Christian Suffering Throughout The World

Detailed Information 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](http://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](http://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](http://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

AFRICA:

Sudan (a1b1)

Religious Atmosphere:

- It is estimated that 70% of this country's people are Sunni Muslims. 9.9% belong to tribal religions and 19% are Christians. The Muslim population is concentrated in the north, while the Christians and animists live in the south or in the Nuba mountain range in central 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.

Extremist Groups:

- Popular Defense Force (PDF) - This is a government-sponsored group that is larger and better equipped than the standing army. This group it known to have its ranks filled with the most fanatical Muslim fighters. They often engage in actions against the rebel forces in the South. Since these actions are done with government support or in coordination with government forces, their actions are listed with those of the government.
- 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. Their actions are also listed with those of the government.

Government:

- Though it has been stated by the National Islamic Front (NIF), the current military regime, that religious freedom is respected, Islam is the de facto state religion. The acronym GoS (Government of Sudan) is often used to identify government forces.
- Forced conversions to Islam is a part of government policy.
- Churches are often closed, destroyed, or not allowed to be built.
- Christian home groups are considered to be a public disturbance and Bible teachers are considered to be the leaders of these public disturbances and are arrested.
- Open preaching is prohibited and punishable by beating or a jail sentence.
- Many Islamic principles are accepted as customs, such as giving the testimony of a Christian man half the weight of that given to a Muslim man. Christians are under constant pressure to convert to Islam.
- Christians are commonly discriminated against in the workplace and rarely receive promotions.

Recent Actions:

- 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. These attacks occurred on the same day that Secretary of State Colin Powell met with the Sudanese Foreign Minister to discuss removing Sudan from the list of state sponsors of terrorism. It was later reported that two of Pastor Manyiel's sons (ages 4 and 6) and another young boy were killed at the regional military headquarters in Adar Yel. (Freedom Now News/Servant’s Heart)

- **May 21, 2003** - Rev. Samuel Dobai Arnum (see April 7, 2003 below) was released from prison after local believers and an American delegation from Calvary Chapel (Santa Margarita, CA) raised enough money to officially purchase the land on which the St. Matthew's church is built. The church expects to soon have ownership papers changed into their name. (Compass Direct)

- **April 21, 2003** - President George W. Bush stated that the Khartoum government and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army were negotiating in "good faith." Thus, it is not necessary for the US to implement any sanctions, as per the Sudan Peace Act.

**Prisoners:**

- It is estimated that there are thousands, or possibly tens of thousands, of women and children who are being held against their will as slaves or as conscripts.

**Suggested Actions You Might Take:**

- Pray for the Christians of Sudan that they may be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all. Pray for a long-term solution to the current civil war and an end to all the atrocities happening there.
- 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 Sudan. 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 Sudan asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

**Official Contacts:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charge D'Affairs Khidr Haroun</th>
<th>Minister of Foreign Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embassy of Sudan 2210 Massachusetts Ave. NW 20008 Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>Post Office Box 873 Khartoum, Republic of the Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 338-8565 Fax: (202) 667-2406</td>
<td>Tel: 011 249 11 773-101 Fax: 011 249 11 778-218 or 779-383 or 777-268</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Omar Hassan Al-Bashir  
President of the Republic of Sudan  
People's Palace PO Box 281 Khartoum, Sudan  
Fax: 011 249 11 787676 or 783223
Eritrea

Religious Atmosphere:

- Approximately half of Eritrea’s population is Christian and half is Muslim. There doesn’t seem to be any significant religious strife in this country.

Government:

- The current draft of the constitution provides for the freedom of religion and the right to practice the religion of one’s choice.
- The government has banned any religious organizations from participating in politics.
- Specific guidelines have been issued that govern the role of religious organizations and their relationships with foreign sponsors.

Recent Actions:

- **May 7, 2003** - Two evangelists and 54 members of the Rema Church in Asmara were hauled off to the police station for holding an "illegal prayer meeting." The evangelical believers were reportedly given "severe punishment" by the police. The Rema Church has been harassed by authorities for the past year and has been refused registration. (Compass Direct/VOM)
- **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)
- **April 17, 2003** - 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.
- **March 23, 2003** - 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. The next day the pastor was publicly tortured in front of the congregation and forced to walk on sharp rocks for half an hour. The same morning the three children were beaten and released with a warning not to attend religious meetings. Most of the Christians were released after eight days. However, relatives posting bail for the prisoners had to sign a statement that if a jailed believer was caught meeting at a church or holding a religious gathering at home, he or she would be executed. (Compass Direct)

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of Eritrea 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>Ambassador Girma Asmerom</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embassy of Eritrea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1708 New Hampshire Ave. NW</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Minister of Foreign Affairs</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post Office Box 190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asmara, State of Eritrea</td>
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</table>
Egypt (a2b1)

Religious Atmosphere:

- Muslims make up 85.4% of this country's people. The government estimates the Christian population at 6%, but other sources put it as high as 14.2%. Ninety-two percent of the Christian population are members of the Coptic Church, which existed before the arrival of Islam. Cairo is currently considered to be the hub of Sunni Islamic publications and scholarship.

Extremist Groups:

- The Supreme Guide Of the Muslim Brotherhood--This illegal political organization is dedicated to the adoption of the Shari'a law in Egypt. They have conducted numerous terrorist actions against government institutions and are known to commit acts of violence against Christians. The leader of this group, Mustafa Mashhour, was quoted in the April 3, 1997 issue of Al-Ahram as saying that Copts would not be allowed to serve in the military under Shari'a law which is a standard principle of Islamic law.
- Al-Gamaa Islamiya (Islamic Group)--This is one of Egypt's largest fundamentalist groups. Its members are dedicated to turning Egypt into an Islamic state. They seek to bring this about by destabilizing the government through attacks on Christians, public officials, and foreign tourists.
- Jihad (Holy War/Holy Struggle)--Another one of Egypt's larger fundamentalist groups. They are dedicated to turning Egypt into an Islamic state. They seek to bring this about by destabilizing the government through attacks on Christians, public officials, and foreign tourists.
- In many instances of violence against Christians, the perpetrators are acting for personal gain or acting under a mob mentality and show no political or large-scale organization.

Government:

- The constitution provides for the freedom of belief and the practice of religious rites.
- Islam was declared the state religion in 1980.
- Despite making up 6-14% of the total population, Copts hold only 5 out of 440 seats (1.13%) in the People's Assembly (Maglis El Sha'b). These representatives were
appointed by the President. No Coptic candidate has ever won an election. It is claimed that should any Coptic candidate win an election, a draw is declared. A second vote is taken with the voters being harassed and Christian voters being discouraged from voting.

- An official decree of the Ottoman Empire still in force is a 1856 law requiring non-Muslims to obtain a presidential decree to repair, remodel, or build a place of worship. A 1934 Minister of Interior Decree added ten conditions to the issuing of this decree. They include not allowing a church to be built within 100 meters of a mosque, requiring the permission of any utility official when the construction is near that utility, and requiring that none of the Muslim neighbors object to the buildings construction. It is reported that obtaining permission often takes years. During this delay, it is not uncommon for a mosque to be built near the site, causing the requested construction to be in violation of the above listed condition. This law was recently changed so those governors could issue a decree for repairs. Many see this as a further hindrance as lower officials are more easily influenced by extremist elements.

- 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.

- The government-owned television stations broadcast only 2 hours of Christian programming a year on Easter. Most of the tax-supported programming is pro-Islamic, if not anti-Christian.

- While proselytizing is not illegal, some Muslim converts to Christianity have been charged with a provision of the Penal code that prohibits the use of religion to "ignite heavenly strife, degrade any of the heavenly religions or harm national unity or social peace."

- Children with Muslim names are enrolled in Islamic classes regardless of their parent's wishes. This presents a problem because parents are hesitant to give their children traditionally Coptic names as it increases the risk they will be discriminated against. As a result, Coptic parents try to give their children a name that is used by both religious communities.

- The portion of history when the Coptic Christians were the majority (the first six centuries AD) is not taught in Egyptian public schools.

Recent Actions:

- 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," 30 kilometers east of the capital Cairo, "accompanied by two bulldozers." In a statement to ASSIST News Service (ANS) the organization stressed the troops "blocked the entrance to the compound with a large pile of stones and rubble and then they destroyed seven metres of adjoining wall." The U.S. Copts Association said that soldiers were also seen "setting fire to structures on the premises." When "those working at the centre rushed out en masse to prevent the army from coming onto their property...soldiers threw stones and bottles at the protesters," added Barnabas Fund, which has close contacts with the centre. In addition a nun was beaten by angry troops, Barnabas Fund said. During the protests, a bus reportedly ploughed into a crowd who were protecting Bishop Botros who heads the centre. "The Bishop was not among those injured, but one staff member, Kirilos Daoud, was killed," the organization explained. It reported that seven people were still in hospital, with one listed in a critical condition. "The police have tried to find the bus driver (who drove into
the crowd), but the army appears to have taken him away, Barnabas Fund reported.

