



**International Christian Concern**

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## Hall of Shame Annual Report

The World's 10 Worst Persecutors of Christians

- North Korea
- Iraq
- Saudi Arabia
- China
- Pakistan
- Eritrea
- Egypt
- India
- Laos
- Indonesia

# *The Hall of Shame 2008*

## **The World's Ten Worst Persecutors of Christians**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to ICC's annual Hall of Shame report. The Hall of Shame is our list of the world's 10 worst persecutors of Christians based on news reports from the previous year. We publish this annual report to bring attention to the plight of persecuted Christians around the globe.

While ICC believes in religious freedom for all religions, our mission is especially to help Christians. There are more than 200 million Christians worldwide who live in countries where there is overt social or governmental anti-Christian hostility. This hostility is expressed in various forms, from harassment, job discrimination, and imprisonment, to rape, torture, and assassination.

Even though Christians are one of the largest religious groups persecuted for their faith, their plight is almost entirely ignored by the mainstream media. It is alarming that a human rights issue of this magnitude is so often ignored.

In the period covered by this report (December 2006 - December 31, 2007), Christians continued to experience severe persecution for their faith on an alarming scale. Several trends of note were:

1. A crackdown on house churches in China in the lead up to the Beijing Olympics,
2. A continuing campaign by radical Muslims to exterminate Christians from Iraq, and
3. An escalation of radical Hindu attacks against Christians in India, which culminated at the very end of 2007 with a series of mob attacks on Christians villages in the state of Orissa.

We have changed the layout of this year's report in an attempt to help readers feel the distress that these Christians face. For each country, we have included a brief introduction, a section that highlights a recent story or two of Christian persecution, a brief analysis of current issues, a look to the future, and a list of ways that concerned individuals can help.

Also included for each country is a chart that shows four things: the most common source of persecution, the number of Christians in that country who are affected, the intensity of the persecution, and whether persecution intensified, relaxed, or remained static during the year.

It is our hope that this Hall of Shame report will help motivate persecuting countries and leaders to take concrete action to uphold religious freedom for all their citizens. In the meantime, we hope that this report will be a useful tool for policymakers and fellow advocates to put even greater pressure on those countries that continue to flagrantly violate the most fundamental human right of religious liberty.



Jeff King  
President  
International Christian Concern

## Methodology

We have expanded our criteria for ranking these countries. While we continue to factor in *source* and *intensity* of persecution, we have also added *scope* and *trend* categories. Under source, we have distinguished between the government being the primary source of persecution or societal/religious actors being the primary source. Societal/religious persecution comes 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 fact that the government itself does not have a strong desire to promote religious freedom for minorities. We consider this a significant problem especially in Iraq, India and Pakistan.

The remainder of the countries listed below have government policies that are specifically designed to root out Christianity. Because official, governmental persecution is much more all-encompassing and brutal, we have generally considered countries where governmentally-sanctioned persecution is prevalent as worse than countries where persecution mainly comes from societal actors.

We have also ranked countries based on the intensity of the persecution Christians experience. 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. While this measure of persecution cannot be easily quantified, it is clear that countries where Christians are being killed for their faith have a more serious problem than countries where Christians do not have the same legal status as Muslims.

This year we are also considering the number of Christians affected by persecution. This is one of the reasons why India has made the list – not because persecution there is governmentally sanctioned or especially intense, but because there are so many reports of persecution from India.

In addition, we have included the severity of persecution over time in our considerations. This is why Vietnam was not included in this year's list – not because there is no persecution there, but because the trend over 2007 was for a lessening of persecution.

To support our rankings, we have compiled tables of published incidents of persecution against Christians for each of the countries below, based on lists compiled on our website, [www.persecution.org](http://www.persecution.org). These lists can be requested by contacting our office.

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 persecution against them for fear of attracting worse persecution or alerting the government to the fact that they are Christians. In addition, many of the countries listed here do not have an independent press, most only feed Western journalists the party line, and some are considered too dangerous for members of the press to visit. The stories listed below are a fraction of the total.

### ***Special note on Ethiopia:***

*Last year ICC included Ethiopia in our list of the 10 worst persecutors of Christians. We did this to raise the profile of a campaign by Muslim radicals against Christians in Ethiopia, but we regret including them in the Hall of Shame for 2007.*

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Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Communist State, Dictatorship	Severe persecution and restriction of information prevents an accurate count of Christians.	High	Increasing



# North Korea

## Introduction

Since 1948, North Koreans have suffered under the rule of a government that mandates a cult of personality, centered on the worship of Kim Jong Il and his late father, Kim Il Sung, in the place of religion. Every aspect of life in North Korea is tightly controlled and personal freedoms are nonexistent. Although the ideology of *Juche* (extreme self-reliance) is slowly being replaced with a “military-first” policy, this state religion continues to hold supreme authority throughout the country.

