Christian Suffering Throughout The World

Detailed information about persecution in Asia

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) childrens rights internationally.

For Further Exploration

Visit the Following Web Sites

ASIA:

North Korea (a1)

Religious Atmosphere:

- The current religious composition is uncertain. Fourth generation Christian leaders estimate that there are as many as 500,000 Christians among North Korea's people. Traditional Korean religions may be practiced by up to a third of the country. Autonomous religious activities are almost non-existent while government-sponsored religious groups exist to provide the illusion of religious freedom.

Government:

- The current dictator, Kim Jong II, 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.
- The government recently re-opened a theological seminary and handpicked 12 students to study Christianity. The opening of the seminary, which features portraits of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong II in the front of the room while placing Christ's picture on the side, may have been opened in hopes to attracting more humanitarian aid from Christian groups.

Recent Actions:

- Ongoing — North Korea has been suffering a terrible famine. This has caused many especially Christians in China to risk huge fines by harboring starving North Koreans who have crossed over the border. A number of these have become Christians and so returned to North Korea.
- 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.

Prisoners:

- 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.

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of North Korea that they may be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all. Pray that the dictatorial stranglehold the communist party has had on North Korea would be broken. Pray also
that the current famine would be used of God to open the government to allowing foreign aid in the area resulting both in the relief of hunger and more religious freedom.

- Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in North Korea asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

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

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Laos (a1)

Religious Atmosphere:

- 58.7% of this country's 4,583,000 people are Buddhist. 33% of the population are animists. There are small populations of Christians (1.53%) and Muslims (1%).

Government:

- The constitution contains provisions for the freedom of religion.
- Associations with foreign religious organizations require governmental approval
- Proselytizing by foreigners is prohibited.
- The importation of foreign religious publications and articles is prohibited.
- Buddhism and Buddhist organizations are openly encouraged.
- The Lao government only officially recognizes three churches: The Lao Evangelical Church, the Seventh-day Adventist church and the Roman Catholic Church.

Recent Actions:

- Ongoing – Government officials are calling Christians the number one enemy of the state. the government has expressly declared its intent to eliminate Christianity. Many Christians have been commanded to sign documents, recanting their faith. If they refuse to sign these documents they may be forced out of their villages, thus losing their land and homes. Reports indicate that government abuses go well beyond systematic intimidation, deprivation, harassment and persecution of Christians. Believers from the Hmong ethnic group have specifically been targeted as “subversive elements.” It is reported that the government is engaged in the systematic killing of Hmong civilians by means of chemical weapons and forced starvation.
- April 29, 2003 - Three Christian families were evicted from the parsonage of the Kengkok Church in Savannakhet province. Authorities earlier confiscated the church building and converted it into a pre-school. (Christian Aid)
- 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.

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of Laos that they may continue to be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all.
- Write a respectful letter to one or more of the government officials listed below. Express your continuing concern for the safety and well being of the Christian community in Laos. Request information about what steps the government is taking to ensure their protection
and freedom to practice their faith as laid out in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights documents.

- Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in Laos asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embassy of the Lao People's Democratic Republic</th>
<th>Kanthay Siphandon, President</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2222 S St., NW</td>
<td>Office of the President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC 20008</td>
<td>Viangchan, Laos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: 202-332-6416</td>
<td>Minister of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: 202-332-4923</td>
<td>That Lunag Road</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Sisavat Keobounphan, Prime Minister             |
| Office of the Chairman                         |
| Council of Ministers                           |
| Viangchan, Laos                                |

Source (“Laos”): [http://persecution.org/Countries/laos.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/laos.html)

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Vietnam

Religious Atmosphere:

- 52% of Vietnam’s people are Buddhist. 29.8% are not religious. 0.8% are Protestant and 8.9% are Catholics. The Catholic Church and the Christian Missionary Alliance of Vietnam are the only two approved denominations. 5.2% belong to offshoots of Buddhism.

Government:

- Despite constitutional provisions for religious freedom, the government continues to restrict any religious activity that it perceives to be in disagreement with its policies and practices. There is a fear of the government that its citizens are using religion to drag in foreign powers.
- Government permission is required for any religious organization to hold training seminars or conferences, to build or remodel places of worship, to engage in charitable activities, and to operate religious schools.
- The government must approve of any ordination, promotion, or transfer of clergy including Catholic clergy assigned by the Vatican.
- Proselytizing is illegal.

Recent Actions:

- **12/3/03 Vietnam (Compass)** -- On November 29, Vietnamese authorities extradited Ma Van Bay from Binh Phuoc province in the Central Highlands to his former home in Ha Giang province on the China border. Christians who know the brutality of government
authorities in Ha Giang fear Bay, a key Hmong Christian leader arrested on November 17, will face serious abuse. A Christian since the early 1990s, Bay emerged as a leader of the rapidly growing Christian community in his home province. In 1997, authorities accused him of "stealing money from the citizens for personal gain" and illegally propagating the Christian religion. Badly beaten and facing up to 12 years in prison, Bay escaped custody and received help from Christians of another minority group in the Central Highlands. On July 1, police in Ha Giang beat to death another Hmong Christian, Vang Seo Giao, and disposed of his body in a river. A journalist in Hanoi who questioned Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the murder was informed that Giao had "drowned crossing a stream while drunk."

**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. They then accused him of using religion to take money from the people and said he was abusing religious freedom. They gave him a three to 12-year prison term. The exact date of his arrest was not specified. However, someone helped him escape and he fled to Binh Phuoc Province in southern Vietnam. There he was again caught and imprisoned. A contact for the Vietnamese churches said if he is returned to the police in the North, he will be severely beaten; if he remains in the South, he will simply be imprisoned. In either case, believers around the world are asked to pray that he regain his freedom. The Vietnam constitution stipulates freedom of religion. Ma Van Bay came to the Lord in 1990 by listening to FEBC radio. He took gospel training in Hanoi and returned to his community, where his ministry spurred the growth of the local church. This caught the attention of local authorities, who began to persecute Bay and the other believers. Bay was persecuted several times and once given a 3 to 12-year prison sentence. In 1997, out of fear of torture or arrest, he left his family and fled to the South. Later he was reunited with his family and was instrumental in translating Biblical materials from Vietnamese into the Hmong language. Those materials have been greatly appreciated by Hmong believers. Vietnamese Christian workers are continually badgered to compromise their faith by godless Communist community leaders. Pray for Bay and all Christian workers in Vietnam. There are now approximately 400 pastors imprisoned for their faith in Vietnam.