There was no comment from the Egyptian government, but the U.S. Copts Association quoted army officials as saying the bus driver had simply lost control of his vehicle and denied involvement. The hour long military operation, was reportedly the ninth and most bloodiest attack against the Patmos Christian Centre, violence some have linked to growing Islamic pressure on Egypt's Christian minority. Officially soldiers from the local army unit are seeking to destroy the wall supposedly in order to conform to a new law passed in January last year 2003 which requires all buildings to be at least 100 metres from the Cairo-Suez road. However human rights watchers point out the centre's wall stands 50 metres from the road and was built ten years ago in full accordance with the law at the time, adding that other buildings in the area are much closer to the road, including some 15 mosques. The Barnabas Fund quoted Church leaders as saying the Minister of Defense, who has been opposed to the centre since 1997, ordered "extreme and conservative Muslim officers" from the local army unit to enforce the law on the Patmos Christian Centre. The centre has been serving the local community in Egypt for 15 years and is legally registered with the Egyptian authorities. It receives between 500 and 1000 visitors every day, said Barnabas Fund.


- **12/4/03 Egypt (Barnabas Fund)** Yesterday, 3 December, police decided to release the last of the 22 converts and their supporters who were arrested between 21 and 24 October in Alexandria. Up until then it seemed that police were determined to make an example of Christian convert from Islam, Mariam Girgis Makar. They even employed the services of a scholar from the Al-Azhar Islamic University in Cairo to help them bring charges concerning crimes against Islam. Mariam, who was seriously abused whilst in custody, was bailed for 1000 Egyptian pounds (£94 / $162). All of those released are now on bail, but charges against them still have not been formalised. They were originally arrested on charges related to falsifying their names on documents. A Christian who converts to Islam in Egypt can receive new ID papers with a new Muslim name within 24 hours. However there is no reciprocal arrangement for a Muslim who converts to Christianity. There are a myriad of factors making it virtually impossible for converts to follow their faith freely and safely whilst they retain an official Muslim name. Thus many converts feel compelled to apply for official papers using an assumed Christian name. Converts such as Mariam living in Egypt have recently issued a declaration calling upon the government to make three changes. Firstly they would like Muslims to be able to change their names to Christian ones, to make conversion from Islam less dangerous. Secondly they would like just treatment for Christians who once converted to Islam, but then chose to reconvert to Christianity. Such people would have received Muslim names on their conversion to Islam, but are unable to recover their old Christian names when they return to Christianity. Thirdly the converts would like the office reopened which used to administer conversions to Christianity. Conversions to Islam can be officially performed in an office at Al-Azhar University. A similar office used to be available for Muslims who wished to become Christians; it was based in the headquarters of the Coptic Church, but was closed in 1970.

- **12/02/03 Egypt (Barnabas Fund)** The Christian husband of a Muslim convert to Christianity has been apprehended trying to leave Egypt. He was then held in the custody of a notoriously cruel and vindictive security official. On Friday 28 November Egyptian Christian Bolis Rezek-Allah was arrested trying to leave the country. This was a desperate attempt to escape the mounting persecution he is suffering at the hands of the Egyptian authorities because of his marriage to Enas Badawi, a Christian converted from a Muslim background. After being apprehended at the Libyan border he was held for 12 hours, when a police database identified him, before being released. Yesterday Rezek-Allah was again detained and taken to the HQ of the Security Police in Cairo, known as
the Lazghouly Office, for interrogation. He was put in the custody of Hussein Gohar, a security officer who is notoriously vindictive towards converts from Islam and those close to them. Gohar has threatened Rezek-Allah that he will find his wife Enas (who is still being sought by police) even if she has gone abroad, and that once he has done so he will kill Enas in front of her husband. Rezek-Allah was released but police say they will continue to block him from leaving the country despite the fact that he has obtained the correct documentation to leave for Canada. Bolis Rezek-Allah was originally singled out by police persecution in the summer of 2003, when he was arrested on the charge of marrying a Muslim. In accordance with shari’a (Islamic law), it is illegal in Egypt for a Christian man to marry a Muslim woman. Enas Badawi had actually converted from Islam to Christianity before the marriage, but since the Egyptian authorities do not recognise conversions to Christianity, she was still a Muslim in the eyes of the law. Rezek-Allah was initially held in prison for three months, during which time he was also accused of helping Muslims convert to Christianity. The couple then decided to emigrate to Canada where Rezek-Allah, who is a pharmacist, hoped to find work. On 24 September Rezek-Allah was pulled off a flight bound for that country where he was due to take qualifying exams. On that occasion the police did not detain him, but have kept him under close surveillance since then and continue to prevent him from leaving the country. Please pray for the safety of Rezek and Enas Badawi.

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of Egypt that they may be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all Egyptians.
- 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 Egypt. 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 Egypt asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambassador M. Nabil Fahmy</th>
<th>Minister of Foreign Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embassy of Egypt</td>
<td>Tahrir Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3521 International Ct. NW</td>
<td>Cairo 15111, Arab Republic of Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. 20008</td>
<td>Tel: 011 20 2 574 6861 / 6862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 895-5400</td>
<td>Fax: 011 20 2 574 7822 / 7840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 244-4319</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mohammed Hosni Mubarak, President
Presidential Palace
Abdeen, Cairo, Egypt
-or
Office of the President
Al Etahadia Building
Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt
e-mail: webmaster@presidency.gov.eg
WebPage: http://www.presidency.gov.eg/

Ministry of Interior
El-Sheikh Reban Street
Cairo, Egypt

Source ("Egypt"): http://persecution.org/Countries/egypt.html
Somalia (b2)

Religious Atmosphere:

- 99.95% of this country's people are Sunni Muslims. There is a very small population of Christians.

Extremist Groups:

- ICC is not aware of any extremist groups. However, the various warlords controlling the country use violent means of imposing their rule.

Government:

- This country has no central government. There has been a Transitional National Government in place since October 2000, but it has little power. The country is actually controlled by various warlords. It is reported that the amount of religious freedom varies greatly depending on the region.
- The Republic of Somaliland and Puntland, two local governments, have made Islam the official religion and have imposed shari'a law. Due to old customs and past laws, proselytizing by non-Muslims is considered a crime. Non-Muslims are generally viewed with suspicion though Christian relief agencies are allowed to work in the country.
- There is no constitution and thus no legal protection for religious freedom.

Recent Actions:

- February 3, 2000 - Nine Ethiopian Christians were arrested in Somaliland on charges of proselytizing. They were later released and deported.
- May 1999 - Seven Ethiopian Christians were arrested in Somaliland for proselytizing.

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

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

Official Contacts: Due to political instability, no official contacts exist. The effectiveness of the following addresses are uncertain:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collective Chairmanship</th>
<th>Minister of Foreign Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Salvation Council</td>
<td>Hargeisa, Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mogadishu, Somalia</td>
<td>Tel &amp; Fax: 011 252 213 4495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nigeria (a3b2)

Religious Atmosphere:

- Fifty percent of this country's people are Christians. 40% are Muslims and 10% belong to tribal religions. Tensions are high between Christians and Muslims.

Extremist Groups:

- Violence towards Christians by Muslims has been reported. It is believed that these acts have been incited up by a group of mullahs who studied in Iran. Politicians are also known for stirring up religious passion whenever it is advantageous for them.

Government:

- While freedom of religious belief, practice, and education is generally respected, some measures have been taken in an attempt to reduce religious tension.
- The country is prohibited from adopting a national religion. However, Nigeria recently joined the Organization of Islamic Countries thus defacto declaring itself a Muslim oriented state. Nonetheless, with the rise to power of President Olusegun Obasanjo in May, this may have been greatly diminished.
- Sharia law has long been part of Nigeria’s family law. However, since late 1999 several northern states have instituted Sharia as a part of the penal system. This would allow for floggings, amputations, and beheadings for certain crimes. Though Muslims claim these laws would not apply to Christians, there is evidence that Christians have already been effected.
- Religious organizations are banned from the primary schools.
- Religious publications circulate freely, but published religious advertisements come under an occasionally enforced ban.
- Religious programming on radio and television is closely controlled by the government.
- Open-air meetings away from a place of worship are not allowed.
- Proselytizing is discouraged but not outlawed.
- Multiple parties accuse the government of restricting the entry of certain religious practitioners, especially those suspected of proselytizing.