Those found engaging in un-sanctioned religious activity have been arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and executed. In addition, the tremendous misallocation of resources has forced the nation to depend on international aid to stave off famine while the government pours itself into the maintenance of an army nearing 1 million. Consequently, North Korea has maintained its status as a “Country of Particular Concern,” a title which the US Department of State has given the nation since 2001.

## Their Stories

### A Million in Concentration Camps

*The number of North Koreans locked up in dozens of concentration camps could number more than a million, but few survive in an atmosphere reminiscent of Hitler's death camps where guards reportedly stomp on the necks of babies born to prisoners and "scientists" experiment on living victims.*





### Smoke and Mirrors

North Korea has designed a system of smoke and mirrors for dealing with foreigners and the outside world. According to the Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU), the government has created “authorized” religious institutions as a means of external propaganda while privately forbidding citizens from entering genuine places of worship.

These authorized institutions, called “religious federations,” were created for Buddhists, Chondokysts, and Christians to provide the appearance of religious freedom where none exists. It remains unclear at this point whether religious citizens make up the congregations of these bodies, or if they are wholly political. The federations operate only in Pyongyang and are led by political operatives in order to maintain control over all religious activity that could lead the country away from the only truly acceptable worship of Kim Jong Il.



### Tight Government Control of Information

Not only has the government of North Korea made it nearly impossible for the outside world to get a clear and accurate picture of the nation, its policies, and its people, but it also has an iron-clad grip on the transmittal of information from the inside. Virtually all media, including television, radio, print, the Internet, and phones are strictly monitored and controlled by the government. The use of cell phones was even banned from the general population in 2004.

International phone lines are rarely available to the public, and never without severe restrictions.

This kind of hold on the main lines of information prevent the people from communicating openly even across their own country, further frustrating their ability to relay reports of persecution to the broader world, and keeping the nation at large in the dark in regards to a general knowledge of life outside North Korea, let alone the progress of human rights.

## A Look at the Future

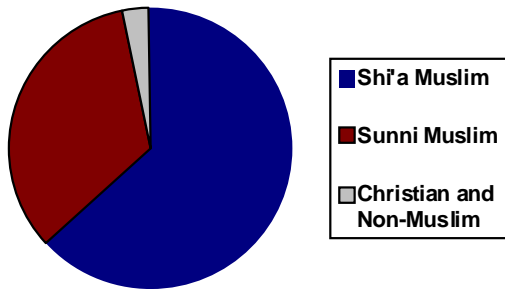
The North Korean government has carefully manufactured an environment of despair in which it attempts to blind its people into cultish submission and beguile the world through practiced manipulation and artfully staged displays of freedom, religious and otherwise. As its seven-year status as a “Country of Particular Concern” indicates, North Korea is showing little to no sign of improvement.

## How You Can Help

- Pray for the Christians of North Korea that they may stand firm with the faith, 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 adverse economic conditions would be used of God to open the government to allowing foreign aid into the country, resulting both in the relief of hunger and greater religious freedom.
- Designate funds to International Christian Concern for the support of underground pastors, the smuggling of Bibles, or general support to the persecuted church in North Korea.
- Contact your legislators (Senators, Congressman, etc.) as well as the U.S. State Department and express your concern for the well being of the Christians in North Korea, asking them to make an inquiry into their status.
- Please keep us informed of any replies or results you may receive! Contact ICC by email at [icc@persecution.org](mailto:icc@persecution.org).

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# Iraq

## Introduction

In the chaos that has become modern Iraq, it has become too easy to forget that most of the persecuted Christians in the country are actually an indigenous people that can trace their roots back 2,000 years to the kingdoms of ancient Mesopotamia. The majority live right in the capital, Baghdad, and others reside in the northern cities of Kirkuk, Irbil and Mosul – what was once a major trading hub known as Nineveh. These Chaldean Christians, many of whom still speak Aramaic, and Assyrian Christians, from the empires of Assyria and Babylonia, have become the target of intensely violent, wide-scale attacks by Islamic extremists.

Although the Christian population enjoyed relative and limited protection under Saddam Hussein’s regime, largely due to a Christian Deputy Prime Minister, the non-Muslim minorities have since been left largely without protection from extremist Islamic militias. Entire communities have been forced to flee the increasingly horrific violence, causing the ancient peoples’ numbers to dwindle from 1.2 million in 2003 to a remnant of only roughly 600,000 and falling. The annual report of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom released in May of 2007 reported that 50% of Assyrian Christians have fled Iraq since 2003.

Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Muslim Extremists	Less than 3% (and falling) are Christian in a population of 27.5 million.	High	Increasing



## Their Stories

### Convert, Pay, or Perish

*The sales of a young Christian family’s store have plummeted since mosques around the community began demanding that Muslims not make any purchases from Christians. “Not only are they infidels,” they said, “but they will soon be leaving.” Less than two years later, Muslim extremists knock at the struggling family’s door and demand that they be paid an infidel’s tax or that the family vacate their home within 24 hours. The only other option is conversion to Islam.*

## Women's Bodies Dumped in Garbage

*“Un-Islamic Behavior,” declares the crudely written notes left in despicable explanation for the horrors littering the garbage dumps of Basra, Iraq. These notes are left on the mutilated bodies of women whose bodies have been dumped out with the daily trash in harsh warning to other women against “violating Islamic teachings.” Police report that no less than 40 women have been murdered by religious vigilantes in the past year, their bodies all similarly disposed. Men and women, Muslim, Christian, and secular, have been forced to cover their heads or face severe punishment for Western dress.*

### The Issues



#### Christians Associated with the West

In what has become an increasingly tragic turn of events, Iraqi Christians, many of whom welcomed Americans and even signed up to serve as interpreters, have only experienced greater persecution since the United States' invasion in 2003. Extremist militias have begun to associate the Christians in Iraq with America and Western culture and largely succeed in their attacks because Christians are not represented or protected by any party. Americans have been discouraged from offering aid to the Iraqi Christians so as not to be seen to “favor” any

particular religion, and also out of fear that their presence may only attract further negative attention from extremist groups. In addition to being easy targets in a society plagued with conflict, Christians are also targeted by criminals because many run their own businesses or are believed to have wealthy relatives in the West.

#### Iraq's Indigenous Assyrian Population in Increasing Danger of Extinction

While the numbers are not as precise as needed, reports estimate that as many as a third of the 1.8 million Iraqi refugees are Christian and that a similar proportion is Christian of the 1.6 million internally displaced Iraqis. This is especially shocking when one considers that the percentage of Christians in Iraq amounts to a mere 3%. Entire communities and neighborhoods are being driven out as extremist groups threaten death if they do not evacuate or pay a high infidel tax. Muslims have also been called on to enforce these edicts by confiscating the forcibly abandoned homes and property.

#### Refugee Crisis

Iraq has been named the fastest-growing refugee crisis worldwide. In many cases, the Iraqis who are forced out of their homes or choose to flee only face more suffering as refugees. Legally unable to work in most neighboring countries, many are forced into prostitution or are exploited for labor. Syria, a country that has hosted the largest numbers of Iraqi refugees, chose to close its borders in October, leaving fewer and fewer viable options for those attempting to escape the escalating violence in their own nation.

## A Look at the Future

In an interview this year with CBN News, Canon Andrew White, known as the “Vicar of Baghdad,” told reporters that he believes two of the largest Christian neighborhoods in Iraq are now totally void of Christians, explaining, “They had bullets put through their doors, they had letters warning them to leave, and they were given a choice – either you pay the *Jiyza* tax or you convert to Islam, or we will kill you.” White also reported that only six people remained from his 1,300 member church because all the rest were either kidnapped or killed.

Assyrian Christians who have fled worry that these next few years may be the end of their culture in their homeland. The New Year brought with it a new wave of bombings targeted specifically at Christian churches. Concern is mounting over the survival of this ancient Christian community, and while there has been some talk of creating an administrative state as a safe haven for these minorities, the persecution is only growing worse. The development of this sort of autonomous region for Assyrian Christians may be the only means of protection and hope so that the Christians who have fled can safely return to the land of their fathers.

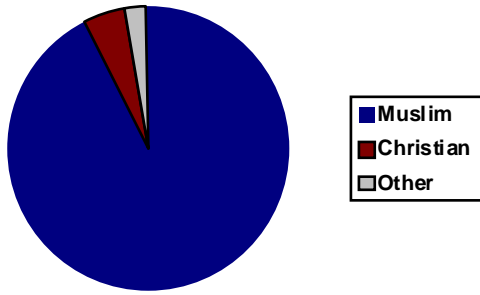


## How You Can Help

- Pray for the Christians of Iraq that they may continue to 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 suffer. Pray that the nation of Iraq would be changed by the courageous witness and the many martyrs of the church.
- Make a donation to International Christian Concern’s “Hand of Hope” Fund for Iraq to help us provide aid to the persecuted in that country.
- Contact your legislators (Senators, Congressman, etc.) as well as the U.S. State Department and express your concern for the well being of the Christians in Iraq, asking them to make an inquiry into their status.
- Please keep us informed of any replies or results you may receive! Contact ICC by email at [icc@persecution.org](mailto:icc@persecution.org).

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# Saudi Arabia

## Introduction

In 1932, Abd Al-Aziz bin Abd al-Rahman Al Saud (Ibn Saud) founded the modern state of Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam and the home of Mecca and Medina, the two holiest Islamic sites. In addition, the *Hajj*, an annual pilgrimage to Mecca required of all Muslims, brings visitors to Saudi Arabia from all over the world. As a result, the Saudi Arabian government portrays itself as the authoritative voice of Islam.