**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.

**Suggested Actions You Might Take:**

- Pray for the Christians of Vietnam that they may be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all.
- Write a respectful letter to one or more of the government officials listed below. Express your continuing concern for the safety and well being of the Christian community in Vietnam. Request information about what steps the government is taking to ensure their protection and freedom to practice their faith as laid out in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights documents as well as their recently passed decree of religious freedom.
Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in Vietnam asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

| Permanent Representative of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to the United Nations |
| 20 Waterside Plaza |
| New York, N.Y. 10010 |
| Tel: (212) 679-3779; (212) 685-8001 |
| Fax: (212) 686-8534 |
| Ambassador Tran Duc Luong |
| Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam |
| 1233 20th Street NW, Suite 400 |
| Washington, DC 20036 |
| Tel: (202) 861-0737 |
| Fax: (202) 861-0917 |

| His Excellency Phan Van Khai, Prime Minister |
| 1 Hoang Hoa Tham Street |
| Hanoi, Vietnam |
| Le Kha Phieu, General Secretary |
| Council of Ministers |
| Bac Thao, Hanoi Vietnam |
| Minister of Foreign Affairs |
| 1, Ton Than Dan |
| Hanoi, Cong Hoa Xa Hoi Chu Nghia Viet Nam |
| Tel: 011 84 4 825 8201 |
| Fax: 011 84 4 825 9205 |

Source (“Vietnam”): [http://persecution.org/Countries/vietnam.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/vietnam.html)

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**Turkmenistan**

**Religious Atmosphere:**

- 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.

**Government:**

- 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.”

**Recent Actions:**

- **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. His family and friends support him in his firm stand and pray that he is not headed for another prison term.
Maldives

Religious Atmosphere:

- Islam is the official state religion and religious liberty is severely restricted. The few indigenous Christians live their faith in secrecy and extreme isolation. When discovered, they risk losing their citizenship.

Government:

- The government requires that all citizens be Muslims, and the public practice of any other religion is prohibited.
- Non-Muslim foreigners are allowed to practice their religion in private, without inviting citizens to join.
- 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.

Bhutan

Religious Atmosphere:

- Bhutan is a Buddhist Kingdom. About 65% of the population practices Buddhism. The Druka Kaguyupa school of Mahayana Buddhism is dominant in the northern and western part of the country while the Nyingmapa sect of Mahayana Buddhism is practiced in the eastern and central districts. Hinduism is prevalent in the south among people of Nepalese descent. About 30% of the people are Hindus while less than 2% are Christians. An animistic faith called Bon is also practiced in various parts of the country.

Government:

- The government is ruled by a monarchy; there is no constitution.
- Druka Kaguyupa Buddhism is the official religion.
- Proselytism is illegal. Religious groups must obtain a government license before constructing places of worship.
- Buddhist instruction is allowed in schools but instruction in other religions is not permitted.
- Only Buddhism and Hinduism are listed as religions on the national census form.
Recent Actions:

- **Ongoing** - In the early 1990s as many as 100,000 ethnic Nepalese were expelled from the country after new citizenship and marriage laws, in effect, denationalized them. These people continue to live as refugees in neighboring Nepal. It is reported that around 10% of these refugees have since become Christians. Most Bhutanese refugees wish to return to their homes in Bhutan. However, the government has been settling Buddhists from other parts of the country on the land vacated by the refugees. Currently a Joint Verification Team (JVT) compromised of both Bhutanese and Nepalese officials are trying to determine the citizenship status of the refugees.

- **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. The Christians suffered from various injuries including bruised backs, broken ribs, damaged eardrums, etc. Those who renounced their faith were forced to sign affidavits stating that they would perform certain Hindu rituals and would be supervised by the village headmen. The others were given until July 2 to give up their faith or face another beating.

Suggested Actions you might take:

- Pray for the Christians of Bhutan that they may continue to be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all.
- Write a respectful letter to one or more of the government officials listed below. Express your continuing concern for the safety and well being of each Christian community in Bhutan. Request information about what steps the government is taking to ensure their protection and freedom to practice their faith as laid out in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights documents.
- Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in Bhutan asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consulate General of Bhutan</th>
<th>Mr. Yeshey Zimba, Head of the Government of Bhutan: <a href="mailto:yzimba@hotmail.com">yzimba@hotmail.com</a></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 UN Plaza, 27th Floor</td>
<td>Mr. Jinmi Thinlay, Foreign Minister of Bhutan: <a href="mailto:jthinlay@mfa.gov.bt">jthinlay@mfa.gov.bt</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>New York, NY 10017</td>
<td>Mr. Ugen Tshering, Foreign Secretary: <a href="mailto:utshering@mfa.gov.bt">utshering@mfa.gov.bt</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: 212-826-1919</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fax: 212-826-2998</td>
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Source (“Bhutan”): [http://persecution.org/Countries/bhutan.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/bhutan.html)
Religious Atmosphere:

- 89% of Burma's 46 million people are Buddhist, 4% are Christians, 4% are Muslims, 3% are Hindus, and 2% belong to an animistic religion.

Extremist Groups:

- Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA)--Also known as the Democratic Karen Buddhist Organization, this is a government supported faction made up of Karen people. They support the government's take over of the Karen territory and are very active in the fight against the Karen National Union (KNU).