Recent Actions:

- **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. (Compass Direct)
- **April 4, 2003** - A group of armed Muslims attacked the village of Fobur in Langtang. One woman was killed and several homes were set on fire. The same group is also believed to have burned down 30 homes in the village of Zambwar. (CSW/ANS)
- **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. (CSW/ANS)

Suggested Actions You Might Take:
Pray for the Christians of Nigeria that they may be allowed to practice and share their faith freely and without the threat of violence from the Muslim population. Pray also that the Christian message may be heard and received by all Nigerians.

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 Nigeria asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

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 Christian community in Nigeria as well as for their right to practice their faith freely.

Official Contacts:

Ambassador Jibril Aminu
Embassy of Nigeria
1333 16th St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel: (202) 986-8400
Fax: (202) 775-1385

Olusegun Obasanjo, President
Presidential Villa
State House, Aso Rock
Abuja, Nigeria
Fax: 234-95-232-138

Minister of External Relations
Private Mail Bag 130
Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria
Tel: 011 234 9 600 2096
Fax: 011 234 9 552 3025

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

Libya (a2)

Religious Atmosphere:

- 96% of this country's people are Muslim. Only 3% are Christian and these are mostly foreigners

Government:

- The current government is a totalitarian regime and does not support the freedom of religion. Even Muslim opposition groups are severely restricted.
- Missionaries are not allowed to enter the country and proselytizing is illegal. The last missionary outpost was closed in 1960.
- There is a government limit of one church per denomination per city.

Recent Actions:

- 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. (Intercessors Network)

Suggested Actions You Might Take:
• Pray for any Christians in Libya 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 Libya. 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 Libya asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts: *note: Libya does not have an embassy in the US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi</th>
<th>General People’s Committee of Foreign Liaison &amp; International Cooperation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office of the President</td>
<td>Tripoli, Great Socialist Libyan Arab People’s Jumuhuriya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripoli, Libya</td>
<td>Tel: 011 218 21 333 4061 to 4069 or 360 0034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammed al Zanati</td>
<td>Fax: 011 218 21 333 3825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Secretary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>General Peoples Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tripoli, Libya</td>
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**Morocco (a2)**

**Religious Atmosphere:**

• 99.8% of this country’s people are Sunni Muslim. Most Christians in this country are foreign nationals.

**Government:**

• Islam is the state religion.
• The practice of Christianity and Judaism are tolerated.
• Law and tradition call for severe punishments for anyone who converts from Islam.
• Proselytizing by non-Muslims is often punished even when it does not violate Articles 220 and 221 of the Penal Code, which make proselytizing a crime only if seductive or coercive means are employed. Convictions of such actions usually result in deportation.

**Recent Actions:**

• **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.
• **July 15, 1998**—A Moroccan appeals court upheld a lower court's sentence against four Western Christians that was passed on June 5, 1998. The court reportedly charged Graham Hutt (British), Serge Dechoz (French), Kelly Viinikka (Canadian), and Antero Ylikangas (Canadian) with "intent to introduce merchandise into the country without a..."
customs declaration. The men were fined $42,000, given a suspended two-month prison term, and Hutt's yacht and motorcycle were confiscated (valued at $253,000). The merchandise in question involved 1200 New Testaments and 500 Bibles and would have required a $65 customs charge had they been declared. All the men except Graham Hutt have been allowed to leave the country with no punishment. It was found that a multi-page confession that was written in Arabic and signed by the men contained other charges. The confession was signed by the men after they had been questioned for fourteen hours, been denied food and water, and were promised they would be released if they signed it, which they weren't. The statement said the signers confessed to the following: illegal entry into Morocco, being missionaries in Morocco as well as other countries, being involved in a conspiracy to subvert the Islamic faith, being involved in a conspiracy to subvert Morocco, planning to distribute materials during the night to convert Muslims, and smuggling the religious materials found in Serge Dechoz's apartment into the country.

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of Morocco that they may allowed to practice and share their faith freely and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all Moroccans.
- 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 Morocco asking them to make an inquiry into their status.
- 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 Christian community in Morocco as well as for their right to practice their faith freely.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embassy of Morocco</th>
<th>Ministere Royale des Affaires Etrangeres &amp; Cooperation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1601 21st St. NW</td>
<td>Avenue Franklin Roosevelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. 20009</td>
<td>Rabat, Royaume du Mauroc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 462-7979</td>
<td>Tel: 011 212 7 762-841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 265-0161</td>
<td>Fax: 011 212 7 764-679 or 765-508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Mohammed VI</td>
<td>M. Abderahmane El Youssoufi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palais Royal</td>
<td>Premier Ministre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabat, Morocco</td>
<td>Palais Royal, Le Mechouar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WebPage <a href="http://www.mincom.gov.ma/">http://www.mincom.gov.ma/</a></td>
<td>Rabat, Morocco</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Tunisia (a3)

Religious Atmosphere:

- 99.5% of this country’s people are Sunni Muslim. The Christian community is estimated to be around 20,000 people and is mostly comprised of nominal Catholic expatriates.

Extremist Groups:
• The government considers the An-Nahda group to be an Islamic fundamentalist group and has arrested people believed to be affiliated with the group.

Government:

• Islam is the state religion but the government permits the practice of other religions.
• Proselytizing is considered an action, which threatens "public order." Foreigners suspected of proselytizing are asked to leave the country and not allowed to return.
• Islamic religious education is mandatory in public schools.

Recent Actions:

• December 1998 – Police officials interrogated a Christian convert as well as searching his home.
• 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.

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

• Pray for the Christians of Tunisia 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>Embassy of Tunisia</th>
<th>Ministere des Affairs Etrangeres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1515 Massachusetts Ave. NW</td>
<td>Place du Gouvernement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C., 20005</td>
<td>1005 Tunis, Republique du Tunisie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 862-1850</td>
<td>Tel: 011 216 1 660-088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 862-1858</td>
<td>Fax: 011 216 1 567-382 / -386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidence de la Republique, Palais de Carthage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Carthage, Tunisia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WebPage: <a href="http://www.ministeres.tn/">http://www.ministeres.tn/</a></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source ("Tunisia"): [http://persecution.org/Countries/tunisia.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/tunisia.html)

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**Djibouti**

**Religious Atmosphere:**

• It is estimated that of the country's people, 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.

**Government:**
• Republic
• Legal system based on French civil law system, traditional practices, and Islamic law


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Algeria (b2)

Religious Atmosphere:

- Approximately 99% of the population is Sunni Muslim. The Muslims seem to be split into factions of extremist versus moderate depending on their interpretation of Islam. There are also small numbers of Christians and Jews.

Extremist Groups:

- The Armed Islamic Group (GIA)--This group seeks to install an "Islamic Republic" similar to those found in Iran and Saudi Arabia. In 1994, this group declared it intention to eliminate Jews, Christians, and polytheists from Algeria.

Government:

- The constitution establishes Islam to be the state religion and prohibits religious discrimination. The government does allow small Christian and Jewish groups to practice their faith.
- The Family Code prohibits Muslim women from marrying non-Muslim men but places no restrictions on who Muslim men can marry.
- Non-Islamic proselytizing is illegal. Conversions from Islam to another faith are not illegal, but the government does not recognize them.
- Converts from Islam often experience other security worries and legal and social problems

Recent actions:

- 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.
- October 1996 - Armed Islamic Group - Bishop Pierre Clavier of Oran was killed.
- May 20, 1996 - Armed Islamic Group - Seven French Trappist monks were beheaded after being held captive for two months.

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of Algeria that they may allowed to practice and share their faith freely and without the threat of violence from the Islamic community and in particular, militant Islamic groups. Pray also that the Christian message may be heard and received by all Algerians.
- 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 Algeria asking them to make an inquiry into their status.
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 Christian community in Algeria as well as for their right to practice their faith freely.

Official Contacts:

Embassy Of Algeria-Chancery
2118 Kalorama Rd. NW
Washington D.C. 20008
Tel: (202) 265-2800
Fax: (202) 667-2174

Ministry of Foreign Affairs:
Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres
6, rue Ibn Badran
El-Mouradia
16050 Algeria
Tel: 011 213 260 8050 / 8499
Fax: 011 213 260 5161 / 5210

President:
Abdel-Aziz Bouteflika
Presidence de la Republique
Place Mohamed Seddik Benyahya
El Mouradia
16000 Algiers, Algeria
Tel: 213-2-60-03-66
Fax: 213-2-69-15-95

Prime Minister:
Ahmed Benbitour, Premier Ministère
Palais du Gouvernement
Rue du Docteur Saadane
16000 Algiers, Algeria
Tel: 213-2-73-23-40
Fax: 213-2-71-79-27

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

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Mauritania (a3)

Religious Atmosphere:

- 99.7% of this country's people are Sunni Muslim. The small Christian population is composed mainly of expatriates.

