

International Christian Concern's

Hall of Shame Report for Year 2009



*The World's Ten Worst
Persecutors of Christians*

PERSECUTION.org
INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONCERN

The Hall of Shame 2010

The World's Ten Worst Persecutors of Christians

INTRODUCTION

International Christian Concern (ICC) exists to raise awareness of Christian persecution throughout the world. ICC's website, www.persecution.org, is updated daily with the latest reports of anti-Christian violence and offers easy accessibility to current Christian persecution news and sources. In our annual "Hall of Shame" report, we seek to give an accurate view of the top ten countries that have executed the most severe brutality towards Christians in 2009, direct attention to the plight of persecuted Christians, and to publicly condemn their perpetrators. For each country in this report, ICC analyzes the historical, political, cultural and religious conditions, and presents a personal testimony from a Christian who was or is being persecuted.

Persecution of Christians is a common occurrence throughout the world, but is rarely reported by the mainstream media. Due to their faith, Christians endure harassment, discrimination, deportation, imprisonment, rape, torture, murder and other forms of persecution. This trend of Christian persecution continues on an alarming scale while Communist and former Communist states are becoming less antagonistic towards Christianity (North Korea being the exception). Concurrently, persecution continues to increase in Islamic countries.

Please note that undertaking the creation of a report such as this does not come without great difficulty. It is impossible to fully determine the severity of Christian suffering throughout the world, and it is an injustice to weigh the persecution of one group of believers over another. In addition, ranking these countries is an exercise in subjectivity. For that reason, this year we did not try and rank the countries but rather presented them as a group.

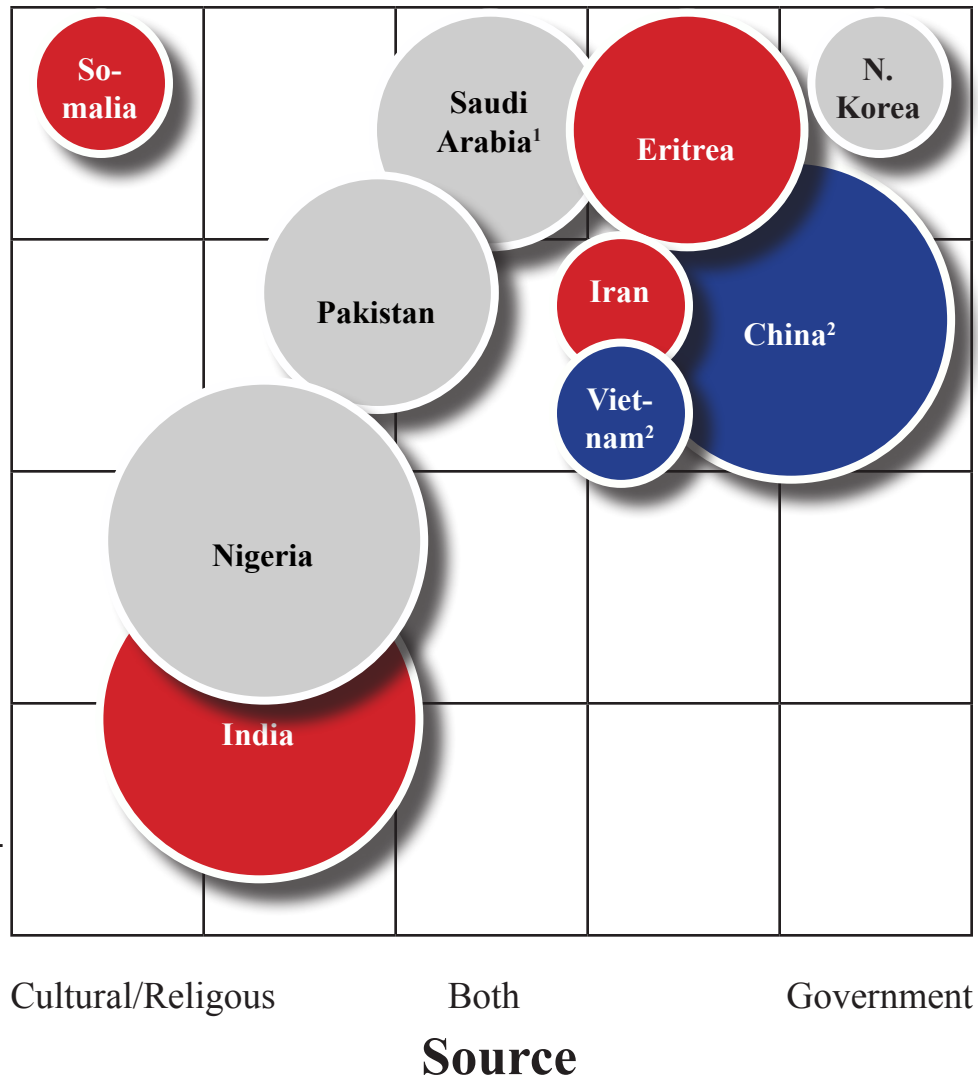
The Hall of Shame is open for debate and is meant as a rough guide rather than the final word on the state of Christian persecution. However, ICC has made every attempt to release a report that is accurate and fair to all persecuted Christians, based upon hundreds of news sources and ICC in-country representatives. Although countries such as Egypt, Iraq, Uzbekistan and the Maldives have been omitted from this year's list of top persecutors, ICC continues to monitor the severe persecution faced by Christians within their borders. However, after review, you will understand why each country listed belongs in 2010's Hall of Shame.