With 25% of the world's known oil reserves in its territory, the country has grown incredibly rich. Unfortunately, the wealth of Saudi Arabia is being used to help spread an extreme version of Islam called Wahhabism around the world. Wahhabism is the brand of Islam that motivates Al Qaeda and is one of the primary sources of Christian persecution throughout Muslim-dominated countries. This is the reason that Saudi Arabia is so high on our list of the top 10 persecutors of Christians, despite an apparent lack of persecution news from Saudi Arabia.

Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Strictly Muslim government and society	Rough estimates put Christians at around 4.5% of a predominantly Muslim population of 27.6 million. The Saudi government does not acknowledge the presence of any Christians in the country.	High	Steady



## Their Stories

### Egyptian Surgeon Held Hostage by Saudi Government Due to His Christian Faith

*Dr. Mamdooh Fahmy, an Egyptian Christian surgeon, was removed from his job and was not allowed to take another after Saudi officials found out about his Christian faith. Dr. Fahmy was detained for five days, and had his property, including his passport, confiscated by Saudi Arabian police.*

*To add insult to injury, the government of Saudi Arabia prohibited Dr. Fahmy from returning home for two years. Following an advocacy campaign spearheaded by International Christian Concern, the officials of Saudi Arabia finally allowed the doctor to leave the country and return to his native country, Egypt, in July 2007.*

## **Saudis Arrest Christian for entering Mecca**

*Nirosh Kamada, a Christian from Sri Lanka, went to Saudi Arabia to work as a truck driver in the city of Dammam. He subsequently left the job and moved to Mecca to sell goods. He was arrested by Saudi Arabian officials for entering Mecca. According to Saudi officials, non-Muslims cannot enter the city of Mecca or Medina.*

## **The Issues**

### **Radical Wahhabi Islam**

The government of Saudi Arabia is determined not only to stop any activity of Christians in the country, but they are also using the country's vast oil resources in order to expand Wahhabi Islam, an extreme version of Islam that encourages violence towards Christians, Jews, and other non-Muslims. As a result, Christians are facing more persecutions in countries where Wahhabi teachings have been accepted and practiced, such as Pakistan, Indonesia, and even Ethiopia.

The kingdom's religiously fervent leaders have invested \$85 billion in an attempt to spread the Wahhabi ideology to the four corners of the globe in the past 25 years.

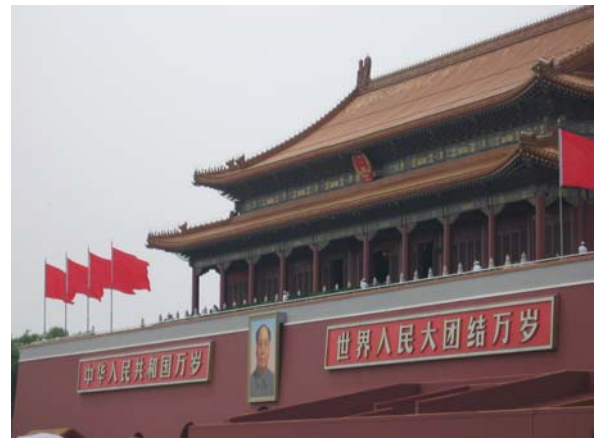
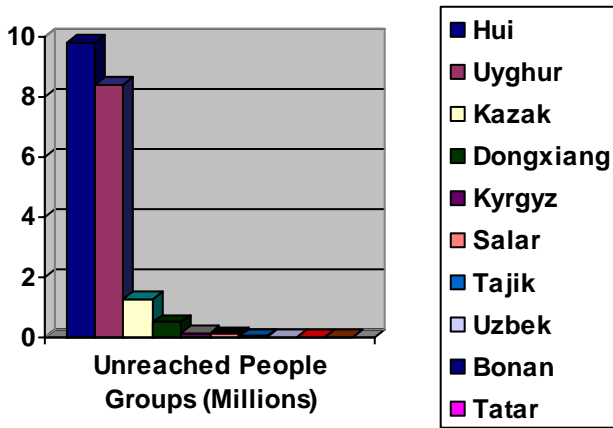
## **A Look at the Future**

There have been little glimmers of progress, such as an agreement by the Saudi kingdom to eliminate intolerant references to other religions in school textbooks. However, the Saudi government continues to employ its Muttawa (religious police), which is charged with the mission of enforcing Islamic morality. In addition, a ban on the building of churches continues to stand, and thus Christians will probably continue to experience the same amount of opposition to the practice of their faith in the next few years.

## **How You Can Help**

- Pray for the Christians of Saudi Arabia that they may continue to be protected from harm and that God would encourage the Christians there to spread the gospel to all, while being as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves. Pray that Christians who do not know any other Christians would find fellowship to boost their faith.
- Contact your legislators (Senators, Congressman, etc.) as well as the U.S. State Department and express your concern for the well being of the Christians in Saudi Arabia, asking them to make an inquiry into their status.
- Please keep us informed of any replies or results you may receive! Contact ICC by email at [icc@persecution.org](mailto:icc@persecution.org).