Government:

- Currently, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), which was formerly known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), is in control of the government. It refuses to acknowledge the 1990 elections in which the National League for Democracy (NLD) won 80% of the seats.
- The government closely monitors all religious groups since it has been these groups that have been politically active in the past.
- Only the individuals who belong to registered religious groups enjoy religious freedom.
- Religious publications are subject to censorship.
- It is illegal to print or import Bibles translated into indigenous languages.
- It is extremely difficult to gain permission to build new churches.
- Foreign religious workers are not issued long-term visas. Permanent foreign missionary establishments have not been allowed since these institutions were nationalized in 1964-65.
- The SPDC and the DKBA are both involved in a brutal campaign to pacify the Karen and Karen people as well as other ethnic minorities. These ethnic minorities have a large Christian constituency. While these actions seem to be motivated by ethnic considerations, the religious nature of some of these incidents has indicated that there is an element of religious persecution. The Karen and Chin people for example are both highly Christianized and heavily persecuted. Religion and ethnicity are thus considered linked. Many members of these ethnic groups have fled to Thailand, where they have been relocated in camps. SPDC and DKBA forces have on multiple occasions crossed the border to raid these camps in an effort to get the people to return to their villages and deprive the KNU of its civilian base.

Recent Actions:

- **May 4, 2003** - Dr. Salai Tun Than and 17 other political prisoners were released from Insein prison. His release is believed to be the result of international pressure on the Burmese regime, especially after Tun Than's recent hunger strike (see below).
- **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.
- **Ongoing** – Forced labor continues to occur despite international outcry against this practice. Government forces have also been known to confiscate private property and demand tribute from the people. In one case several villages were ordered to give 150 cubic feet of wood per village as a punishment for having moved the villages 2 years prior. The wood was then sold and the money was pocketed by the military officer in charge.
Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of Burma that they may continue to be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all the people.
- Write a respectful letter to one or more of the government officials listed below. * Express your continuing concern for the safety and well being of the Christian community in Burma. Request information about what the government of Burma is doing to protect the rights of its believing citizens.
- Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in Burma asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

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<tr>
<th>Embassy/Person</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambassador U Linn Myaing</td>
<td>Embassy of the Union of Myanmar&lt;br&gt;2300 S St. NW&lt;br&gt;Washington D.C. 20008&lt;br&gt;Tel: (202) 232-9044&lt;br&gt;Fax: (202) 332-9046</td>
<td>H.E. General Than Shwe&lt;br&gt;Chairman, State Peace and Development Council</td>
<td>Prom Court, Prom Road&lt;br&gt;Yang, Union of Myanmar&lt;br&gt;Tel: 011 95 1 222-844&lt;br&gt;Fax: 011 95 1 222-950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs&lt;br&gt;Prom Court, Prom Road&lt;br&gt;Yang, Union of Myanmar&lt;br&gt;Tel: 011 95 1 222-844&lt;br&gt;Fax: 011 95 1 222-950</td>
<td>Ministry of Home Affairs&lt;br&gt;Rangoon Division General Administration Department&lt;br&gt;4th Floor, Supping One, Bank Street&lt;br&gt;Kyauktada Township, Rangoon, Myanmar</td>
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Source ("Myanmar"): [http://persecution.org/Countries/burma_myanmar.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/burma_myanmar.html)

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**China**

**Religious Atmosphere:**

- Buddhism is the country’s dominant religion with around 100 million adherents. Islam is practiced by approximately 20 million people. The government allows for the practice of Christianity as long as it is done under the auspices of the state controlled churches. The Catholic Patriotic Association, which does not recognize the authority of the Vatican, claims some 5 million adherents while the Three-Self Patriotic Movement claims between 10-15 million Protestant worshippers. Unofficial Catholics (those who are affiliated with the Vatican) number around 10 million while Protestant house churches may have as many as 30 million members. Folk religions and Taoism are also practiced by a larger number of people. Practitioners of eastern religions usually receive less interference from the government than "foreign" religions like Christianity and Islam. Tibetan Buddhism, however, is not tolerated by the government.

**Government:**

• While the constitution states that citizens enjoy total religious freedom, the government has consistently attempted to restrict all religious practice to government-authorized religious organizations and registered places of worship.
• All religions are required to register with government religious affairs bureaus and accept the supervision of official religious organizations. Many groups have resisted this action on the grounds of opposing state control of religion, being unwilling to limit their activities, or refusing to compromise their positions on issues which don't agree with that of the government.
• The Communist Party officially states that party membership and religious belief are incompatible. This is a considerable concern for believers since Party membership is required for almost all high-level positions. Even so, a 1995 government survey showed that 20 percent of the Communist Party engages in some kind of religious activity.
• Foreigners are not allowed to proselytize. They are allowed to preach to other foreigners, bring in religious materials for their own use, and preach to Chinese at the invitation of a registered religious organization.
• In the province of Guangdong, local regulations have been added to the government ones. Illegal materials (any unapproved foreign religious material) cannot be sold, distributed, copied, or shipped. Chinese residents cannot accept any outside money or assistance from foreigners or foreign organizations. The existence of any unapproved religious organization or personnel is illegal. Foreigners cannot establish a religious organization, churches, appoint any pastors/leaders, distribute religious materials, train disciples, or conduct any other religious activities. Foreign organizations cannot recruit religious students from overseas to attend religious universities in China without the approval of the Chinese government. All of these crimes are punishable by fines of $2,200 to $11,000.
• The seminaries are largely government controlled. To qualify for the clergy, one must demonstrate "political reliability" and pass an examination of their political knowledge.
• Provincial governments have taken extreme means to eradicate the underground Catholic Church in their jurisdiction. Taken from the plans in the Donglai township, the following actions were recommended: Registering and setting up a file for each religious believer, and investigating the background of out-of-town Catholics. These plans also call for disintegrating the underground religious influences by uniting the majority through education, isolating and attacking the extremists, developing overall education, organizing specialists, and using "any other conceivable means."
• The government-run Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA) and the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) are attempting to unite the 80 million members of the underground church by offering reconciliation, the promise of allowed registration for house churches, and a halt to make Chinese theology more socialist, the movement that was lead by Bishop Ding. Many underground members are concerned the unification will restrict evangelization methods.