Sincerely,

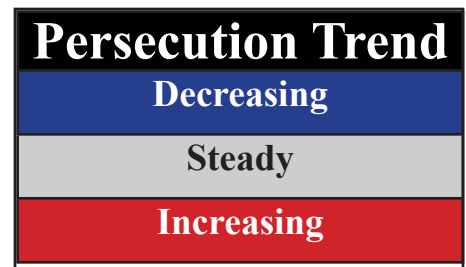
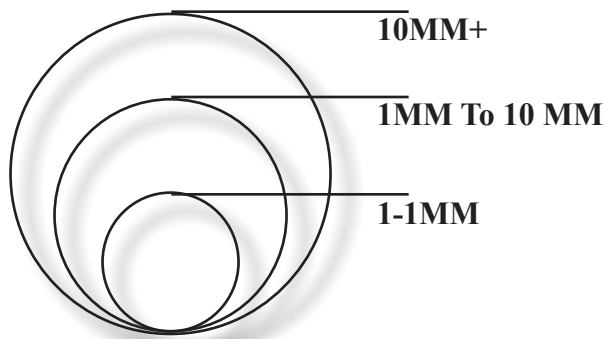
Jeff King

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- 4. Martyrdom
- 3. Torture/Rape
- 2. Imprisonment
- 1. Physical Attacks and/or Deportation, Discrimination



Scope:
of Christians affected



Notes:

1 Note that Saudi Arabia is a unique case and should not be compared to other countries listed among the top persecutors of Christians. While the Saudi government suppresses its Christian minority and has no intention to establish religious tolerance, this alone does not deem it to be among the top ten worst persecutors. Saudi Arabia earns its listing for its role in financing external terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, and exporting Wahhabi Islamic extremism to madrassas and mosques worldwide.

2 In China and Vietnam, persecution continues at a level that bids these countries to remain on the top ten list. However, note that although persecution is prevalent, it has declined significantly over the years, and ICC anticipates that this decrease will gradually continue.

METHODOLOGY

This year we decided to present the countries in the top ten as a whole rather than to rank them from 1 to 10. Despite wrestling through different methodologies in an effort to bring more intellectual rigor to the process, we have found it to be an entirely subjective exercise in attempting to rank each country.

We are therefore presenting the countries in graph form with the variables being: source of persecution, intensity, scope and trend. The graph grants the opportunity to view all countries simultaneously, allowing you to see the whole, as well as to evaluate source, intensity, scope and trend of persecution in individual countries.

Notes in regards to the variables:

Source (of persecution): Distinguishes between the government or societal/religious actors (or a combination) being the primary source. Cultural/religious persecution arises from individuals or groups who are not necessarily sanctioned by the government. However, their ability to operate within a country is often due to the government's lack of a strong desire to promote religious freedom for minorities, or even tacit approval of the persecution. ICC considers this a significant problem in countries such as India, Pakistan and Somalia. The remaining countries listed have government policies that are specifically designed to root out Christianity. On account that official governmental persecution is usually all-encompassing, brutal and efficient, ICC considers countries where government-sanctioned persecution is prevalent to be more severe than other countries.

Intensity: Persecution can be as subtle as requiring a citizen's religious affiliation to be displayed on their official identification card, or as overt as execution simply for possessing a Bible. Countries where Christians are being imprisoned, tortured, and killed for their faith have a more serious problem than countries where Christians do not have the same legal status as Muslims.

Scope: The size of a country's circle indicates the size of the affected group of Christians in a given country.

Trend: The color of each country's circle indicates the trend of persecution, whether persecution is increasing, stable, or declining. Please use the graph's key for further clarification.

It is important to note that a lack of published cases of persecution does not necessarily indicate a more relaxed condition for Christians. Christians are often unwilling to report cases of persecution committed against them from fear that they will attract additional persecution or expose their Christian affiliation to the government. In addition, many of the countries listed here do not have an independent press to report on their behalf, and some countries are considered too dangerous for foreign press to visit. The stories listed in the report below are a mere fraction of the total cases of persecution.

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Eritrea

Official Name: **State of Eritrea**

Head of State: **President Isaias Afworki**

Government: **Transitional**

Religious Majority: **Muslim**

Total Population: **5,647,168**

Christian Population: **2,800,000**



OVERVIEW

Eritrea became independent from Ethiopia in 1993. The People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), the country's ruling party, has excluded all other political parties, thereby monopolizing power within the country. PFDJ is a communist regime which fiercely restricts religious freedom and controls nearly every aspect of society with an iron hand. Freedom of press and other basic human rights are also restricted.

As part of its oppressive policies, on May 21, 2002, Eritrea issued a decree which effectively outlawed all religious organizations other than the Eritrean Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church and Islam. All religious organizations, including several evangelical churches, were forced underground and many of their members were imprisoned.

Even members of government-registered churches are not immune from persecution. Several leading members of the Eritrean Orthodox Church are currently imprisoned, including the Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church, Abune Antonios, who has been under house arrest for resisting government interference at a church service.

Christians in underground churches are forced to meet in private homes. When the government finds such meetings, all Christians present are sent to prison. Currently, there are more than 3,000 Christians imprisoned in Eritrea. Many are kept in metal shipping containers, military barracks and prison cells under inhumane conditions. Many Christians have been paralyzed or killed in prison due to torture and lack of medical attention. Imprisoned believers are given minimal food and water. Eritrean Christians have remained imprisoned for years without ever having been convicted for any crime before a court of law. Eritrea is seldom accessible by foreign media or the international community, therefore most cases of persecution are unknown.

Primary Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Government	2,800,000	4	Increase

THEIR STORIES

On December 5, 2009, at 4 pm local time, a group of approximately 30 elderly Christian women were praying at a house in Asmara, the capital city of Eritrea. They gathered at a house because they were not allowed to worship at their home church, Faith Mission Church, one of more than a dozen evangelical churches closed by authorities of Eritrea in 2002.

Eritrean security forces invaded the prayer meeting and arrested all thirty women, taking them to a police station in Asmara.

ICC was informed of the arrest on December 7, and immediately exposed the problem by issuing a press release that very day. Mainstream media outlets BBC and Reuters picked up the story. Eritrea's Information Minister Ali Abdu denied the news of the imprisonment when interviewed by Reuters concerning ICC's report.

Due to the international media attention that the case attracted, Eritrean officials were unable to continue to deny the detention. On December 15, at about 3:30 pm local time, officials of Eritrea released all thirty women.