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<p>Royal Diwan  Riyadh Region, Saudi Arabia 11111  Tel: 966-1-482-2222</p>	<p>Royal Minister of Foreign Affairs  Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 11544  Phone: 009661 4055000 / 4067777  Fax: 009661 4030645</p>



# China

## Introduction

The People's Republic of China is a diverse and contradictory land. Despite its continued economic growth and willingness to engage with international markets, not to mention its pride in hosting the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, the governing Chinese Communist Party (CCP) retains one element of its Leninist-Maoist ideology: an intense hostility towards and fear of religion. Chinese Christians, wary of state-controlled religious organs, have increasingly turned to the model of "house churches," which have helped spark a once unthinkable revival across the Middle Kingdom, as estimates now number Chinese believers at more than 100 million.

Most of this evangelistic success, however, has been among China's Han population. What many do not know is that China is also home to 20 million Muslims, members of diverse groups such as the Turkic-speaking Uyghurs of Xinjiang and the Chinese-speaking Hui, the largest ethnic group in the world without a single known Christian fellowship. But even as Chinese believers and their foreign partners work to take the gospel to these unreached minorities, the government has stepped up its efforts to control – and eliminate – the house churches.

Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
A Communist government seeking to maintain internal order – at any cost.	Christians now number over 100 million (7% of the population).	High	Increasing

## Their Stories

### China Detains 40 House Church Pastors

*The Chinese house churches have increasingly been burdened to take the gospel to the unreached Muslim peoples of western China. Immense as this task is, the government is not making it any easier for them through raids like this one on a Bible study in Henan province which led to the arrests of forty house church leaders; an additional pastor, Liu Huiwen, was arrested for distributing Christian materials among Muslims and sentenced to 18 months in prison.*



## Jailed Chinese Pastors String Christmas Lights

*Their fingers bleed, but they press on, for if they don't make the day's quota – 5,000 bulbs – they are beaten. The Christmas lights that decorate the trees of Christian believers around the world are often made by inmates like these. Their crime? Preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. House church pastors are sent to work camps after their arrest, and in some respects, these are the lucky ones, for they survived the standard interrogations that greet most Christian leaders after they are detained; several are killed or “disappear,” never to be seen or heard from again. Their legal rights are almost always severely curtailed and prisoners are denied access to lawyers, medical care, and their families. In the past year, estimates project that more than 600 pastors were jailed in China.*

### The Issues



## Typhoon No. 5

Beijing's fear of Christian interference or evangelism at the 2008 Olympics has led to a landmark campaign, originating at the highest levels of government, to crack down on Chinese Christians. Code-named “Typhoon No. 5,” this government directive instructs the Public Security Bureau to attack Christians on two fronts. First, Beijing is trying to rid China of all foreign missionaries. Dozens of foreign Christians, some of whom had been working in China for more than twenty years, were expelled from the country, and others had their travel privileges curtailed and their actions more closely monitored. At the same time, China has moved aggressively against the house church, leading to hundreds of new arrests. Yet despite so many of its leaders languishing in Chinese prison camps, the church continues to grow and grow.

### A Look at the Future



The dawn of 2008 has not seen any improvement in the lives of Chinese believers; if anything, there are indications that the Chinese government is more aggressively arresting house church leaders, particularly in the far western province of Xinjiang, where two Uyghur pastors were detained in January.

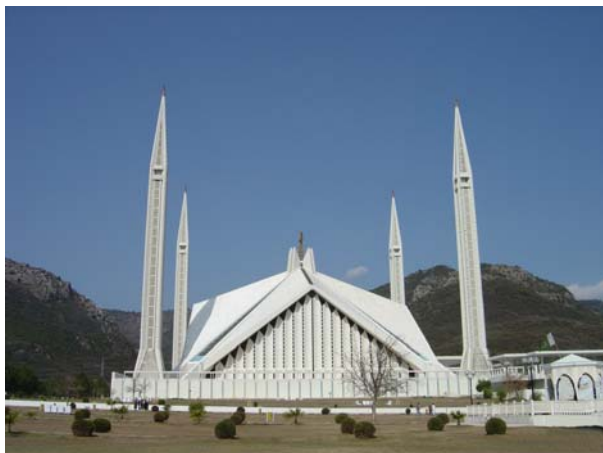
Of course, no discussion of China in 2008 could fail to mention the Olympics, beginning in August, for the immense pride the Chinese take in hosting the Games – and the fear they have of troublemakers embarrassing them on the world stage – is the cause of the recent crackdown on

Chinese Christians. Watch for there to be some kind of human rights protest at the Olympics – by underground Christians, pro-independence Tibetans or Uyghurs, even Falun Gong members – that will be met with a severe response from the authorities. Despite the dangers, pray that this would be an unprecedented platform for Chinese Christians to share the gospel and expose the abuses of China’s communist regime.