Recent Actions:

• 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 Zhejiang 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. Xu’s wife was not informed of her husband’s whereabouts by authorities and only learned of her husband’s location through VOM sources this week.
• 11/26/03 China (Shanghai) AP Christopher Bodeen-Police have charged an activist for China’s unofficial Christian church with revealing state secrets more than a month after he was detained while investigating church demolitions, a U.S.-based church activist said Wednesday. Authorities in the eastern city of Hangzhou issued a formal arrest notice for Liu Fenggang on Tuesday, said Bob Fu, citing unidentified police sources. That step
clears the way for Liu's likely indictment and trial. Fu said police earlier this month denied a request by Liu's lawyer to visit his client, saying that was not permitted in cases involving state secrets. Authorities have not said what sort of secrets Liu was accused of revealing, according to Fu, who heads the China Aid Association, which is based in the Philadelphia suburb of Glenside. Liu's Beijing lawyer, Zhao Jian, said his client was under investigation on state secrets charges, but declined to discuss details of the case over the telephone. China's sweeping state secrets law is ill-defined and broadly applied. Those charged under it have included independent labor organizers, representatives of householders whose dwellings were destroyed in urban renewal projects and people who have posted political essays on the Internet.

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of China that they may be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all. Pray especially for the security and well being of the underground house church leaders who are currently in prison for their faith.
- Write a respectful letter to one or more of the government officials listed below. Express your continuing concern for the safety and well being of the Christian community in China. Request information about what steps the government is taking to ensure their protection and freedom to practice their faith as laid out in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights documents.
- Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in China asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambassador Yang Jiechi</th>
<th>Qiao Shi Weiyuanzhang</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embassy of the Peoples Republic Of China</td>
<td>Chairman, National People's Congress</td>
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<td>2300 Connecticut Ave.</td>
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<td>Washington D.C., 20008</td>
<td>Great Hall of the People</td>
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<td>Tel: (202) 328-2500</td>
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<td>Jiang Zemin Guojia Zhuxi</td>
<td>People`s Republic of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>President of the People's Republic of China</td>
<td>Governor, Hebei Provincial People's Government</td>
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<td>Beijingshi, People`s Republic of China</td>
<td>Shijiazhuangshi</td>
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<td>Zhu Rongji</td>
<td>Hebei Sheng</td>
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<td>Premier, People's Republic of China</td>
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<td>Guowuyuan</td>
<td>Governor, Henan Provincial People's Government</td>
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<td>9 Xihuanchenggenbeijie</td>
<td>Zhengzhoushi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beijingshi 100032</td>
<td>Henansheng, People`s Republic of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People`s Republic of China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: 86-10-6-512-5810</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source ("China"): [http://persecution.org/Countries/china.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/china.html)
Religious Atmosphere:

- Muslims make up 97.6% of Pakistan's people. Hindus make up 1.5% and Christians 1.7%. 70% of the Christian population is in the poorest segment of society. The growth of the Christian church is calculated at 3.9%.

Extremist Groups:

- There are numerous extremist Muslim groups currently operating within this country. The government's inability to provide basic services in recent years has left room for many of these groups to step in and assume various responsibilities. These responsibilities include running clinics and hospitals, setting up job training, providing dowries, and operating institutes of higher education. In addition to the universities, these groups also operate madrassas, which are Islamic schools whose curriculum often includes military/weapons training. Most of these groups maintain their own cadre of fighters and even give them battle experience fighting for Muslim causes in areas like Afghanistan. The graduates of these madrassas are joining the junior officer ranks of the military, a traditionally secular institution. Three of the main extremist groups are Jamaat-e-Islami, Tanzeem Ikwane-e-Pakistan, Sipah-I-Sahabah and Lashkar-e-Taiba. All of these groups maintain popular public support due to the services and hope they provide.

Government:

- The constitution sets up Islam as the state religion.
- Members of a religious minority are barred from ever holding the office of President or Prime Minister by the constitution.
- Conversions are not illegal but proselytizing among Muslims is prohibited.
- Local law enforcement officials commonly fail to take precautions against Islamic extremists abusing religious minorities or to investigate and prosecute those responsible for such actions.
- All Pakistani citizens are subject to a form of shari'a law, which was introduced in 1991. These laws are based on Islamic laws and are not supposed to apply to non-Muslims. Despite this fact, these laws have been applied in disputes between Muslims and non-Muslims.
- 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.
- A law currently on the books, Section 295(c) of the Penal Code, applies a death sentence to anyone who defiles the name of the Prophet Mohammed. This law only requires the testimony of four Muslims for a conviction. It is laws like this and the lack of proper law enforcement that encourages an environment were Muslims feel free to use intimidation and violence against religious minorities for personal gain as illustrated above.

Recent Actions:

- 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 investigate. A cook heard gunshots and ran outside to find Rev. Ibrahim dead. The local Christian community believes that Ibrahim was targeted because he helped the church to regain...
control of a Catholic school that had been seized by the government during the 1970s when private schools were nationalized. Ibrahim was also known to speak out on behalf of the poor Christian community.

- **June 4, 2003** - Aslam Masih, a Christian accused of blasphemy, was acquitted by the Lahore High Court. Masih had been handed a double life sentence and a fine on May 7, 2002 by the Faisalabad Sessions Court (see May 7, 2002 below for more details). Masih's life may still be in jeopardy, though, as Islamic militants target Christians who have been charged with blasphemy, even if they have been exonerated by the courts.

- **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. The youths were angered because the Christians chastised them for trying to block the entrance to the church and making derogatory remarks to women and girls. Police have refused to file a case under the blasphemy laws which punish those who defile a place of worship. (ANS/Barnabas Fund)

**Suggested Actions You Might Take:**

- Pray for the Christians of Pakistan that they may be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all. Pray that the drive to institute stricter Islamic law would be blocked and equal treatment for all faiths would prevail.
- Write a respectful letter to one or more of the government officials listed below. Express your continuing concern for the safety and well being of the Christian community in Pakistan. Request information about what steps the government is taking to ensure their protection and freedom to practice their faith as laid out in the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights documents.
- Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in Pakistan asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

**Official Contacts:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambassador Ashraf Jehangir Qazi</th>
<th>Minister of Foreign Affairs</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embassy of Pakistan</td>
<td>Constitution Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3517 International Ct. NW</td>
<td>Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington D.C., 20008</td>
<td>Tel: 011 92 51 211-941 or 812-470</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 243-6500</td>
<td>Fax: 011 92 51 920 0420 or 820-420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 387-0484</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Pervez Musharraf
President, Islamic Republic of Pakistan
Chief Executive’s Secretariat
ISLAMABAD
PAKISTAN
Fax: 011 92 51 211 018
E-mail: CE@pak.gov.pk

Source (“Pakistan”): [http://persecution.org/Countries/pakistan.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/pakistan.html)
Religious Atmosphere:

- 98% of the island's people are Muslim. 0.8% are Christian. Many of the Muslims also incorporate traditional religions, including witchcraft.