Although these elderly women were released, many Eritrean Christians have experienced a much different fate. Thousands of Christians are still imprisoned and their plight has not been reported by mainstream media. For example, Yemane Kahasay Andom, 43, was a member of Kale-Hiwot Church, an underground evangelical church in Eritrea. In 2008, he was detained by Eritrean authorities for the 'crime' of practicing his Christian faith.

Eritrean officials detained Yemane at a military confinement center where he was tortured and denied medical attention. Due to the harsh prison conditions, he caught malaria.

The malaria, coupled with the torture Yemane suffered, weakened his body, until he died on July 23. He was the third Christian known to have died in an Eritrean prison in 2009.

Pakistan

Official Name: **Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

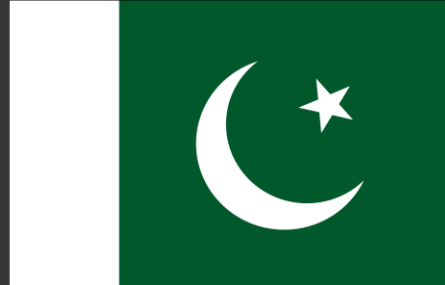
Head of State: **President Asif Ali Zardari**

Government: **Federal Republic**

Religious Majority: **Muslim**

Total Population: **176,242,949**

Christian Population: **2,600,000 (some estimate at 8,800,000)**



OVERVIEW

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan was founded in 1947, carved out from British India when millions of Indian Muslims fled to Pakistan following communal riots. The country was designated to be a homeland to the Muslims of British India and now contains the second largest population of Muslims in the world. Christians are a minority in Pakistan, making up roughly 1.6% of the population.

Primary Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Islamic Radicals/ Government	2.6 – 8.8 million	3	Steady

In the past two years, Pakistan, like Afghanistan, has become a hotspot for terrorism and a staging ground for Al-Qaeda. Islamic radicals have enacted relentless and ongoing suicide bombing attacks in Pakistani cities, resulting in the murder of thousands of innocent civilians. United States intelligence and military officials believe that Osama Bin Laden and top Al-Qaeda leaders are hiding within Pakistan's borders. In keeping with the gradual ascension of Islamic insurgency, sectarian violence targeting Christians and overall persecution is also rising dramatically.

Pakistani laws, most notably the blasphemy laws, serve to instigate attacks against Christians and others in the country. According to the country's blasphemy laws, blaspheming the name of the Islamic prophet Muhammad or desecrating the Quran is punishable by the death penalty or life imprisonment.

Section 295-C of the Penal Code applies a death sentence to anyone who defiles the name of Islam's prophet Muhammad. This law only requires the testimony of four Muslims for a conviction, and is one of many that attempt to protect "religion," but in reality only protect Islam. A lack of equality in law enforcement creates an environment where Muslims feel free to use these laws to entangle religious minorities in hopeless legal battles for their own personal gain. Excerpts of the Pakistan Penal Code are included as follows:

295-B. Defiling, etc., of Holy Quran : Whoever willfully defiles, damages or desecrates a copy of the Holy Qur'an or of an extract therefrom or uses it in any derogatory manner or for any unlawful purpose shall be punishable with imprisonment for life.

Sec. 295-B added by P.P.C. (Amendment) Ordinance, I of 1982.

295-C. Use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet: Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine.

Muslim mobs often execute attacks against Christians as an act of revenge toward Christians who are suspected or falsely accused of blasphemy. In July 2009, Muslim mobs instigated attacks in Kasur, southeast of Lahore, resulting in 100 Christian homes burned down and over a dozen Christians injured, including two women who were attacked with acid.

In another more violent attack against Christians in late July and early August, 11 Christians were killed, three churches and over 100 Christian homes were burned down, and approximately 100 homes were looted by Muslim mobs who attacked Christians in Gojra and Korian village. Major attacks against Christians in Pakistan have continued during the reporting period.

THEIR STORIES

The most horrifying part of the violence in Gojra was the burning of seven members of Hameed Masih. Mr. Masih, 50, a Christian man was a well-known painter in Gojra. Masih had just arrived home from work when a Muslim mob surrounded his house.

The Muslim mob approached the house of Masih's family, threatening to kill them. The family locked the front door and barricaded themselves in a back room. The mob, unable to reach the family, set fire to the home and proceeded to their next target.

Ikhlaq Hammed, who escaped to tell the story, reported that the Muslims threatened them by saying, "*if you come out, we'll kill you.*"

However, soon after the warning, Masih's family saw smoke rising from under the door and rushed to escape; but it was too late. The inferno engulfed their home. Seven members of the family were burned alive. Two children: Musa, 6, and Umayya, 13, were among the dead. The charred bodies were later discovered in the rubble of the burned house.

Iran

Official Name: **Islamic Republic of Iran**

Head of State: **President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad**

Government: **Islamic Republic**

Religious Majority: **Shi'a Muslim**

Total Population: **66,429,284 (July 2009; CIA World Fact Book)**

Christian Population: **Some estimates at 1,000,000 (300,000 registered; UNHCR)**



OVERVIEW

Twenty years ago, Christian persecution in Iran rose suddenly along with the Islamic Revolution of 1979, reaching a peak in the 1990's when several prominent church leaders were seized and executed. In 2009, Iran again witnessed extreme tactics of imprisonment, torture and rape used by the Iranian government in acts to terrorize and reduce the number of Christians within its borders. It is no surprise that a totalitarian Islamic dictatorship would view Christianity as a threat to its religious and political authoritarianism.