### How You Can Help

- Pray for the Christians of China that they may continue to 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 because of 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 your legislators (Senators, Congressman, etc.) as well as the U.S. State Department and express your concern for the well being of the Christians in China, asking them to make an inquiry into their status.
- Please keep us informed of any replies or results you may receive! Contact ICC by email at [icc@persecution.org](mailto:icc@persecution.org).

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Embassy of People’s Republic of China Ambassador Zhou Wenzhong 2133 Wisconsin Ave NW Washington, DC 20007 Tel: 202-625-2030 Email: <a href="mailto:chinaembassy_us@fmprc.gov.cn">chinaembassy_us@fmprc.gov.cn</a>	Yang Jiechi Minister of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China No. 2, Chaoyangmen Nandajie, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100701 People's Republic of China Tel: 86-10-65961114 Email: <a href="mailto:webmaster@mfa.gov.cn">webmaster@mfa.gov.cn</a>



# Pakistan

## Introduction

In October 2007, *Newsweek* magazine ran this headline on their October 22 issue: “The Most Dangerous Nation in the World Isn’t Iraq. It’s Pakistan.” Sharing a largely unprotected border with Afghanistan, Pakistan is home to some of the most violently radical Muslims in the world. In fact, it is in Pakistan that US intelligence reports most often place Osama Bin Laden. Created as a homeland for Muslims as a separate country out of the newly independent India in 1947, Pakistan has grown into a major player in regional and global politics, especially since it conducted nuclear weapons tests in 1998.

Christians are the largest religious minority in Pakistan, comprising about 1.5% of the total population, though Christian leaders claim that they constitute 6% of the total. Since independence, Pakistan has increasingly cut away at the rights of the Christian minority, treating them as second-class citizens and largely relegating them to a life of poverty. Attacks on Christians are commonplace and often go unreported as local police, and even the national government, have shown reluctance in upholding the rights of minorities.

Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Muslim extremists perpetrate attacks on Christians, but the government indirectly encourages this by being reluctant to prosecute the attackers.	Between 1.5% and 6% - numbering between 2 and 9 million out of a population of 165 million.	High	Increasing

## Their Stories

### Business Manager Murdered for His Faith in Lahore

*Riaz Shahid, 51, the only Christian employed in a higher managerial position at Imperial Chemical Industries, was murdered by unidentified person(s) at his house in Bahar, a huge Christian neighborhood in Lahore. According to a source, Shahid had worked at the company for about 20 years and had just received a promotion earlier in November 2007. His family suspects that he was murdered due to religious hatred by his Muslim colleagues, based on several items left at the scene.*



## 18-Year-Old Christian Woman Raped and Forced to Convert to Islam

*Razia went to visit her aunt on October 21, 2007, but did not return home until October 31, when, in a state of shock, she told her parents that a Muslim acquaintance, Sajid, had abducted her, repeatedly raped her and forced her to convert to Islam. She was able to receive medical care, but the Pakistani courts are slow to take action because of the religious element of the case.*

## Two Christian Sanitary Workers Shot Dead in Pakistan

*Two Catholic sanitary workers were shot dead by Muslim neighbors near a madrasa in October 2007. According to a local source, the men were asked by Muslim clerics to clear out a gutter near the mosque and settled on a nominal sum of rupees for the service. After finishing the task, they requested payment, but were instead told to convert to Islam or die. The two men refused and were shot.*

## The Issues

### Blasphemy Laws

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, and is one of many that attempt to protect “religion,” but in reality only protect Islam. A lack of equal 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 Qur'an :** *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.*

*Sec. 295-C ins. by the Criminal Law (amendment) Act, 111 of 1986, S. 2*

### 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 madrasas, 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 madrasas are joining the junior officer ranks of the military, a traditionally secular institution. Four of the main extremist

groups are Jamaat-e-Islami, Tanzeem Ilhwane-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.

## A Look at the Future

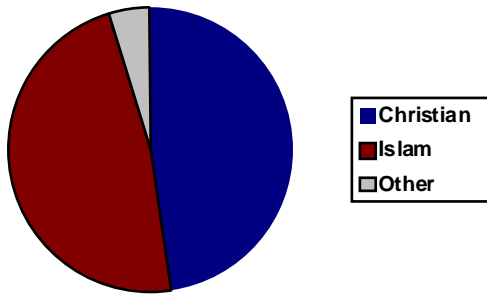
The end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008 has been an incredibly tumultuous time in Pakistan. In October 2007, former Prime Minister and democratic reformer Benazir Bhutto returned to Pakistan from self-imposed exile to prepare for national elections for parliament in 2008. In November 2007, General Musharraf declared a state of emergency, suspending the constitution and governing purely by force. During the state of emergency, he arrested hundreds of lawyers and judges, including the chief justice of the Pakistan Supreme Court, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry.