Government:

- This nation is an Islamic Republic. Islam is the religion of the State and its people.
- Proselytizing by non-Muslims is prohibited.
- 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.

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for any Christians in Mauritania 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 Mauritania. 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 Mauritania asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embassy of Mauritania</th>
<th>Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres et du Cooperation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2129 Leroy Pl., N.W. Washington, DC 20008</td>
<td>Boite Postale 230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 232-5700</td>
<td>Nouakchott, Republique Islamique du Mauritanie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 319-2623</td>
<td>Tel: 011 222 2 52020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maaouya Ould Sidi Ahmed Taya, President</td>
<td>Fax: 011 222 2 52860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence de la Republique</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.P. 184</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nouakchott, Mauritania</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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**Middle East:**

**Iran (a1)**

**Religious Atmosphere:**

- 99% of this country's people are Shi'ite Muslims. 0.5% are Baha'i, 0.1% Farsi-speaking Jews, and 0.4% Christian. A small minority also practices Zoroastrianism. Most of the Christians are ethnic Armenians and Assyrians.

**Extremist Groups:**

- *Mojahadin-e-Khalq (MEK)*—This political opposition group has been implicated in several violent acts against Christians. As an armed group, it has been heavily oppressed by the government.

**Government:**

- The constitution claims that Islam is the official religion, in particular, the Ja'fari Shi'ism sect of Islam. Other sects of Islam and other religious minorities are under multiple restrictions.
- Members of Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Judaism are considered protected minorities and are allowed to elect representatives to fill reserved parliamentary seats.
• While members of religious minorities are supposedly granted the freedom to practice their religion and instruct their children, government interference with school administration and government harassment are common.
• All activity of religious minorities are monitored by the Ministry of Islamic Guidance.
• Laws stipulate penalties for government workers who don't follow Islamic principles and rules.
• The printing of Christian literature, including church bulletins and church newsletters, is prohibited.
• Non-Muslims are not allowed to proselytize. Muslims who convert are considered apostates and are subject to the death penalty.
• 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.
• Many pastors report being under constant surveillance. Many are also pressured into signing documents that say they will not proselytize Muslims or allow them to attend church services.

Recent Actions:

• April 2003 - The cleric-based Guardian Council has rejected a proposed bill that would make the diyeh (blood price) for a non-Muslim equal to that of a Muslim. Under shariah the diyeh is the price of a man's life measured in livestock. Currently a non-Muslim is considered to be worth only 1/12 that of a Muslim. (ANS/Barnabas Fund)

• August 29, 2002 - Mr. Mahmoud Erfani (see May 2001 below) received notice from the Canadian Embassy that his family's application for asylum had been approved despite being refused three times by the UNHCR. The Canadian government initially turned down their asylum request, but after further documentation of persecution was presented, the family was accepted. (Compass)

• May 2001 – Mr. Mahmoud Erfani and his wife, Atefeh along with their family of three daughters fled from Iran into Turkey on July 1, 1999, after being interrogated intensely in a series of one hour abductions by "savama" secret police in 1998 and being evicted from their home on their former Presbyterian church site on March 17, 1999. Christian converts from Islam, they fled Iran into Turkey when they heard of the arrest and questioning of other converts. Erfani and his family have twice been refused for United Nations refugee status, and without sponsorship from an Immigrant friendly nation like Canada or Australia, deportation is imminent. Refusal of refugee status in Turkey is common for Iranian immigrants.

• 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)

Suggested Actions You Might Take:
• Pray for the Christians of Iran 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 Iran. 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 Iran asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts: No official diplomatic ties exist between the United States and Iran. All required contacts are processed through the Swiss Embassy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran</th>
<th>Minister of Foreign Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thunstr. 68</td>
<td>Kushak Mersi Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3006 Berne, Switzerland</td>
<td>Ferdusi Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: 001-41-31-351-0801</td>
<td>Tehran 11200, Islamic Republic of Iran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: 011-41-31-351-5652</td>
<td>Tel: 011 98 21 3211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fax: 011 98 21 311 6276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seyed Mohammad Khatami, President</td>
<td>Iran Interests Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Al Shariati Ave</td>
<td>Pakistani Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c/o Islamic Republican Party</td>
<td>2209 Wisconsin Ave. NW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tehran, Iran</td>
<td>Washington, DC 20007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tel: (202) 965-4990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-mail page:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WebPage:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.gov.ir/">http://www.gov.ir/</a></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source (“Iran”): [http://persecution.org/Countries/iran.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/iran.html)

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**Saudi Arabia**

**Religious Atmosphere:**

• 93.4% of this country’s people are Muslim with 79% being Sunni, and the remaining 13.4% being Shi’ite. Hindus make up 0.7% while Buddhists make up 0.5% and non-religious/others make up 1.4%. 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.

**Extremist Groups:**
• There are reports of religious vigilante groups who harass non-Muslims. The attitude and stance of the government likely gives these groups personal justification for their activities.

Government:

• 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.
• Public and private practice of any non-Muslim religion is restricted. Non-Muslims can be arrested, lashed, or deported for any religious activity that attracts the attention of the government.
• The wearing of non-Muslim religious symbols is restricted.
• The printing, possession, importing, or distribution of any non-Muslim religious material is banned.
• In April of 2000 Prince Turki ibn Muhammad Saud Al-Kabir, the assistant undersecretary for political affairs in the Foreign Ministry, announced at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will form two human rights bodies, one independent and the other under the government. These bodies will investigate allegations of torture, monitor the implementation of human rights codes, and acquaint the public to the concept of human rights.

Recent Actions:

• August 9, 2003 - Girmaye Ambaye was deported to Eritrea (see April 27, 2003 below).
• May 16, 2003 - Pastor Endeshaw Adane Yizengaw was deported to Addis Ababa (see April 27, 2003 below). 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)
• April 27, 2003 - Pastor Endeshaw Adane Yizengaw was arrested in Jeddah because authorities had inexplicably cancelled his residency permit. Pastor Endeshaw has been questioned several times over the past two years for his Christian activities. Another member of his Ethiopian/Eritrean fellowship, Mr. Girmaye Ambaye, was arrested on March 25. Both are expected to be deported shortly. Pastor Endeshaw said, ”The reason they are sending us back is because we are Christians. We have been serving Jesus Christ here in Saudi Arabia.” (Middle East Concern/Compass Direct)
• July 2002 - All of the Ethiopian Christians being detained in Jeddah were released and deported.
• 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.
Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians in Saudi Arabia that they may be protected from harm and from being deported. Pray that the Christian message may be heard and received by all. Pray especially for the foreign Christian workers who are currently in prison for holding worship services in Saudi Arabia.
- Write a respectful letter to one or more of the government officials listed below. Express your continuing concern for the safety and wellbeing of the Christian community in Saudi Arabia. Emphasize the goal of those currently imprisoned to be released and the deportations for those charged with religious crimes to end. 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 Saudi Arabia asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Official Contact</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His Excellency Prince Bandar Bin Sultan</td>
<td>The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>601 New Hampshire Ave. NW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Washington, D.C. 20037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tel: (202) 342-3800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Fahd Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud</td>
<td>Royal Diwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Riyadh, Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tel: 966-1-488-2222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Minister of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Shariya Nasriya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Riyadh 11124, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tel: 011 966 1 441 6836 or 405 5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fax: 011 966 1 403 0159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown Prince H.R.H. Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud</td>
<td>Royal Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Riyadh, Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tel: 966-1-491-5400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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**Afghanistan (a1)**

Religious Atmosphere:

- Almost all people in this country are Muslims. They are members of the Sunni (73%) and Shi‘ite (27%) branches of Islam. Most of the Christians in the country are expatriates.

Extremist Groups:

- Taliban – Remnants of the radical Islamic group still remain in the country.

Government:

- An interim government is currently in place. More specifics will be reported as details are known.
Recent Actions:

- **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. The following NGO's have been shut down: Shelter Now Afghanistan, International Assistance Mission and Serve, and Partners in Aviation and Communications Technology. The organizations provide relief to the tens of thousands of refugees in the suffering country. The United Nations Food Program expressed concern that Afghanistan will suffer more than ever because of the crack down against Christianity.

- **September 10, 2001** – The Taliban arrested 35 Afghan IAM workers (International Assistance Mission) when they arrived at the Planning Ministry office in Kabul to receive their salary check.