Primary Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Government	300,000 – 1,000,000	3.5	Increase

It is Iran's strategy to eliminate any potential challenge to its sovereignty, and to intimidate its religious and political opponents. However, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's tyrannical regime *is* being challenged. Iranians are on the street in mass (as seen during the June elections, National Student Day, and the Shi'ite holy day of Ashura) protesting Islamic coercion, and shouting, "Death to the dictator!" On the brink of potential revolution, the Iranian reformist Green Movement, a coalition of agitated voices represented by the official color of movement leader Mir Hossein Mousavi, is demanding democratic revival, religious freedom and government regeneration. Iranian jurisdiction has combated this threat with notorious tactics: murder, torture and imprisonment. 2009's first opposition movement, a demonstration against President Ahmadinejad's stolen election, witnessed the government killing of more than 73 protesters by the Revolutionary Guard, with hundreds more detained as 'political' prisoners.

Directly connected to Iran's revolution is the significant number of Iranians discovering the freedom found in Christ. Presently, Christianity in Iran is spreading like never before. Suppressed and disheartened by a tyrannical, incompetent and corrupt Islamic regime, many Muslims are encountering Jesus Christ. This new-found hope has assisted the impetus of the country's revolutionary fervor.

Even before the June elections, the Iranian government was convinced that Christianity was growing beyond its control. Many Christian conversions were a result of satellite television and radio Christian broadcasts. The Iranian government has been active in obstructing television signals by erecting

jamming towers in major cities, controlling phone lines to Christian television programs, and arresting house church leaders.

The Iranian Constitution declares that all “laws are based on Islamic criteria” and, in practice, the government severely restricts religious freedom, especially those of evangelical protestants. Therefore, most Christians are forced to worship underground in house churches, with many choosing to keep their faith private so they will not be charged with apostasy (conversion from Islam), a “crime” punishable by death. The total number of Christians in Iran is unknown, yet some estimate that there are as many as one to two million.

THEIR STORIES

Iranian Christians are under constant threat of discrimination, imprisonment, torture, and even execution. Iranian believers have been steadfast in their faith, as exemplified in the persevering testimony of two Christian Iranian women. Maryam Rostampour, 27, and Marzieh Amirizadeh Esmaeilabad, 30, were unjustly accused for engaging in “anti-government activities” and were arrested on March 5, 2009. Detained at the notorious Evin Prison in Tehran, Maryam and Marzieh feared being forgotten when placed in cells amongst hundreds of political protesters after the disputed presidential election. Court charges of anti-government activity were eventually dropped, yet it became increasingly clear that Maryam and Marzieh were imprisoned as a direct result of their conversion from Islam to Christianity. At one hearing, a judge declared that he would make certain they were executed as ‘apostates.’

However, such statements did not deter the courage nor the boldness displayed by Maryam and Marzieh as they held firm to their faith. They were told that if they recanted, they would be released. Yet, for these women, it was more important to proclaim Christ than to be free; a choice that would cost them severe torture, poor health, and constant threats to their lives. Taken before a Revolutionary Court hearing on August 9, Maryam and Marzieh declared, “We will not deny our faith, if we come out of prison, we want to do so with honor.”

On November 18, after international pressure and prayers from Christians throughout the world, Maryam and Marzieh were released! “Words are not enough to express our gratitude to the Lord and to His people who have prayed and worked for our release,” they said.

North Korea

Official Name: **Democratic People's Republic of Korea**

Head of State: **Kim Jong Il**

Government: **Communist state; one-man dictatorship**

Religious Majority: **Autonomous religious activities now nearly nonexistent; government-sponsored religious groups exist to provide illusion of religious freedom**

Total Population: **22,665,345 (2008)**

Christian Population: **Unknown**



OVERVIEW

Ruled by Communist totalitarian dictator Kim Jong Il's iron fist, religious freedom and human rights are non-existent in North Korea. North Korea prides itself in an ideology centered on self-reliance called *Juche*. *Juche* principles, described as a cult of personality, were established by North Korea's founder, Kim Il-Sung, and became the country's official creed when it was adopted by the new constitution in 1972.

Primary Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Government	unknown	4	Steady

In the 21st Century, President Bush labeled North Korea as an "axis of evil" and an "outpost of tyranny." North Korea is still officially at war with South Korea, and publicly denounces the presence of American troops in the South. In 2009, North Korea blatantly opposed UN sanctions by declaring its progress in uranium enrichment programs. With Kim Jong Il's health reportedly failing, it is hopeful that North Korea's regime is steadily losing its influence over society.

North Korea has long been difficult to obtain reliable information from, especially regarding the Christian population. It remains the most closed country to date in the modern world. However, information that does leave North Korea's borders presents a very severe state of persecution. Reports indicate that many Christians are in labor camps; some estimates are as high as 200,000 imprisoned.

North Korea has a few "official" churches; however, these are strictly limited to the capital of Pyongyang – all existing church buildings are actually no more than showcase structures for visiting dignitaries and NGO's. Outside of these, religious practice is forbidden except *Juche*, which directs religious worship toward Kim Jong Il, and his late father, Kim Il Sung.

In 2009, the North Korean government took new steps to combat religious activity, and halted cross-border support from Chinese Christians. The government set up false prayer meetings and infiltrated underground churches as new tactics to entrap Christian converts. The government is also known to frequently search suspected locations of Christian gatherings, and to regularly seek out and dispose of

underground believers in an effort to completely annihilate all Christians within its borders. Captured Christians faced severe methods of torture, including being used as guinea pigs for chemical weapons.

The number of Christians inside North Korea's borders is unknown. Prior to communist rule, the nation is believed to have been home to roughly 300,000 Christians. However, during the Korean War (1950-53) many Christians fled to South Korea or were killed. Today, sources estimate that 30,000 North Koreans continue to practice Christianity privately in their homes.

According to a former North Korean prisoner, Kang Cheol Hwan, *"The situation in the North is getting worse. It is like a giant prison camp has crossed the land. Starvation spreads out over the entire nation; it has become the norm. I lived in Yoduk prison camp for 10 years; I was treated like an animal there. I had watched many people die from starvation and beatings. I witnessed open executions and watched helplessly as people died miserably. These fearful scenes have not left my mind."*

THEIR STORIES

Lee Sung Ae had converted a small circle of friends before a suspicious neighbor called the police and she was arrested. *"They pulled out my nails, one by one,"* she said. *"And then they started on my teeth."* They were trying, she said, to extract the names of those she had converted but she refused. Without a trial, she was sentenced to four years in a re-education camp. Worse than the starvation she endured there, was the fear she felt for her children. *"I felt like my heart was bleeding for them,"* she said. *"My children, made homeless, begged on the streets for two years before fleeing to China. The eldest was fifteen, the youngest seven. Soldiers keep up a 24 hour patrol along the border but sometimes they have to take short breaks. That's when the boys fled for their lives."* One later died, she said, at the hands of the police when they made a brief return to North Korea.