In addition, it appeared that the state of emergency would push back the 2008 elections indefinitely, but Musharraf later lifted the emergency and put the elections back on schedule. On December 27, 2007, Benazir Bhutto was assassinated during a political rally. While elections are still on schedule, Pakistan has lost its most prominent voice for reform in Bhutto's death, which means that Christian persecution and discrimination will continue to be the rule for the foreseeable future. What is more frightening is that the growth of Islamic extremism puts Pakistan into the spotlight, as with *Newsweek*, we agree that a nuclear Pakistan with a strong contingent of radical Islamists is indeed the most dangerous nation in the world.

## How You Can Help

- 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 your legislators (Senators, Congressman, etc.) as well as the U.S. State Department and express your concern for the well being of the Christians in Pakistan, asking them to make an inquiry into their status.
- Please keep us informed of any replies or results you may receive! Contact ICC by email at [ICC@persecution.org](mailto:ICC@persecution.org).

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# Eritrea

## Introduction

Eritrea is a young nation that won its independence from Ethiopia in 1993 after over three decades of military struggle waged to win freedom for Eritrean people. With equal numbers of Muslims and Christians, the country has nine different ethnic groups living in its territory.

Eritrean People’s Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) is the ruling party in Eritrea and it is the only party legally operating in the country. The party follows Communist ideology and has been cracking down on Christian groups for the past few years. On May 21, 2002 the PFDJ issued a decree ordering the closure of all churches not belonging to Orthodox, Roman Catholic, or Lutheran denominations. Following the decree, the Eritrean government stepped up persecution of Christians. More than 36 churches were closed and forced to go underground.

Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Communist government	Almost half of the country claims to be Christian in a population of 4.9 million.	High	Increasing



## Their Stories

### Paralyzed for Christ

*Helen Birhane released her gospel album on May 13, 2004. In Western countries releasing such an album would result in earning riches and fame, but these were not for Helen.*

*As soon as she released the album, Eritrean officials locked Helen in a metal shipping container. She spent two years in the shipping container, repeatedly subjected to severe torture and solitary confinement in order to force her to deny Christ. But just like the apostles and prophets in the Bible, Helen refused to deny her faith in Christ. Though she longed for escape from her metal prison and missed her young daughter Eva, her love for the Lord surpassed her love for anything else in her life.*

*Due to the severity of the torture, Helen became paralyzed and was released from detention in December 2006 in order to receive medical attention. Helen took that opportunity to flee the country and take refuge in neighboring Sudan. In October 2007, Helen arrived in Denmark in her wheelchair after being granted asylum.*

## **Found Faithful until Death**

*Mogos Solom Semere was 25 and about to get married to his fiancé in 2002 when he was apprehended by Eritrean officials for following Jesus Christ. Mogos was a committed Christian who had been imprisoned in 2001 for the “crime” of evangelism. Mogos was given a choice during his four and half years in prison. He would be released as soon as he signed a paper that declared his refusal to follow Jesus. Some of his friends chose to sign the paper and were released from prison. But for Mogos, the idea of renouncing his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was unacceptable.*

*When he caught cardiac pneumonia and suffered due to the consequences of his torture, he was again given the choice to get medical treatment, but only if he agreed to stop following Christ. Once again, Mogos’ answer was a resounding, “NO!” He finally passed away inside the prison cell on February 15, 2007, due to the combined effect of pneumonia and torture. Our brother remained faithful to the Lord until the end. Mogos’ life is best described in Hebrews 11: 35 which states, “. . .others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might rise again to a better life.”*

## **The Issues**

### **2,000 Christians in Eritrean Jails**

Currently there are more than 2,000 Christians imprisoned under inhumane conditions in Eritrea. Some of the imprisoned Christians are kept in metal containers and are often subjected to torture. Some of the imprisoned have lost their lives, others have lost their sight in the prolonged darkness, and still others have been paralyzed due to the severity of torture and beatings. And yet thousands have decided to remain faithful to Christ rather than gaining their freedom by denying him.

## **A Look at the Future**

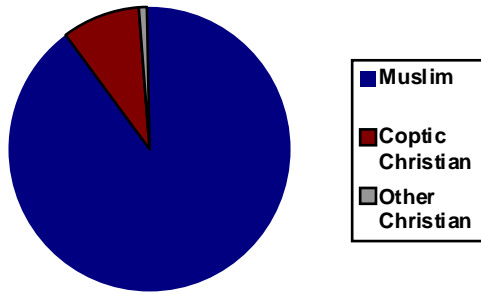
There is no reason for optimism as far as the persecution of Christians is concerned in Eritrea. Most faithful Christians are imprisoned, have already left the country or are trying to leave the country. Though we hope for the miraculous, we can thus far only expect to hear more reports of death and imprisonment as we move in to 2008.