- **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." Thus, anyone who converts from Islam to another religion or attempts to convert others will be executed. In addition, it was added that book store owners found guilty of selling books critical of Islam will receive a 5 year jail sentence. Most non-Muslims have fled the country, thus there are few reports of persecution against them. However, the Taliban is known to oppose all religious groups that do not adhere to the Hanifa School of Sunni Islam. Consequently, other Muslim groups, like the Shi'a, are often faced with persecution.

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of Afghanistan that they may continue to be protected from harm.
- Contact the elected national officials (Senators, Congressman etc.) for your area as well as that the Christian message may be heard and received by all. the U.S. State Department and express concern for the well being of the Christians in Afghanistan asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

Hamid Karzai is the leader of the interim government.

Source ("Afghanistan"): [http://persecution.org/Countries/afghanistan.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/afghanistan.html)

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**Yemen**

Religious Atmosphere:

- The overwhelming majority population of Yemen is Muslim. Of the Muslim groups, Zaydi Shiite Muslims and the Shafi’i Sunni Muslims, are the two largest. In addition, there are very small pockets of Christians, Jews, and Hindus.

Extremist Groups:
There are local extremists groups, but these groups have never demonstrated countrywide coordination or solidarity.

**Government:**

- Islam is the state religion.
- The government forbids conversions, requires permission for the construction of new places of worship and prohibits non-Muslims from proselytizing.
- Non-Muslim residents regularly hold services in private homes etc. without incident.

**Recent Actions:**

**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.

**Suggested Actions You Might Take:**

- Pray for the Christians of Yemen 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>Embassy of the Republic of Yemen</th>
<th>Minister of Foreign Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2600 Virginia Ave, NW Suite 705</td>
<td>Dr. Abu Bakr al-Qurbi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC 20037</td>
<td>Sanaa, Republic of Yemen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 965-4760</td>
<td>Tel: 011 967 1 202-555 / -244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 337-2017</td>
<td>Fax: 011 967 1 276-618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali Abdullah Saleh, President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanaa, Yemen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: 011 967-274-629</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source (“Yemen”): [http://persecution.org/Countries/yemen.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/yemen.html)

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**Qatar**

**Religious Atmosphere:**
- It is estimated that of the country’s people, 79.4% are Muslims, 10.5% are Christians, 7.2% Buddhist, and 2.9% are of other faiths. Qatar is almost entirely covered by desert, but there are huge oil reserves beneath the ground. The desolation of the countryside is mirrored in the hearts of Qatar’s citizens. Women live under even harsher rules – they are not allowed to drive or travel abroad without permission from male relatives.

**Government:**

- Traditional Monarch: The current Emir ousted his father in a bloodless coup in 1995. His foreign and domestic policies reflect a remarkably open and progressive attitude.
- Proselytism of Muslims is forbidden; however, expatriate believers are allowed to practice their faith. In 2000, the Emir granted land for a Christian compound to be built for the purpose of holding services.
- Criticism of the Muslim faith or the ruling family is a crime.


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**Iraq**

**Religious Atmosphere:**

- This country is dominated by Shi’ite Muslims (59.1%) and Sunni Muslims (36.1%). The Christian population is 3.3% with Catholics making up the majority.

**Extremist Groups:**

- The Protestant church in Northern Iraq has endured numerous death threats, an assassination of a clerk at a Christian bookstore, and several attacks upon the home of the pastor. It is thought that part of the provocation for these incidents originated in Iran although perpetrated by extremist Muslims from Iraq.

**Government:**

- The provisional constitution of 1968 establishes Islam as the state religion.
- The recently ousted government of Saddam Hussein brutally oppressed the Shi’ite population (the Sunni portion of the population is politically dominant) and the Kurds who live in the northern part of the country. The Assyrian Christians who also live in the North suffered numerous injustices, including forced relocations and artillery bombardments.

**Recent Actions:**

- **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. When Ziwar refused, the other man shot him in the face and chest, shouting “Allahu Akbar” (God is Great). The assassin was pursued and captured by other taxi drivers. (Middle East Concern et al.)
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. (AINA)

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of Iraq that they may be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all. Pray that they may have the chance to serve those who continue to suffer from war.

Official Contacts: None available at this time.

Source (“Iraq”): http://persecution.org/Countries/iraq.html

Turkey

Religious Atmosphere:

- 99.8% of this country's people are Muslim. There are small populations of Greek, Armenian, and Syriac Christians and Jews in various parts of the country.

Extremist groups:

- The radical Islamic group Hizbollah continues to operate in this country.

Government:

- The constitution establishes a secular government and the freedom of belief and worship.
- Religious services may only take place in designated houses of worship.
- Proselytizing is not illegal but is viewed with suspicion, especially when political overtones are suspected. Police often arrest individuals who are proselytizing for disturbing the peace or other charges both civil and political. The courts almost always drop these charges. Foreigners are often deported but are sometimes allowed to reenter the country.
- Religious instruction in state schools is mandatory for every child except for those members of religious minorities listed in the Lausanne Treaty signed in 1928.
- Due to current laws concerning historic preservation, some minority congregations are in danger of losing their building to the government if they are unable to provide adequate staff or adherents.
- The government does not fulfill any obligations to non-European refugees as outlined in the U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. It is also reported that many Iraqi and Iranian asylum seekers who claimed to be under religious persecution due to their conversion to Christianity are turned away.

Recent Actions:

- 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. (Compass Direct)
Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of Turkey that they may be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all. Pray that the recent earthquake and subsequent compassion of Christian organizations would be well received by both the government and people and would open their hearts to God’s love.
- Write a respectful letter to one or more of the government officials listed below. Express your continuing concern for the safety and wellbeing of the Christian community in Turkey. 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 Turkey asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambassador Dr. Osman Frank Logoglu</th>
<th>Ministry of Foreign Affairs:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embassy of Turkey</td>
<td>Disisleri Bakanligi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2525 Massachusetts Ave. NW</td>
<td>Yeni Hizmet Binası</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. 20008</td>
<td>06520 Belgat-Ankara, Cumhuriyeti Turkiye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 612-6700</td>
<td>Tel: 011 90 312 287 1665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 612-6744</td>
<td>Fax: 011 90 312 287 3869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed Necdet Sezer, President</td>
<td>Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumhurbaskanligi Kosku</td>
<td>Basbakanlik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cankaya, 06100 Ankara Turkey</td>
<td>06573 Ankara, Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fax 90-312-468-5026</td>
<td>Fax: 90-312-417-0476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-mail: <a href="mailto:cankaya@tccb.gov.tr">cankaya@tccb.gov.tr</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.cankaya.gov.tr">http://www.cankaya.gov.tr</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(“Turkey”): [http://persecution.org/Countries/turkey.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/turkey.html)

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**United Arab Emirates (UAE)**

**Religious Atmosphere:**

- Although there are some non-Muslims such as Christians, virtually all Emiris and the majority of foreigners living in this country are Muslim.

**Government:**

- Islam is the state religion.
- Non-Muslims may not proselytize publicly or distribute religious literature.
- Only a small number of Christian denominations are officially recognized. Other denominations may meet, but they must share facilities with the official churches.
- Naturalization of new citizens is limited to Sunni Muslims.
Recent Actions:

- **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. (Compass Direct)

- **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. (Middle East Concern)

- **November 12, 2002** - Filipino pastor Fernando Alconga was arrested by two members of the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) outside of the Al Bustan Center in Al Qusais, Dubai. Rev. Alconga was asleep in his car at the Al Bustan Center in Al Qusais, Dubai when he was approached by two men requesting Christian materials in Arabic. The previous day Rev. Alconga had given a package of information called "The God Story" to an Egyptian Arab outside of the same building. After being informed that he had no materials in Arabic, the men requested that Rev. Alconga show them his supply of materials in other languages, which he did. At that point the men identified themselves as CID agents and arrested Rev. Alconga for distributing Christian materials, which included cassette tapes, tracts, and New Testaments. (Middle East Concern)

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of the United Arab Emirates 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>Embassy of the United Arab Emirates</th>
<th>Minister of Foreign Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3522 International Ct., NW</td>
<td>Post Office Box 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC 20008</td>
<td>Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 243-2400</td>
<td>Tel: 011 971 2 652-200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 243-2432</td>
<td>Fax: 011 971 2 653-849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheikh Zaid bin Sultan Al-Nahayan</td>
<td>Sheikh Maktum ibn Rashid Al-Maktum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amiti Palace</td>
<td>PO Box 12848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Dhabi</td>
<td>Dubai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WebPage:** [http://www.fedfin.gov.ae/](http://www.fedfin.gov.ae/)

**Ministry of the Interior**

| P.O. Box 398                        |
| Abu Dhabi                            |
| United Arab Emirates                |

Source ("United Arab Emirates"): [http://persecution.org/Countries/uae.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/uae.html)

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**Kurdistan**
Religious Atmosphere:

- 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.