A Christian woman was reportedly executed in public last June, in a northern town close to the Chinese border. She was accused of distributing Bibles, spying for South Korea and the United States, and helping to organize dissidents. Her parents, husband, and children were sent to a prison camp.

Somalia

Official Name: **Federal Republic of Somalia**

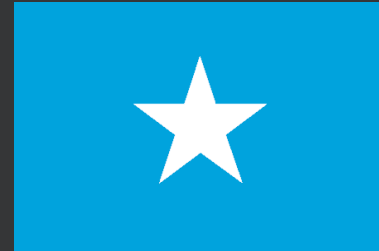
Head of State: **President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed**

Government: **Transitional, Parliamentary Federal Government**

Religious Majority: **Sunni Muslim**

Total Population: **9,832,017**

Christian Population: **Estimated at 6,000 – 9,000**



OVERVIEW

Somalia has become a byword for violence since the collapse of the Somali government in 1991. The lack of an effective government since has led the country to famine, war and relentless brutality. Various Islamic insurgents and warlords fight to control regional domains, creating a divided state of chaos, lawlessness and corruption. Most recently, Somalia has attracted international media attention for its acts of piracy. Several ships have been hijacked on Somalia's Indian Ocean coast, an attempt to attain ransom payments in exchange for the release of ships and hostages.

The internationally recognized Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) controls a very small area of the capital city of Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab, an Islamic insurgent group, controls much of south and central Somalia and is waging relentless war in an effort to control power within the government. The internal fighting among Islamic insurgents and clashes with the TFG, as well as a severe water drought in the country, has resulted in the worst humanitarian disaster in the world today.

Al-Shabaab has been designated as a terrorist organization by many Western countries, including the United States. The group governs according to a strict interpretation of Islamic laws in regions under its jurisdiction. Al-Shabaab's objective is the complete eradication of Christians from Somalia. It carries out cruel and inhumane punishments on individuals that they consider to be offenders of its interpretation of Islam. Such punishments include flogging, hand amputations and execution by stoning. In 2009, the group has killed more than a dozen Christians in a country where very few Christians exist or openly practice their faith. Nearly all of these martyrs were Christian converts from Islam.

Primary Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Government	unknown	4	Increase

THEIR STORIES

Ali Hussien Weheliye was born in the Jamame district, 280 miles from Mogadishu. Ali received Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior in 1999 while working as a linguist in Mogadishu. After three years of following Christ, he became a pastor of an underground church. He was so adored by the Christian community that they called him *Ali Weyneh* (Ali the great).

On October 10, 2009, Pastor Ali was returning home from a church service when two masked members of Al-Shabaab ambushed and fired at him nine times. The Islamists left the bleeding Ali for dead. After being discovered, he was taken to Darul Shifa Hospital, one of Mogadishu's main medical centers.

Ten days later, Ali died from the bullet wounds. He left behind his wife and daughter.

India

Official Name: **Republic of India**
Head of State: **President Prathibha Patil**
Government: **Federal Republic**
Religious Majority: **Hindu**
Total Population: **1,166,079,217**
Christian Population: **24,000,000**



OVERVIEW

With over 1 billion people, India is the world's largest democracy. While Hinduism is the primary religion, there are also a significant number of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and other minorities. United Progressive Alliance, the country's

ruling coalition, promotes the ideals of religious freedom. However, Hindu nationalist parties and organizations such as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) engage in anti-Christian activities by advocating for policies that directly discriminate against Christians, including restrictions against converts to Christianity. Moreover, some members have also instigated violent attacks against Christians, Muslims and other minorities. Extremist Hindu nationalists promote the ideology of *Hindutva*, a belief that India belongs only to Hindus.

There have been several acts of extreme violence against Christians in India. In 2008, more than 100 Christians were killed and more than 50,000 displaced from their homes following unprecedented attacks by Hindu radicals in the Kandhamal district of Orissa State. Hindus attacked these Christians in an act of revenge after the prominent Hindu leader, Swami Lakshmananda Saraswati, and four of his followers were killed. Hindu groups falsely accused local Christians for the murders although it was proven that their leader was killed by Maoist insurgents.

Although violence in Orissa has calmed, Christians continue to face challenges. Many churches were destroyed, and others remain closed, making it difficult for Christians to worship in public. The Hindus suspected of the Orissa attacks have been exonerated by courts due to lack of evidence and police negligence to properly investigate suspects. There have been more than 120 acquittals, including the ringleader, Manoj Pradhon, a legislator from the Hindu extremist BJP party.

Many Christians in Orissa are still unable to return to their homes due to threats issued by Hindu radicals forcing their conversion to Hinduism as a condition for their return. These Christians continue to suffer in refugee camps that lack housing, sanitation and food.

In addition to violence, Christians also face discrimination from state and local officials. The states of Gujarat, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh enforce anti-conversion laws

Primary Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Hindu Extremists/ Government	24,000,000	1.5	Increase

which restrict the freedom of Hindus to convert to other religions. The state of Arunachal Pradesh has an "anti-conversion" law that, while not being enforced, shows the anti-Christian bias of the lawmaker.

Government officials at the state level have repeatedly failed to protect religious minorities from attacks of impunity and have even encouraged Hindu nationalists to carry out such attacks.

Note: India remains on the top ten worst persecutors list due to constant violent attacks against Christians. Sources indicate that in 2009, there was an average of three attacks per week against Christians. Although attacks are not comparable in intensity with other top ten countries, the scope of persecution in India is widespread and affects millions of believers.