Extremist Groups:

- Islamic fundamentalism seems to be growing in this country and societal attitudes toward Christians are extremely negative.

Government:

- The May 2000 constitution declares this country to be an Islamic state.
- The constitution does not prohibit discrimination based on religion or religious belief.
- While Christian missionaries are allowed to do humanitarian work, proselytizing is illegal.

Recent Actions:

- Most discrimination against Christians occurs on the island of Anjouan, where Christians tend to be more open about their faith. In the town of Mremeni Christian burials were banned while in the town of Lingoni Christians were banned from attending any community events. Christians in areas of Anjouan also reported being harassed by mobs and forced to attend services at mosques against their will. Recently radio broadcasts have been utilized to provoke anti-Christian hatred.
- 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.

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of Comoros that they may continue to be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Azali Assoumani, President</th>
<th>Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres et Cooperation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office of the President</td>
<td>Boite Postale 482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.P. 421</td>
<td>Moroni, Republique Islamique Federale du Comoros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroni, Comoros</td>
<td>Tel: 011 269 73 2306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azali Assoumani (same as above)</td>
<td>Fax: 011 269 73 2108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premier</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mahdi, Moroni, Comoros</td>
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Source ("Comoros"): [http://persecution.org/Countries/comoros.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/comoros.html)

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Uzbekistan

Religious Atmosphere:
• 68.2% of this country’s people are Sunni Muslim. 4.7% of the population is Christian with 90% of that being Orthodox. This segment appears to be decreasing.

Government:

• Missionary activity and proselytizing are illegal.
• Any religious conversion is illegal. This is especially sensitive issue since Muslims claim all Uzbeks are Muslim and the Orthodox Church claims all those baptized as children as its members.
• All religious organizations must be officially registered with the government. To apply for registration, a religious organization must have one hundred members over the age of 18.
• Teaching religious doctrine on an individual basis is not allowed. Sunday school teachers will be forced to show proof of pedagogical training or face sanctions.
• Worship services cannot be held in people’s private homes.
• In addition to registration papers, government officials can request access to any church document.
• A local church cannot produce, export, or import or spread any religious materials. These activities must be done at the religious organization’s headquarters. The government also has the right to censor any imported religious material.
• A religious organization can only establish a headquarters if it has at least eight registered churches in eight different regions.
• No miners are allowed to be members of a religious group. This is likely due to the fact that the world’s largest gold mine is found in this country.

Recent Actions:

• 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 noted that literature confiscated from the church, including leaflets and a few Bibles, was printed in the Kazakh language, and was not acceptable for distribution. However, Kazakh-speaking people make up 30% of the population in Karakalpakstan. (ANS/F-18 News)
• March 2003 - Christian groups in the Karakalpakstan region of the country complained that they are being forced to meet secretly due to increasing pressure on the non-Muslim community. A Presbyterian church in Nukus has attempted to register three times since 2000 and has been denied. (F-18 News)
• December 17, 2002 - 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. The other two men reported being insulted and told that if they did not stop holding religious meetings they would be sent to prison where Islamic extremists would “use them like women.” (F-18 News)

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

• Pray for the Christians of Uzbekistan that they may be better protected from harm and harassment and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all the people of this country.
• Pray that the harsh anti-religious legislation passed in 1998 is repealed.
• Write a respectful letter to one or more government officials at the address listed below. * Express your continuing concern for the safety and well being of the Christians in Uzbekistan mentioned above as well as for their right to practice their faith freely and without harassment and arrest. Commend them for the recent prisoner releases.
• Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in Uzbekistan asking them to make an inquiry into the status of those Christians who have been arrested. Ask them to officially protest the harsh new legislation.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambassador Shavkat Hamrakulov</th>
<th>Ministry of Internal Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan</td>
<td>Main Punishment Administration,</td>
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<tr>
<td>1746 Massachusetts Avenue, NW</td>
<td>Karakalpakstan Autonomous Republic,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington DC 20036</td>
<td>742000 Nukus, UYA-64/IZ-9, Uzbekistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Minister of Foreign Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 887-5300</td>
<td>Ulytsya Gogolya #87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 293-6804</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:emb@uzbekistan.org">emb@uzbekistan.org</a></td>
<td>Tel: 011 7 3712 336-475</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islam Karimov, President</td>
<td>Fax: 011 7 3712 394-348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the President</td>
<td>Utkir Sultanov, Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akhunbabayeva 1</td>
<td>Office of the Cabinet Ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tashkent, Uzbekistan</td>
<td>Government House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone 007-371-1395404</td>
<td>700008 Tashkent, Uzbekistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax 007-371-1395325</td>
<td>e-mail: <a href="mailto:uzinfo@uzinfo.gov.uz">uzinfo@uzinfo.gov.uz</a></td>
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</tbody>
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Azerbaijan (a2)

Religious Atmosphere:

• Shi‘ite Islam is the traditional religion of the Azeris. Islam overall comprises about 93% of the population. Russian and Armenian Orthodox together comprise almost 5%.

Government:

• The constitution provides for the separation of church and state and holds that all religions are equal before the law. It also provides citizens the right to "profess, individually or together with others, any religion or to profess no religion, to express and spread one’s beliefs concerning religions."
• Anti-Armenian sentiment has resulted in the departure of most Armenians and the closing of Armenian Churches.
• Only the Roman Catholic Church has been granted formal registration status in the past 6 years while the Baptist, Adventist and Greater Grace churches had previous status. Several churches have been refused or delayed in their attempts to gain legal registration. Among these are the Pentecostal Church, Word of Life, and the Unregistered Baptists.
Recent Actions:

- **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. However, Katsiashvili says he has tried to become a citizen and was refused because he preaches. Authorities deny these accusations. Katsiashvili’s small congregation has been harassed numerous times (F-18 News).