Extremist Groups:

- Iraqi Kurdistan Islamic Brigade

Recent Actions:

- Recent (Following is the exact copy the letter and a rough translation that has been sent to families throughout Iraq, including the Assyrians, telling them if they do not convert to Islam, they will be either raped, killed, kindapped, 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. We are the Muslim people that do not accept any mistakes. If not – and the message will not be followed 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. This message is directed to the women of this family of the two girls, and the little daughter. (Signed) The Islamic troops of Bader in Najaf

- January 13, 2003 (Following is the text of a memorandum dated Aug. 11, 2001, addressed from the "Iraqi Kurdistan Islamic Brigade" and found in an Al Qaeda guest house in November 2001 in Kabul, Afghanistan, as translated for The New York Times.) - The Islamic Brigade (Ketibe) has already succeeded around Halabja and will try to establish an Islamic Order (Shariah) all around the world. And it will succeed with the will of God. My Muslim brothers, in order to unify the Islamic fronts and realize Holy Jihad, the administrative board of Islamic Brigade has made the following statement: 1 - The Islamic Unity Movement should be called for a summit to require the organization to cut links with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. 2 - The Islamic Unity Movement and its followers will be asked to apply the Islamic Shariah. 3 - They will be asked not to stand with the seculars against the Islamic Brigade. 4 - They will be asked to act together with the Islamic Brigade. The reference to this request is in the Koran - unite in fear of God and for good will, never in enmity and sin. Therefore: A. - Expel those Jews and Christians from Kurdistan and join the way of Jihad. B. - Rule every piece of land you rule with the Islamic Shariah rule.

Source (“Kurdistan”): http://www.assyrianchristians.com/
http://home.cogeco.ca/~observer/14-1-03-memorandum-kurd-islam-qaeda.html

Oman

Religious Atmosphere:
- It is estimated that of the country’s people, 9.27% are Muslims, 3% are Hindus, and 2.5%, Christians, and 1.8% are others.

Government:

- No political parties are permitted, but there is considerable personal freedom and political stability. It is one of the most socially progressive nations in the region.
- Churches and church activities for the expatriate communities are permitted, but proselytizing Muslims is forbidden.


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**Kuwait**

**Religious Atmosphere:**

- This country is 69.9% Sunni Muslim and 20% Shi'ite Muslim. Christians make up 5.3% of the population with most of these individuals being expatriates. There are also small populations of Hindus (2%), Non-religious (1.5%), and Buddhist (1%).

Government:

- Islam is the state religion. The constitution declares that Shari'a law is “a main source of legislation.” The constitution also protects the freedom of religion.
- There are several expatriate churches which are legally recognized. These include a Catholic diocese and several Protestant congregations.
- Proselytizing by missionaries among Muslims is prohibited.
- There is a law on the books, which prohibits religious education for any religion other than Islam but this law is not rigidly enforced.

**Suggested Actions You Might Take:**

- Pray for the Christians of Kuwait 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 Kuwait. 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 Kuwait asking them to make an inquiry into their status.
Jordan

Religious Atmosphere:

- 92% of the population practices Sunni Islam. About 6% of the population is Christian, with the majority being Greek Orthodox. Two percent of the population follows other religions, including Shi'a Islam.

Extremist Groups:

- There are several Muslim groups who advocate a more Islamic government. They vary in their inclination to extremism. The Muslim Brotherhood is one group that is gaining power and popular support in Jordan.

Government:

- The constitution designates Islam as the state religion and prohibits religious discrimination.
- Christians are represented in government, media, and academia in numbers higher than their percentage in the population. 9 seats out of the 80 seats in the Lower House of Parliament are reserved for Christians.
- The government tends only to recognize only the more established religious groups. Governmental recognition is required to register property in the name of the organization. Private members may practice their religion without government recognition.
- Proselytizing by non-Muslims is illegal.
- Muslims who convert to Christianity report some government, and social, discrimination.
- Christian students in public schools are not required to take classes in Islamic instruction.

Recent Actions:
• **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. (ANS)

**Suggested Actions You Might Take:**

• Pray for the Christians of Jordan 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>Embassy of Jordan</th>
<th>Ali Abu Regheb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3504 International Drive, NW</td>
<td>Office of the Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC 20008</td>
<td>Post Office Box 1577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 966 2664</td>
<td>Amman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 966 3110</td>
<td>The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.M. King Abdallah ibn al-Hussein al-Hashimi</td>
<td>Tel: 011 962 6 644-361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Palace</td>
<td>Fax: 011 962 6 464 2520</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amman</td>
<td>Abd al-Raouf al-Rawabdeh, Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan</td>
<td>PO Box 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-mail: <a href="mailto:info@nic.gov.jo">info@nic.gov.jo</a></td>
<td>352 Amman, Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WebPage: <a href="http://www.nic.gov.jo/">http://www.nic.gov.jo/</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

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**Syria**

**Religious Atmosphere:**

• Sunni Muslims make up approximately 74% of the population while other Muslim sects, such as Shi'as, Druze, Alawites, Ismailis and Yazidis, make up 16% of the population. About 10% of the population is Christian, with most of these being Orthodox and Uniate churches of different confessions. Small numbers of Protestants and Jews also reside in the country.

**Extremist Groups:**

• Certain Islamic and Palestinian groups like the Islamic Brotherhood and Liberation Party are active in the country.

**Government:**

• The constitution provides for the freedom of religion.
• There is no state religion, but the President must be a Muslim.
• Religious groups and sects must register with the government. All fundraising activities are monitored. A group must obtain a permit to hold any meeting other than its regular worship service. It has been reported that the government attempts to control most places of worship and monitors sermons and worship services.
• Proselytizing is not illegal, but it is discouraged.
• Religious instruction is mandatory in schools. The instruction must come from government- approved teachers and curriculum.
Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of Syria 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 wellbeing of the Christian community in Syria. 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 Syria asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embassy of Syria</th>
<th>Minister of Foreign Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2215 Wyoming Avenue NW</td>
<td>Shariya Ishbilya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. 20008</td>
<td>Abu Rummana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 232-6313</td>
<td>Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 234-9548</td>
<td>Tel: 011 963 11 333 1200 / 1201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhammad Mustafa Miru, Prime Minister</td>
<td>Fax: 011 963 11 331 0134 or 332 0686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Prime Minister</td>
<td>Ministry of the Interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damascus, Syria</td>
<td>Marjeh Circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bashar al-Asad, President</td>
<td>Damascus, Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the President</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


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**Bahrain**

**Religious Atmosphere:**

- It is estimated that of the country’s people, 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.

**Government:**

- Constitutional hereditary monarchy
- Legal system based on based on Islamic law and English common law

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 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.

• 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:

Embassy of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
2222 S St., NW
Washington, DC 20008
Tel: 202-332-6416
Fax: 202-332-4923

Sisavat Keobounphan, Prime Minister
Office of the Chairman
Council of Ministers
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Kanthay Siphandon, President
Office of the President
Viangchan, Laos
Minister of Foreign Affairs
That Lunag Road
Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic
Tel: 011 856 21 414-008
Fax: 011 856 21 414-009
Ministry of Internal Affairs
Mahosot Road
Viangchan, Laos

Source (“Laos”): 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 | His Excellency Phan Van Khai, Prime Minister |
| 20 Waterside Plaza | 1 Hoang Hoa Tham Street |
| New York, N.Y. 10010 | Hanoi, Vietnam |
| Tel: (212) 679-3779; (212) 685-8001 | Le Kha Phieu, General Secretary |
| Fax: (212) 686-8534 | Council of Ministers |
| Ambassador Tran Duc Luong | Bac Thao, Hanoi Vietnam |
| Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam | Minister of Foreign Affairs |
| 1233 20th Street NW, Suite 400 | 1, Ton Than Dan |
| Washington, DC 20036 | Hanoi, Cong Hoa Xa Hoi Chu Nghia Viet Nam |
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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 Drupka 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.
- Drupka 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:

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<thead>
<tr>
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<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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<td>Fax: 212-826-2998</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source (“Bhutan”): [http://persecution.org/Countries/bhutan.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/bhutan.html)