THEIR STORIES

Pastor Captain Samuel has worked in the small village of Bashi Nagar in Jammu, India, for 20 years and leads a church with 350 members. In two separate instances, a group of radical Hindus accosted Pastor Samuel, hitting him more than 15 times on the head and threatening him with a knife and gun. Unsatisfied with the results of their attacks, the radical Hindus began pressuring the local police to take action against Pastor Samuel.

As a result, the police detained Pastor Samuel on April 2, 2009, but released him the same day. However, on April 8, the police returned to Pastor Samuel's home at the instigation of radical Hindus, arrested him and dragged him to the local court, claiming that he was a terrorist. Three false witnesses testified that they were paid money to become Christians. The court remanded Samuel's case to the local police, who put him in prison for 20 days.

During the detention period, the elderly pastor was tortured by police. In addition to repeated beatings by police officers, his head was completely shaved. He was kept in a dirty cell without a toilet and was forced to wash the bathrooms and sweep the rooms in the prison.

Pastor Samuel was released from prison after posting bail of Rs. 20,000 (420 USD). The police ordered him to stop all his mission work in Jammu.

Saudi Arabia

Official Name: **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

Head of State: **King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud**

Government: **Governed on basis of Sharia law**

Religious Majority: **Sunni Muslim**

Total Population: **28,686,633 (July 2009; CIA World Fact Book)**

Christian Population: **Estimated 1.2 million (majority are foreigners)**



OVERVIEW

Before reviewing Saudi Arabia's persecution report, it is important to note that Saudi Arabia is a unique case and should not be compared to other countries listed among the top persecutors of Christians. While the Saudi government

suppresses its Christian minority and has no intention to establish religious tolerance, this alone does not deem it to be among the top ten worst persecutors. Saudi Arabia earns its listing for its role in financing external terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, and exporting Wahhabi Islamic extremism to madrassas and mosques worldwide.

Primary Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Islamic Radicals/ Government	1,200,000	4	Steady

Before the modern state of Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932, the Saud family made an alliance with the founder of Wahhabism, Muhammad Abd al Wahhab, in order to defend the two Islamic holy sites, Mecca and Medina, from Ottoman invasion. This single act has had massive repercussions today for Christian suffering throughout the world. Allying with Saudi Arabia, Abd al Wahhab sought to "purify" Islam by returning to the roots of Muhammad's teachings, combating the culture's moral decline and cleansing the Arabian peninsula of all idolatry (including Jews and Christians). Wahhabism was officially adopted as the authoritative sect of Islam within the Kingdom when the son of Muhammad ibn Saud married the daughter of Abd al Wahhab in 1744, a union which persistently continues to frame the power structure of Saudi Arabia.

Saudi King Abdullah is not only the ruler of Saudi Arabia, but also the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques (Mecca and Medina) and an authoritative voice on Sunni Islam. Saudi Arabia's legal code is founded on Islamic Sharia law. Sharia is administered throughout the Kingdom in strict accordance with the interpretation of the Hanbali school of Sunni Islam, the same jurisprudence that was foundational to Wahhabism. Wahhabi Muslims believe that Sharia is sacred and therefore only accept judges who are studied and well versed in the oppressive Hanbali rule of law. Hanbali law punishes thievery with the amputation of limbs and condemns adulterers with public executions by stoning. These Wahhabi doctrines have been foundational to terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood, and are among the prime sources of Christian persecution throughout Muslim-dominated countries.

Saudi political and funding organizations are as dangerous a part of radical Islam as violent terrorism. These groups have a common goal: the global spread of radical Islam. These seemingly disparate elements are equal players in a three-pronged war of extermination: military, political, and religious. Militarily, they seek to bleed the West through terrorism and sap the US's will to fight. Politically, they manipulate democracy and subvert US institutions to place radical Muslims in power. Theologically, they attempt to convert moderate Muslims and to spread Wahabbi Islam into Western mosques. They have declared war against countries like the United States and are willing to pay any price to win. The financial foundation of Islam's war with the West is Saudi Arabia, who spends billions of dollars to spread its theology around the world via mosques, boarding schools, and recruitment. These Islamists are organized, connected, and are adhering to a common doctrine; the Quran and Hadith. It is primarily for this reason that Saudi Arabia is listed among the top ten persecutors of Christians. It is difficult to estimate the amount of Christians who have been imprisoned, tortured or killed as a direct result of Saudi influence.

Within Saudi borders, the government denies recognition or protection of any religion other than Sunni Islam. Not one public church building exists in the country as Christians are forced to worship underground. Suspected converts to Christianity often become victims of honor killings, meaning they are murdered by family or friends in order to 'save face' amidst the Islamic society. Saudi Arabian courts punish apostates (converts from Islam to another religion) with the death sentence if they refuse to recant. Executions by beheading have been on the rise in an effort to deter criminals. Women are treated as second class citizens and given few rights. Making up only 5% of Saudi's workforce, most women are forced to stay at home, often detained and abused by their husbands.

THEIR STORIES

On January 10, Hagos Woldu, a Christian leader in Saudi Arabia, found a note on his van warning him to leave Saudi Arabia or face consequences. "People who covered their faces started to follow me. They blocked my van on three different occasions," Woldu explained.

One month later, Woldu fled from the city of Riyadh following death threats he received from radical Muslims.

This is not the first time that Woldu has been persecuted for his faith in Jesus Christ. In 2005, he and four expatriates were detained by the *Mutaween* (Commission for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice), an arm of the government that enforces religious purity. At the time, they were imprisoned for their underground church activities. They were released one month later following pressure by Western diplomats.

"I have not stopped telling the truth by preaching the gospel. I preach the gospel to Muslims," said Woldu in explaining why the extremists still want to force him to leave Saudi Arabia.

Currently, Woldu continues to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ to the underground church. The threat remains on his life, yet nothing will deter him from his life's mission to preach the gospel.