- **February 24, 2002** - Police in Gyanja, western Azerbaijan, halted a meeting at the local Adventist Church, demanding to see the church’s registration certificate. The pastor explained that the certificate had been sent to the State Committee for Work with Religious Organization as a part of the re-registration process. However, the officers refused to listen and asked to see identity documents for some of those present. The church has been told it cannot hold services until its registration certificate is received. Officials planned to seal off the church in the meantime. (Keston)

- **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.

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of Azerbaijan that they may continue to be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all.
- Write a respectful letter to one or more of the government officials listed below. Express your continuing concern for the safety and well being of each Christian community in Azerbaijan. Request information about what steps the government is taking to ensure their protection and freedom to practice their faith as laid out in the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights documents.
- Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in Azerbaijan asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan</th>
<th>Minister of Foreign Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>927 15th St. NW, Suite 700</td>
<td>Ghanjilar meydani #3</td>
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<td>Washington D.C. 20005</td>
<td>370004 Baku, Azerbaijani Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 842-0001</td>
<td>Tel: 011 994 12 933-012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 842-0004</td>
<td>Fax: 011 994 12 935-643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heydar Aliyev, President</td>
<td>Artur Tair oghlu Rasizade, Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the President</td>
<td>Council of Ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize Levmontova 63</td>
<td>Mermontov Str 68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baku, Azerbaijan</td>
<td>370066 Baku, Azerbaijan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: 994-12-920625</td>
<td>Source (“Azerbaijan”): <a href="http://persecution.org/Countries/azerbaijan.html">http://persecution.org/Countries/azerbaijan.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-mail: <a href="mailto:president@gov.az">president@gov.az</a></td>
<td>WebPage: <a href="http://www.president.az">http://www.president.az</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brunei

Religious Atmosphere:

- The government does not publish statistics on religious affiliation. However, the majority of the population is Muslim while perhaps 10% is Christian, and 10% is Buddhist. There is also a sizeable population of expatriate workers in the country. Expatriates generally practice Christianity and Hinduism.

Government:

- 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.
- The importation of religious books and materials is outlawed.
- Permission to build, expand, or repair religious buildings other than mosques is often denied.

Recent Actions:

- **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.
- **December 17, 2000** - 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.

Suggested Actions you might take:

- Pray for the Christians of Brunei that they may continue to be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all.
- Write a respectful letter to one or more of the government officials listed below. Express your continuing concern for the safety and well being of the Christian community in Brunei. Request information about what steps the government is taking to ensure their protection and freedom to practice their faith as laid out in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights documents.
- Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in Brunei asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embassy of Brunei Darussalam</th>
<th>H. M. Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3520 International Court, NW</td>
<td>Prime Minister's Office</td>
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<td>Washington, DC 20008</td>
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<td>Tel: 202-237-1838</td>
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<td>Fax: 202-885-0560</td>
<td>Tel: 011-673-2-229988</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Info@bruneiembassy.org">Info@bruneiembassy.org</a></td>
<td>Fax: 011-673-2-241717</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tajikistan

Religious Atmosphere:

- It is estimated that of the country’s people, 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, and the influence of Islam is increasing.

Government:

- Republic
- 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.

Recent Actions:

- **January 04, 2004** (Barnabas Fund) - A pastor who was also an active missionary has been shot dead while he was praying in a chapel. A burst into a churchyard in Isfara in the north of Tajikistan and fired several rounds through a window at Sergei Bessarab as he was kneeling in prayer. The hard-line Islamic Revival Party garnered a large majority of the local vote in recent elections, despite central government attempts to curb the growth of Islamic extremism.

- **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.

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray that God will guide the Tajik authorities wisely as they consider how to tackle the growing threat of Islamic extremism.
India

Religious Atmosphere:

- India’s population is 80% Hindu, 12% Muslim, and 2.4% Christian. Both Muslims and Christians have been the object of attack by Hindu extremists who want to make India a Hindu state.

Government:

- Religious freedom is protected by law. However, enforcement of the law has been poor, especially at state and local levels.
- The Bharatiya Janatha Party (BJP) is the Hindu nationalist coalition government. Since the group came to power there has been an increase in persecution and opposition of minorities, especially Christians. The BJP is an offshoot of the extremist RSS (see Extremist Groups below). Prime Minister Vajpayee is a member of the BJP. However, Vajpayee has reportedly called for religious tolerance and spoken out against the persecution of Christians.
- In November 1999 Orissa State (where missionary Graham Staines and his two sons were killed) passed an order prohibiting religious conversions without the prior permission of local police and district magistrates. The person wishing to convert must explain his/her reasons to the police who then collect information from neighbors and friends. Police draw up a report, which is passed on to the district magistrates who may grant or withhold permission.
- Low caste Hindus who convert to Christianity lose their eligibility for affirmative action while those who become Buddhists, Jains, or Sikhs do not because these faiths are included under the definition of Hindu in the Constitution. Affirmative action is often necessary in order for lower caste members to receive good jobs as discrimination on the basis of caste still exists.
- Since the mid-1960s the government has refused to admit new foreign resident missionaries. Missionaries must thus enter the country with a short-term tourist visa. In March 1999 it was reported that the government was refusing to renew these visas.
- Missionaries and religious organizations must comply with the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) which restricts funding from abroad and therefore the ability of some organizations to finance their activities.

Extremist Groups:

- Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) – the “National Volunteer Corp.” – a nationalist Hindu party which espouses a return to Hindu values and cultural norms. The group was responsible for the murder of Mahatma Ghandi.
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.

Bajrang Dal – a militant Hindu youth organization which boasts about half a million members, many of whom receive military training.

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

Recent Actions:

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. Sister Kamlesh was killed in the attack on the convent, which was believed to be a result of exaggerated media reports claiming thousands of Muslims were converting to Christianity in Kashmir. (Compass Direct)

March 26, 2003 - The Gujurat Freedom of Religion Bill was passed in the State Assembly. The bill bans religious conversions by coercion and stipulates a prison sentence of up to three years and a fine of 50,000 rupees for being involved in a forcible conversion. The law further states that all conversions must be registered and accepted by the District Magistrate. Failure to register a conversion is liable to a fine or up to one year in prison. (ANS)

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)

Suggested Actions you might take:

Pray for the Christians of India that they may continue to be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all.