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**Myanmar, a/k/a Burma (a1)**
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambassador U Linn Myaing</th>
<th>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</th>
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<td>Fax: (202) 332-9046</td>
<td>Ministry of Home Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.E. General Than Shwe</td>
<td>Rangoon Division General</td>
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<td>Chairman, State Peace and Development Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Signal Pagoda Road</td>
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<td>Rangoon, Myanmar</td>
<td>Kyauktada Township, Rangoon, Myanmar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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 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. 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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambassador Yang Jiechi</th>
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<th>Jiang Zemin Guojia Zhuxi</th>
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<tr>
<td>President of the People's Republic of China</td>
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<td>Beijing, People’s Republic of China</td>
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<th>Zhu Rongji</th>
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<th>Qiao Shi Weiyuanzhang</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chairman, National People's Congress</td>
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<td>Quanguo renmmin Daibiao Dahui</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great Hall of the People</td>
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<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
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</table>

| Governor, Hebei Provincial People's Government |
| Shijiazhuangshi |
| Hebei Sheng |
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| Governor, Henan Provincial People's Government |
| Zhengzhoushi |
| Henansheng, People’s Republic of China |

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 Ithwan-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 citizen 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 go 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:**

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<tr>
<th>Ambassador Ashraf Jehangir Qazi</th>
<th>Minister of Foreign Affairs</th>
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</table>

| General Pervez Musharraf        |                             |
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Source ("Pakistan"): [http://persecution.org/Countries/pakistan.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/pakistan.html)

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**Comoros**
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 Mremenin 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:

| Azali Assoumani, President          | Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres et Cooperation |
| Office of the President             | Boîte Postale 482                                   |
| B.P. 421                           | Moroni, Republique Islamique Federale du Comoros    |
| Moroni, Comoros                     | Tel: 011 269 73 2306                                 |
| Azali Assoumani (same as above)     | Fax: 011 269 73 2108                                 |
| Premier                             |                                                        |
| Mahdi, Moroni, Comoros              |                                                        |

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:

Ambassador Shavkat Hamrakulov  
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1746 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington DC 20036  
United States  
Tel: (202) 887-5300  
Fax: (202) 293-6804  
emb@uzbekistan.org  
Islam Karimov, President  
Office of the President  
Akhnababayeva 1  
Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
Telephone 007-371-1395404  
Fax 007-371-1395325  
e-mail: uzinfo@uzinfo.gov.uz  
http://www.gov.uz/

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Main Punishment Administration,  
Karakalpakstan Autonomous Republic,  
742000 Nukus, UYA-64/IZ-9, Uzbekistan  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Ulytsya Gogolya #87  
700047 Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan  
Tel: 011 7 3712 336-475  
Fax: 011 7 3712 394-348  
Utkir Sultanov, Prime Minister  
Office of the Cabinet Ministers  
Government House  
700008 Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Source (“Uzbekistan”): http://persecution.org/Countries/uzbekistan.html

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 Farkhadow 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>927 15th St. NW, Suite 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington D.C. 20005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 842-0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 842-0004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heydar Aliyev, President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize Levmontova 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baku, Azerbaijan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: 994-12-920625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-mail: <a href="mailto:president@gov.az">president@gov.az</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WebPage: <a href="http://www.president.az">http://www.president.az</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minister of Foreign Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ghanjilar meydani #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>370004 Baku, Azerbaijani Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: 011 994 12 933-012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: 011 994 12 935-643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artur Tair oghlu Rasizade, Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mermontov Str 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>370066 Baku, Azerbaijan</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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3520 International Court, NW</td>
<td>Prime Minister's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC 20008</td>
<td>Istana Nurul Iman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: 202-237-1838</td>
<td>Bandar Seri Begawan BA 1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: 202-885-0560</td>
<td>Tel: 011-673-2-229988</td>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embassy of India</td>
<td>Abdul Kalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2107 Massachusetts Ave. NW</td>
<td>Rashtrapati Bhavan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington D.C. 20008</td>
<td>New Delhi 110004</td>
</tr>
<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>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>011 91 11 3017824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Representative of India to the UN</td>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>235 East 43rd Street</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embassy of Sri Lanka</th>
<th>Permanent Representative of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the United Nations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embassy of Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Permanent Representative of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2148 Wyoming Ave. NW</td>
<td>630 Third Avenue, 20th Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC 20008</td>
<td>New York, N.Y. 10017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 483-4025</td>
<td>Telephone: 212-986-7040, 7041, 7042, 7043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 232-7181</td>
<td>Fax: 212-986-1838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:srilanka@un.int">srilanka@un.int</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombo</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
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<td>Fax: 011 94 1 446091</td>
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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 fare 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>
<th>Fax</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambassador Soemadi Brotodiningrat</td>
<td>Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia</td>
<td>(202) 775-5200</td>
<td>(202) 775-5365</td>
</tr>
<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 Religious Affairs</td>
<td>Jl. Lapangan Banteng Barat No. 3-4</td>
<td>011 62 21 360-244</td>
<td>011 62 21 361-720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Jl. Pejambon No. 6</td>
<td>011 62 21 360-720</td>
<td>011 62 21 361-720</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Prime Minister</td>
<td>820 Second Ave. Suite 17B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singha Durbar</td>
<td>New York, NY 10017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathmandu, NEPAL</td>
<td>Tel: (212) 370-3988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: 011-977-1-227286</td>
<td>Fax: (212) 953-2038</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Embassy of Nepal

| 2131 Leroy Place NW                         | 820 Second Ave. Suite 17B                                     |
| Washington, DC 20008                       | New York, NY 10017                                            |
| Tel: (202) 667-4550                         | Tel: (212) 370-3988                                            |
| Fax: (202) 667-5534                         | Fax: (212) 953-2038                                            |

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

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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 ransom. (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
Christians in Bangladesh asking them to make an inquiry into the status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permanent Representative of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations</th>
<th>Embassy of Bangladesh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>821 UN Plaza, 8th floor</td>
<td>3510 International Dr. NW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York, NY 10017</td>
<td>Washington, DC 20008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (212) 867-3434/3435</td>
<td>Tel: (202) 244-0183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (212) 972-4038</td>
<td>Fax: (202) 244-5366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:bangladesh@un.int">bangladesh@un.int</a></td>
<td>Honorble Prime Minister of Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Khaleda Zia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prime Minister’s Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taigaon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PABX-888160-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: 011-880-2-815100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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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 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. (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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embassy of Malaysia</th>
<th>Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2401 Massachusetts Ave. N.W.</td>
<td>Prime Minister of Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC 20008</td>
<td>Prime Minister's Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 328-2700</td>
<td>Blok Utama, Tingkat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United</td>
<td>No. 1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nations</td>
<td>Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313 E. 43rd St.</td>
<td>Persekutuan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York, NY 10017</td>
<td>62502 Putrajaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (212) 986-6310</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (212) 490-8576</td>
<td>Tel: 011-603-8888-8000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Malaysia@un.int">Malaysia@un.int</a></td>
<td>Fax: 011-603-8888-3424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:ppm@smpe.jpm.my">ppm@smpe.jpm.my</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source ("Malaysia"): [http://persecution.org/Countries/malaysia.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/malaysia.html)

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**South America:**
Cuba

Religious Atmosphere:

- 41.1% of this country’s people are Catholic, though only 2% attend mass. 30.9% are non-religious and 25% practice some kind of spiritism. Only 2.82% of the country is Protestant but they are growing at an annual rate of 6.1%.

Government:

- This government maintains an active opposition to house churches, which have grown dramatically since petroleum for driving to traditional churches is no longer available.
- Christian workers entering the country often have items or materials confiscated by customs officials and are rarely allowed to enter if the true reasons for their coming is known.
- Recent actions by Fidel Castro and his government expressing acceptance of first the Catholic Church and then Protestants give reason for guarded optimism concerning the future of religious liberty in Cuba.

Recent Actions:

- 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. The pastor was then taken to Ciego de Avila Province while his wife and children were able to stay with friends and relatives in Santi Spiritus.

- September 2002 - Juan Carols Gonzalez-Leiva (see March 5, 2002 below) remains imprisoned under charges of "acts of disrespect toward Fidel Castro" and "public disorder." Mr. Gonzalez has been transferred to the State Security Facility in Holguin, which makes it difficult for his family to visit. He also reports psychological torture and the withholding of medical treatment. Gonzalez could be sentenced to 6 years in prison. (ANS/CWS)

- 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)

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of Cuba that they may be protected from harm, that religious liberty would continue to increase, and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all. Pray that the Cuban government would be more and more open to the spirit and truth of true Christianity.
Write a respectful letter to one or more of the government officials listed below. Congratulate them on the recent allowances of religious expression in Cuba. Express your continuing concern for the safety and well being of the Christian community there.