Vietnam

Official Name: **Socialist Republic of Vietnam**

Head of State: **President Nguyen Minh Triet**

Government: **Communist state**

Religious Majority: **Officially atheist, religious minorities consist predominantly of Buddhists and Catholics**

Total Population: **86,967,524 (July 2009 est.)**

Christian Population: **6,200,000; Catholic 6.7%, Protestant 0.5%**



OVERVIEW

In 1954, Vietnamese forces overwhelmed and drove out the French Foreign Legion, a victory which ended French rule in Indochina. This would also unlock the door

to an unstable future genocide and Christian persecution that continues to this day. Now, Vietnam is a one-party Communist state that severely restricts and monitors all Christian activity. Christianity is regarded as a western religion and is viewed as a threat to Communist authorities.

Within Vietnam's Dak Lak Province, ICC has compiled a list of more than 300 Christians imprisoned by the Communist government. Prison conditions are extremely harsh, where religious and political prisoners frequently perish due to torture and starvation. Those arrested are not given a trial and are often never released. In keeping with its Christian persecution, Vietnam also sternly discriminates against women and ethnic minorities and condones forced child slave labor. In addition, cases and child prostitution are well known.

Among minorities most targeted by the Vietnamese government are the Montagnards, a generic term for minorities who live in the central mountainous regions, and the Hmong people. Thousands of these civilians have been hunted and killed, and there is overwhelming evidence of both chemical and biological warfare employed against them by the Lao military regime in cooperation with the Vietnam government. For these reasons, and due to religious persecution, hundreds of Hmong Christians have fled Vietnam and have become refugees in neighboring countries.

Surprisingly, such genocidal acts were not included in the US State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom annual report. Instead, the 2009 report praised Vietnam for improving its restrictions on religion, including its recognition of several Protestant denominations. Vietnam has not been included on the State Department's Country of Particular Concern list since 2006 and enjoys normal trade status with the United States. Regrettably, the US State Department has failed to recognize the severity of Vietnam's violations of religious freedom, specifically its dealings toward Christians. Whereas the lowlands of Vietnam have seen encouraging improvement, the Central Highland region where most minorities reside, has experienced extreme brutality and contempt. In this particular case, the US State

Primary Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Government	6,200,000	3	Decrease

Department has either ignored or is unaware of the grave human rights abuses committed by the Vietnamese government and has failed to grasp the scope of government-imposed oppression upon its citizens which has furthered endangered ethnic and religious minorities throughout the country.

More than 750,000 of Vietnam's ethnic minority have converted to evangelical Christianity since 1975. In addition, there are eight million Catholics in Vietnam proper who continue to face repression for their faith. Church property is regularly confiscated by the government without redress. Hmong and Montagnard Christians continue to be doubly persecuted as both an ethnic and religious minority. By refusing to join the officially sanctioned Church, they face beatings and imprisonment, and have come to be defined historically as an exploited and oppressed peoples.

THEIR STORIES

Siu Krot, 65, was killed outside his farm for refusing to sell his land to the government. Local authorities often pressure indigenous Christians to sell their land below market value, or else the property is confiscated by the government. A group of Vietnamese police and approximately ten Vietnamese civilians reportedly waited for Siu Krot at his hut and demanded that he sell his farmland to them. When Siu refused, they took him about three kilometers and killed him by "*whacking him with their machetes on the back of his head, on his forehead, on his nose, both sides of his cheek...until he died,*" according to Montagnard Foundation Incorporated. "*Then they tied a big rock to his corpse and sunk him to the bottom of the river.*" His body was discovered the next day.

Police invaded the Sunday service of the Agape Baptist congregation in Vietnam's Hung Yen Province on June 7, beating worshippers, including women, and arresting a pastor and an elder. Police put the two church leaders into separate cells. Each man was beaten by a gang of five policemen. Pastor Duong Van Tuan of the house church in Hamlet 3, Ong Dinh Commune, Khoai Chau district, said that officers beat them in a way that did not leave marks: hard blows to the stomach.

On October 16, police in Loan Ly attacked Catholics who were protesting the seizure of their classrooms. Agents erected fences around the premises and put up a board stating the land did not belong to the church of Loan Ly but to Phan Van Tung, a local government official. To make sure Loan Ly parishioners' call for help did not reach the outside world, all internet and phone access to the area were cut off prior to the invasion. The authorities also placed all priests in the neighboring areas under close surveillance. The land in question, located behind the Loan Ly Church, had been donated to the church by President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1956.

Nigeria

Official Name: **The Federal Republic of Nigeria**

Head of State: **President Umaru Yar'Adua**

Government: **Federal Republic**

Religious Majority: **Muslim & Christian**

Total Population: **149,229,090**

Christian Population: **75,000,000**



OVERVIEW

Since the introduction of Sharia law in 12 northern Nigerian states nearly a decade ago, Christian minorities living in the North have endured violence at the hands of Muslim mobs and Islamic militants. The suffering of Christian minorities is

compounded by the discriminatory policies of Muslim officials in the North and their failure to protect Christians from persecution. Northern officials have restricted the rights of Christians to establish places of worship, and have discriminated against Christians in employment and educational opportunities. Muslim officials have also repeatedly failed to protect Christian minorities from attacks, and to bring the perpetrators of those attacks to justice.

This year, Christians faced horrific attacks waged by the Islamic extremist group, Boko Haram. These terrorists waged jihad against Christians and government officials. Several innocent civilians were killed, including three pastors who were murdered for refusing to convert to Islam. Boko Haram also destroyed more than 20 churches. Unlike the previous attacks by Islamists that targeted only Christians, the Boko Haram insurgency was mainly waged against government officials in northern Nigeria. One goal of Boko Haram was to implement a strict form of Sharia law over all of Nigeria, including the South where Christians are the majority.

In another act of violence against Christians, members of the Islamic sect known as *Izala*, carried out attacks against Christians in the Northern Nigerian city of Bauchi. Eleven people were killed and more than 3,000 displaced due to these sectarian attacks.