Write a respectful letter to one or more of the government officials listed below. Express your continuing concern for the safety and well being of the Christian community in India. Request information about what steps the government is doing to ensure their protection and freedom to practice their faith laid out in the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights documents.

Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in India asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambassador Lalit Mansingh</th>
<th>The President of India</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Embassy of India</td>
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<td>2107 Massachusetts Ave. NW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 939-7000</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 483-3972</td>
<td>Fax: 011 91 11 3017290</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>011 91 11 3017824</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Permanent Representative of India to the UN

Prime Minister
Sri Lanka

Religious Atmosphere:

- Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity are all practiced in this country. Approximately 70% of the population is Buddhist with another 12% Hindu, 7% Muslim, and about 8% Christian. The Hindu population is mainly concentrated in the northern part of the country while the Christian segment is primarily in the West. The South is predominantly Buddhist.

Government:

- The Constitution gives Buddhism the foremost position but also provides for followers of other faiths to practice them freely. Major festivals of all faiths are celebrated as national holidays.
- For more than 30 years the government has restricted the entrance of new Jesuit clergy. This has mainly been the result of the wishes of the local Catholic Church which wants to replace foreign clergy with native Sri Lankans.
- Issues involving family law, divorce, child custody, and inheritance are adjudicated by the customary law of each religious group.

Extremist Groups:

- The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) - an insurgent organization fighting for a separate state for Sri Lanka's Tamil (and mainly Hindu) minority. The conflict is mainly with the national government, but members of all religious groups have been victims of LTTE violence at one time or another. Christians in the LTTE areas face extortion from the militants and sometimes see their children kidnapped into the Tamil army.
- Various extremist Buddhist groups exist. On a national level they are trying to draw up a new constitution which would prohibit religious conversions. At a local level they incite mobs to attack newly-formed churches and claim Christians have converted people in an unethical manner.

Recent Actions:

- 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.

**Suggested Actions you might take:**

- Pray for the Christians of Sri Lanka that they may be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all.
- Write a respectful letter to one or more of the government officials listed below. Express your continuing concern for the safety and well being of the Christian community in Sri Lanka. Request information about what steps the government is doing to ensure their protection and freedom to practice their faith laid out in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights documents as well as their recently passed decree of religious freedom.
- Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in Sri Lanka asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

**Official Contacts:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embassy of Sri Lanka</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2148 Wyoming Ave. NW</td>
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<td>Fax: (202) 232-7181</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka</td>
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<td>Colombo</td>
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<td>Sri Lanka</td>
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<td>Fax: 011 94 1 446091</td>
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| Permanent Representative of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the United Nations |
| 630 Third Avenue, 20th Floor |
| New York, N.Y. 10017 |
| Telephone: 212-986-7040, 7041, 7042, 7043 |
| Fax: 212-986-1838 |
| Email: srilanka@un.int |


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**Indonesia**

**Religious Atmosphere:**

- Indonesia is the world’s largest Muslim country in terms of the number of adherents. Eighty-eight percent of Indonesia’s people are Muslim and almost 60% of these are Javanese Muslims who practice a very unorthodox version of Islam mixed with mysticism and Buddhism. However, the number of Islamic extremists is growing. The Christian community is 5% Protestant and 3% Roman Catholic. Tension between Muslims and Christians is present throughout Indonesia but is mostly concentrated in the Maluku province (formerly called the Spice Islands) where Muslim and Christian populations are roughly equal.

**Government:**
• 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.
• A 1969 regulation dictates that the agreement of the local community must be obtained before building a house of worship. A permit must also be obtained from the Ministry of Religion. As a result of these laws, Christians in Muslim-dominated areas have difficulty in obtaining permission to build churches.
• The law allows conversion between religions. However, proselytizing in areas heavily dominated by another religion is discouraged because it is seen as disruptive.
• Recently religiously oriented political parties, illegal under the Soeharto regime, have become legal again. Muslim parties won 30% of the vote while Christian parties did not fair well.
• Many members of Indonesia’s armed forces have helped militant Muslims in their goal of ridding the country of Christians.

Extremist Groups:

• Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) - A militant Islamist group active in several Southeast Asian countries that is seeking to establish a Muslim fundamentalist state in the region. Jemaah Islamiyah ("Islamic Group" in Indonesian) is alleged to have attacked or plotted against U.S. and Western targets in Indonesia, Singapore, and the Philippines. The group is believed to have ties to Al-Qaeda and has been linked to a series of church bombings that took place on Christmas Eve 2000 as well as the bombing of a Bali nightclub in October 2002.
• 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.
• Muslim Ahlus-Sunnah Wal Jama’ah Forum – a paramilitary group which claims its role is to help fellow Muslims, not attack Christians. The group has, in fact, been involved in violent acts but claims they were in self-defense.
• Indonesian Committee for Worldwide Islamic Solidarity (KISDI)

Recent Actions:

• July 12, 2003 - Petrian Malenge, a Christian police sergeant, was shot while riding his motorcycle in Lembomawo village, Central Sulawesi. A neighbor riding with him escaped major injury when she fell from the bike. Malenge is in critical condition at Poso Public hospital. He was known as a supporter of the Christian community in Central Sulawesi and had helped Rev. Rinaldy Damanik evacuate IDPs during the summer of 2002.
• July 11, 2003 - Nine members of the Jemaah Islamiyah were arrested in Central Java. Over 20,000 rounds of ammunition, 11 rocket launchers and 2 M-16s were among the weapons confiscated during the capture of the terrorists. One of the men, Pranata Yuda, admitted the group's past involvement in the Central Sulawesi conflict.
• 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.

Suggested Actions you might take:

• Pray for the Christians of Indonesia that they may continue to be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all.
• Write a respectful letter to one or more of the government officials listed below. Express your continuing concern for the safety and well being of the Christian community in Indonesia. Request information about what steps the government is taking to ensure their protection and freedom to practice their faith as laid out in the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights documents.

• Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in Indonesia asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Ambassador Soemadi Brotodiningrat</td>
<td>Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia</td>
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<td>(202) 775-5365</td>
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<td>Minister for Religious Affairs</td>
<td>Jl. Lapangan Banteng Barat No. 3-4</td>
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<td>011 62 21 361-720</td>
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<tr>
<td>President Megawati Soekarnoputri</td>
<td>Istana Merdeka</td>
<td>011 62 21 344-1508</td>
<td>011 62 21 360-517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Noer Hasan Wirajuda</td>
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Source (“Indonesia”): [http://persecution.org/Countries/indonesia.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/indonesia.html)

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**Nepal**

**Religious Atmosphere:**

• Nepal is the world's only Hindu Kingdom. Hindus make up 90% of the population while 5% of the people are Buddhist and 3% are Muslim. The Christian population is small but growing. It is estimated that there are around 400,000 Christians in Nepal with at least 170 churches operating in Kathmandu. People who convert from Hinduism to another religion may be socially ostracized.

**Government:**

• The country does not have an official state religion, but it declares Nepal to be a Hindu Kingdom.

• While the Constitution supposedly provides religious freedom, conversion and proselytizing are prohibited and can be punished by fines or imprisonment. Foreigners found guilty of proselytizing can be expelled from the country.

**Extremist Groups:**

• Various Hindu extremist groups exist.
Recent Actions:

- **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.

- **January 2001** – Timothy Rai, Devi Prasad Bhattarai, and Prem Bahadur Rai remained imprisoned in Rajbiraj while Trond Berg has been transferred to Kathmandu Central Jail. The Nepal Supreme Court refused to hear Mr. Berg’s case and denied a petition that would allow the other three Christians to return to the capital for trial.

- **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.

Suggested Actions you might take:

- Pray for the Christians of Nepal that they may be better protected from harm and harassment and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all.

- Write a respectful letter to one or more government officials at the address listed below. Request information about what steps the government is taking to ensure their protection and freedom to practice their faith as laid out in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights documents.

- Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in Nepal asking them to make an inquiry into the status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala</th>
<th>Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Nepal to the United Nations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Office of the Prime Minister</td>
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<td>Fax: (202) 667-5534</td>
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**Bangladesh (b3)**

**Religious Atmosphere:**
• About 88% of the population is Muslim with another 10% Hindu. The remaining 2% are Christians, animists, and Buddhists. The Christian church is split into two groups: the visible church, which consists of converts from Hinduism and the invisible church, which consists of converts from Islam.

Government:
• Islam became the state religion in 1988.
• The constitution promises all citizens the right "to profess, practice or propagate any religion" (Article 41). However, the government has introduced a number of restrictions on the Christian community and continues to do so because of pressure from Islamic fundamentalists.
• One restriction is the requirement that all Christian organizations need to be registered as a Non-Government Organization (NGO), whose charter and board need to be presented to the government for approval. The board may be dismissed at any time and be replaced by another board appointed by the government.
• The NGO Affairs Bureau has imposed restrictions on Bible printing and importation. Distribution of Bibles must be limited to Christians.
• Proselytizing is permitted under the law. However, strong social resistance to conversion from Islam means most proselytizing is aimed at Hindus and tribal groups.
• Foreign missionaries may work in the country but their right to proselytize is not protected under the Constitution and they often have trouble obtaining visas.

Extremist Groups:
• As with other Muslim countries, Bangladesh has extremist groups which push for Islamic law.

Recent Actions:
• 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 ranson. (ANS)
• 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. (ANS/Barnabas Fund)
• Ongoing - Most persecution of Christians occurs at a village level. People who convert from Islam are ostracized and in many cases are beaten, denied water from village wells, or even thrown out of the villages.
• 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. The attack was instigated by fundamentalists who falsely announced that Christians were dismantling a mosque adjacent to the school.

Suggested Actions you might take:
• Pray for the Christians of Bangladesh that they may be better protected from harm and harassment and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all.
• Write a respectful letter to one or more government officials at the address listed below. Request information about what steps the government is doing to ensure their protection and freedom to practice their faith laid out in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights documents.
• Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Representatives, etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the
Malaysia

Religious Atmosphere:

- Sunni Islam is the predominant religion with large numbers of religious minorities. About 60% of the people are Muslim, 20% are Buddhist, 10% are Christian, 5% are Hindu and 5% practice other religions, including Taoism and indigenous belief systems. Most of the religious minorities are concentrated in the eastern part of the country.

Extremist Groups:

- Islamic fundamentalist groups exist.

Government:

- Islam is the official religion.
- Article 11 of the Constitution gives citizens the right to freely profess, practice, and propagate their religion. However, this right is restricted in practice.
- The construction of non-Muslim places of worship must be approved by the government while Muslim places of worship face no such restriction.
- The sale and distribution of Malay language Bibles and other Christian materials are strongly discouraged.
- Visas for foreign clergy of non-Muslim religions are severely restricted.
- Apostates (those who convert from Islam to another religion) may be fined or imprisoned for a year of “rehabilitation.”

Recent Actions:

- April 2003 - Thirty-five Christian books, including the Iban translation of the Bible were banned, as they are considered detrimental to public peace. The majority of Ibans are
Christians and thus will be greatly affected by the new ban, which makes the printing, sale, distribution and possession of any banned book punishable by up to three years imprisonment and/or a fine of 20,000 ringgits. Other books on the list include translated versions of books by J.I. Packer and John Stott. English language versions are not on the list. (Barnabas Fund/ANS)

- **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. It has been promised the laws will apply to Muslims only, however they have already been enforced on non-Muslims. Several moderate peace-keeping leaders in Malaysia have either stepped down or died, leaving a power vacuum open to more charismatic Muslim leaders. (BFS)

- **May 23, 2002** - A French missionary was arrested on blasphemy charges after distributing a pamphlet on Koranic plagiarism. 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. (Charisma)

Suggested Actions you might take:

- Pray for the Christians of Malaysia that they may be better protected from harm and harassment and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all.
- Write a respectful letter to one or more government officials at the address listed below. Request information about what steps the government is doing to ensure their protection and freedom to practice their faith laid out in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights documents.
- Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in Malaysia asking them to make an inquiry into the status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
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<th>Embassy of Malaysia</th>
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<td>Washington, DC 20008</td>
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<td>Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:ppm@smpke.jpm.my">ppm@smpke.jpm.my</a></td>
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Source (“Malaysia”): [http://persecution.org/Countries/malaysia.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/malaysia.html)