Official Contacts: There are currently no official diplomatic ties between the U.S. and Cuba.

Principal Officer Dagoberto Rodriguez Barrera  
Cuban Interests Section  
Embassy of Switzerland  
2630 16th St. NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
Tel: (202) 797-8518

Fidel Castro Ruz, President  
Palacio de la Revolucion  
Havana, Cuba  
WebPage: http://www.cubaweb.cu/

Ministerio de las Relaciones Extranjeros  
Calzada #360  
e/ G Y H  
Vedado, La Habana, Republica de Cuba  
Tel: 011 53 7 312-206 / 311-628  
Fax: 011 53 7 333-085

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

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**Colombia**

**Religious Atmosphere:**

- 93.1% of this country's people claim to be Catholic but actual mass attendance is much lower. There is also a small Protestant population and an even smaller group of tribal adherents and non-religious individuals. Protestants have traditionally felt disenfranchised by the politically and socially dominant Catholic Church. The "Law of Religious Freedom" passed in 1995 has helped change this sentiment. Tensions however, seem to be more due to actions by the extremist groups mentioned below who exploit churches and their members for high profile exposure.

**Extremist Groups:**

- Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) - This armed, leftist group is dedicated to establishing a more socialist government. They often engage in narcotics traffic to raise funds for their cause. They often oppose missionary activity as it discourages rural individuals' participation with their activities and is not in line with their socialist philosophies.
- National Liberation Army (ELN) - Similar to the group above, they also operate in rural or undeveloped areas and are weary of an individual who promotes peace, non-violence, and loyalty to any authority other than themselves.

**Government:**

- The constitution does provide for complete religious freedom.
- Roman Catholic instruction in state schools is no longer mandatory.
- A law on the freedom of cults enables new religious groups to be recognized as religious entities.
The previously mentioned 1995 "Law of Religious Freedom" seems to be elevating Protestant evangelicals to a status closer to that of Catholics.

Recent Actions:

- **May 6, 2003** - A Christian pastor and three others were murdered inside the Sardis Church in the town of Tierralta, Cordoba department. About 25 unidentified men entered the church and brutally murdered 80-year-old Pastor Miguel Mariano Posada and church treasurer Ana Berenice Girardo Velásquez by slitting their throats. Natividad Blandón and 17-year-old Julio Torres, were shot to death by the armed group, according to El País newspaper. (Compass/VOM)

- **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. (BBC)

- **January 27, 2003** - Unidentified uniformed men stopped a public bus, singled out Rev. Jose Juan Lozada Corteza and shot him in the head. Rev. Lozada was the pastor of the Evangelical Christian Church of San Antonio. At least 72 Protestant pastors have been killed by armed insurgents since 1985. (Compass)

Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for the Christians of Colombia 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. Congratulate them on recent motions to elevate Protestant evangelical Christianity to a level equal to that of Catholicism. Express your continuing concern for the safety and well being of the Protestant Christian community as well as the Catholic community in Colombia. Encourage them to continue to take steps to ensure the protection and freedom of all Colombians 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 Colombia asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambassador Luis Alberto Moreno Mejia</th>
<th>Ministerio de las Relaciones Extranjeros</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embassy of Colombia-Chancery</td>
<td>Carrera 10 #5/51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2118 Leroy Pl. NW</td>
<td>Palacio San Carlos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. 20008</td>
<td>Bogota, Republica de Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 387-8338</td>
<td>Tel: 011 57 1 282 7811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 232-8643</td>
<td>Fax: 011 57 1 341 6777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alvaro Uribe Velez, Presidente</td>
<td>Ministerio del Interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casa de Narino, Carrera 8a. 7-26</td>
<td>Cra. 8 No. 8-09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the President</td>
<td>Palacio Echeverry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Fe de Bogota</td>
<td>Santa Fe de Bogota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: 011 57 1 248-3300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WebPage: <a href="http://www.presidencia.gov.co">http://www.presidencia.gov.co</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:auribe@presidencia.gov.co">auribe@presidencia.gov.co</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source ("Colombia"): [http://persecution.org/Countries/colombia.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/colombia.html)
Mexico (Chiapas)

Religious Atmosphere:

- Since the advent of evangelical Christianity in the Chiapas Highlands in the 1960s, caciques, or powerful community chieftains, have used violent tactics to discourage its spread 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. In three decades, only six caciques and their accomplices have been punished for these crimes. Caciques practice a “traditionalist” semi-pagan mix of Roman Catholic beliefs and ancient Mayan religion.

Recent Actions:

- **Jan. 9, 2004** - Christians around the world are applauding the decision of Mexican authorities to conduct a judicial review of the conviction and sentencing of 76 Tzotzil-speaking peasant farmers imprisoned for the past six years in Chiapas. Among the prisoners are 34 evangelical Christians, some of them pastors and lay leaders in local congregations affiliated with the Presbyterian, Assemblies of God and Pentecostal churches. Some observers believe the authorities singled out evangelicals because they knew them to be peaceable citizens who would offer little resistance to arrest. “What may seem like a random step is, I believe, the result of thousands of believers who have been praying for many years for justice to be done,” Luna said. Dr. Carl Moeller, President of Open Doors USA, added: “This is just tremendous news…praise the Lord! I know people around the country have been praying for and writing the prisoners and their families. We need to continue to remember them in prayer as the judicial process continues.”

- **October 28, 2003** (Compass) - 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. Diaz 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.

Source (“Mexico (Chiapas)“): [http://www.opendoorsusa.org](http://www.opendoorsusa.org)

Europe:
Russia (a3)

Religious Atmosphere:

- This country has a large (55%) Orthodox population with small (<1%) populations of Protestant and Catholics. There is also a sizeable population of non-religious individuals (32.7%) and Muslims (8.7%). The Orthodox Church in conjunction with the Russian government seems to be the primary source of persecution here as new laws and underhanded political/legal tactics have been employed to purge Russia of "unwanted" foreign religious groups.

Extremist Groups:

- The Orthodox Church has been a strong supporter of any legislation that would slow the growth of new religious groups. Orthodox clergy are also known to express their disdain for new religious groups through personal contacts.
- There are also occasional reports of actions by nationalistic Russian groups and individuals against foreign religious groups.

Government:

- The most recent constitution provides for the freedom of religion and the separation of church and state.
- The 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations imposes registration requirements on religious groups. The law requires that all religious groups re-register with local authorities by 1999 or lose their legal status. The original law states that groups need to have been in existence in Russia for 15 years to obtain full legal status. This law does not effect Orthodox, Jewish, Islamic, or Buddhist believers as it does the new Protestant and Pentecostal groups that have come into Russia in the past eight years. President Yeltsin encouraged local authorities to ignore this requirement. Local authorities still have considerable power to deny registration under the law. An organization that is not registered or does not have legal status cannot own property or have a bank account.
- As of 1997, about 25% of Russia's 89 regional governments had passed laws which restricted the activities of religious groups.
- Religious workers can only obtain three-month visas and renewals of the visas must take place at a Russian Embassy or consulate abroad. Local authorities have, at times, refused to register the passport of missionaries, not allowing the missionaries to operate in the area under their jurisdiction.

Recent Actions:

- **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. Students of the school have been allowed to attend seminars at the adjacent Centre of the Living God Church but cannot reside on school property. Supporters of the school say the authorities have been looking for an excuse to close it down. (F-18 News)
- **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. (Keston)
Suggested Actions You Might Take:

- Pray for all Christians of Russia 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 non-Orthodox Christian communities in Russia. 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. Note that letters addressed to officials in Russia should be translated into Russian using Cyrillic characters with the address written the same in order for it to be properly delivered.
- 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 Russia asking them to make an inquiry into their status.

Official Contacts: According to the source of the Russia based addresses listed below, mail will not reach its destination unless the address is written in Cyrillic characters. Fax and email are advised.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambassador Yuriy Viktorovich Ushakov</th>
<th>Minister of Foreign Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embassy of the Russian Federation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2650 Wisconsin Avenue NW</td>
<td>32, Smolenskaya-Sennaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. 20007</td>
<td>121000 Moscow, Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 298-5700</td>
<td>Tel: 011 7 095 244 3448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (202) 298-5735</td>
<td>Fax: 011 7 095 244 3276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vladimir Putin, President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kremlin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moscow, Russia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-mail: <a href="mailto:president@gov.ru">president@gov.ru</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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Belarus

Religious Atmosphere:

- It is estimated that of the country's people, 78.7% are Christians, 20.3% are non-Religious and other, and 1% Jewish. Belarus became an independent state in 1991, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Despite independence, 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.

Government:
Republic
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.