Christians are sacrificing their lives and property in their efforts to reach Muslims with the good news of Jesus Christ in Northern Nigeria. During British rule in Nigeria, missionaries were prohibited from witnessing about Christ to the Muslims in the North. However, following independence, large numbers of Muslims came to Christ as the North opened to evangelism.

The Nigerian government, both at the state and federal levels, has failed to contain Islamic extremist violence against Christian minorities in the North. If the government continues to turn a blind eye to this

Primary Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Islamic Radicals/ Government	75,000,000	2	Steady

violence, the North will become an incubator of radical Islamic ideologies that will naturally result in continued persecution against Christians and, in turn, will pose a threat to peace in Nigeria and beyond.

THEIR STORIES

George Ojih was pastor of the Good News of Christ Church in Madiguri, Borno State. He was a devout man of God, a father of two, and soon-to-be father of three.

On July 27, 2009, Islamists broke into the pastor's home and abducted him. The Islamists demanded him to renounce his faith in Christ and embrace Islam. Instead, Pastor Ojih told his abductors that they are the ones who need to repent and come to Jesus Christ.

Convinced that the pastor wouldn't convert to Islam, the Islamists hacked him in the back of the neck with machetes, killing him instantly.

The final hours of Pastor Ojih's life were very difficult, but he persisted in his faith until the end. Just before his murder, he told a Christian who was abducted with him, *"If you survive, tell my brothers that I died well and living with Christ. And if we all die, we know that we died for the Lord."*

China

Official Name: **People's Republic of China**

Head of State: **President Hu Jintao**

Government: **Communist**

Religious Majority: **Officially Atheist**

Total Population: **1,338,612,968 (2008)**

Christian Population: **Some estimates over 100 million; roughly 7%**



OVERVIEW

Before reviewing China's persecution report, it is important to note that persecution in China continues at a level that demands China to remain on the top ten list. However, although persecution is prevalent, it has declined significantly over the years, and ICC anticipates that this decrease will gradually continue.

Primary Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Government	100,000,000	3	Steady

The People's Republic of China is a diverse and contradictory land. Despite its continued economic growth and willingness to engage with international markets, the governing Chinese Communist Party (CCP) retains some elements of Leninist-Maoist hostility and fear toward religion. Chinese Christians, wary of state-controlled religious organs, turn to the model of "house churches," which have helped spark a once unthinkable revival, as estimates now number Chinese believers at more than 100 million.

2009 witnessed a continuation of prior practices for religious persecution in China. As seen in the past, the Chinese government continues to conduct periodic raids on house churches and other Christian events, often times arresting believers and confining them to 'reeducation through labor' camps without a court hearing (an attempt to reform the prisoner to a patriotic socialist ideology and, in turn, a recanting of faith).

Moreover, the Chinese government has begun marked persecution of Chinese human rights lawyers by interrogating or imprisoning those who represent religious groups. Christian attorneys specializing in defending underground Christians have testified before US Congressmen regarding the threats, detainment, and close government surveillance they are repeatedly subjected to for defending religious freedom cases.

In February, Secretary of State Clinton visited a state-sanctioned church, but veered away from directly confronting the issue of religious persecution. President Obama made his first visit to China in November, and while much publicity was given to human rights issues, little impact was made. Whole there, Obama stated that "freedoms of expression and worship, of access to information and political participation - we believe are universal rights;" however, that speech marked the extent of the President's

pressure on the issue. Conversely, leading up to and following Obama's trip, there were reports of increased persecution and imprisonment of religious representatives.

The provinces of Henan, Beijing, Xinjiang, Shandong and Zhejiang have experienced the worst cases of persecution. China Aid, an NGO that works with the Chinese underground church, reported 130 incidents of persecution in 2009.

THEIR STORIES

- On October 20, 2009, the High School Division of the Huashan Middle School officially expelled Chen Le for signing a document confirming his identity as a Christian. The Official Notice of Expulsion reads as follows: *Chen Le, a 2nd grader from Class 8 of Senior High School, was found by Bazhou Public Security Agency and other related agencies to have engaged in Christian gatherings. His school was notified that it should educate the student and persuade him to mend his ways. However, efforts from the class advisor and some leaders from the school in educating him have all failed and this student persists in his belief that he should not renounce his Christian belief. He can't promise that he will not believe in Christianity or attend Christian activities. He also claims that if the school wants him to write a statement of self-criticism and self-introspection of examining his error of attending religious activities as a high school student, he would rather not attend this school. Given the above situation, this school advises him to transfer to other related schools. Chen stated emphatically, "I would rather be forced out of school, than deny my faith."*
- At 7:40 AM on November 19, human rights lawyer Jiang Tianyong and his wife attempted to leave their home to take their daughter to school, when they were barred from leaving the apartment building by Public Security Bureau officers assembled at the gate. Before Jiang could speak with them, four officers grabbed him violently and forced him into a police car. A police officer named Wang Tao threw his wife to the ground and began striking her. Jiang's 7-year-old daughter cried helplessly as she watched her father being dragged away to detention by the officers.
- Gao Zhisheng was a Chinese Army veteran who became a Christian. He pursued a career as an attorney, specializing in defending underground churches, and representing those who couldn't find adequate justice in the Chinese courts. He experienced some success; too much in the Chinese government's eyes. In the fall of 2007, he was kidnapped by Chinese police and interrogated. After refusing to renounce Christianity and those he defended, he endured fifty days of torture, including electric shock and puncture wounds. His interrogators used cigarette smoke to fill his nose and eyes so that he was blinded for days on end. He was ordered to not tell of his treatment or else he would face even worse treatment.

After being released, Gao instead wrote a detailed account of his torture to the international community. On February 4, 2009, Gao was seized again by a dozen Chinese police officers. No word has been heard from him since, except an explanation from the government that he is no longer in their custody. This has led many to believe that Gao has been killed. The Chinese government has cut all communication from Gao's family, including his two brothers, placing them under strict surveillance.