## **How You Can Help**

- Pray for the Christians of Eritrea that they may continue to be strong in their faith in face of increased persecution by the government officials.

- Pray for imprisoned Christians in Eritrea. Please pray for growth of underground Church in the country.
- Help the families of persecuted Christians in Eritrea through a donation to International Christian Concern.
- 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 Eritrea. 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 your legislators (Senators, Congressman, etc.) as well as the U.S. State Department and express your concern for the well being of the Christians in Eritrea, asking them to make an inquiry into their status.
- Please keep us informed of any replies or results you may receive! Contact ICC by email at [icc@persecution.org](mailto:icc@persecution.org).

<p>Ambassador Ghirmai Ghebremariam          Eritrean Ambassador to United States          1708 New Hampshire Ave NW          Washington, DC 20009          Phone: (202) 319-1991          Fax: (202)319-1304</p>	<p>Issaias Afwerki, President          Office of the President          P.O.Box 257          Asmara, Eritrea          Phone: +291-1-119701          Fax: +291-1-125123</p>
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# Egypt

## Introduction

Egypt is an ancient country with a historically rich civilization. The country became a Republic in 1953. 90% of Egyptians are Muslims (mostly Sunni) while the great majority of the rest are Coptic Christians. There are also limited numbers of Egyptians who are Baha'i.

Though freedom of religion is guaranteed under the Egyptian constitution, Islamic law is used as the highest law of the land, as indicated in Article 2 of the constitution which subjects Christians to discriminatory laws that favor Muslims. Muslims that convert to Christianity are forced to hide their Christian identity because government officials do not recognize such conversions. They are also targeted by Muslims that threaten to kill them, harass them and excommunicate them from the community, forcing them to flee to areas where they will not be recognized as former Muslims.

Coptic Christians, a native group of Egyptian Christians that traces its existence back to the beginning of Christianity, are widely discriminated against as a result of the discriminatory policies of the country and the bias of Muslim officials. There have been many instances in which, in some localities, Muslim extremists looted and burned down Christian owned businesses and homes, maiming and killing Christians.

Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Islam	About 10% are Christian in a population of 80.3 million.	Moderate-High	Increasing

## Their Stories

### Persecuted at the Hands of Police and Her Family

*Shaymaa (Eman) Muhammad Al-Sayed became a Christian in January, 2003. Her Muslim family couldn't accept the fact that their daughter had chosen to renounce her Islamic faith and follow Christ Jesus. Her family abused her and immediately arranged for her to marry her extremist Islamic cousin. Fleeing her parents' home, Shaymaa assumed a new identity in Alexandria where she later married a Christian man.*

*In July, 2007, she was spotted by the members of her family who had earlier abused her. Police came and “rescued” her from her angry family members and put her under “protective custody” for a week. During this time, Shaymaa was tortured and electrocuted in sensitive parts of her body by the very police who were supposed to protect her. After a week-long stay in the police station, the police handed her over to her family who began beating her from the first moment they put their hands on her.*

### **Raped at Police Station for Becoming a Christian**

*A previously Muslim couple decided to follow Christ. They didn’t want their Muslim relatives to know about their new relationship with Christ Jesus, so they decided to live in a neighborhood far from their family.*

*But in April, 2007, the Muslim extremists living in the couple’s neighborhood began following the husband because he would not come to the Mosque. The extremists finally found out that the husband was going to a Christian church instead of a Mosque. As soon as they discovered this, they came to couple’s home and dragged them to the police station where the wife was raped twice and her husband was severely beaten. They were finally released from imprisonment, but the husband was fired from his job and the couple was excommunicated from the neighborhood. They were forced to move to a remote village where the husband took a job as a daily laborer. This is the kind of price our Egyptian brothers and sisters are paying for choosing to follow Jesus.*

## **The Issues**

### **Coptic Christians**

Coptic Christians are subjected to discriminatory laws in Egypt. Their life is also made difficult by the injustice they face from Egyptian officials who are almost all Muslim. Egyptian Christian women carry the brunt of the persecution as it is the strategy of Muslim men to Islamize the women by forced marriage.

According to Egyptian law, Christians are required to secure a permit from the president of the country in order to build churches. There is no such obligation for Muslims to construct mosques. While it is illegal for a Muslim to convert to Christianity, and those that do face severe persecution, Christians who convert to Islam are actually rewarded by government officials.



Muslims create pretext to spark sectarian violence and damage churches. They also burn properties belonging to Christians. Monasteries have been targeted by Muslims who lay claim on lands on which the monasteries are founded.

## A Look at the Future

Many Muslims in Egypt are becoming radicalized and the influence of the Islamic brotherhood, the hitherto banned political party, is increasing significantly. With the increased clout of Islamic radical groups, the persecution of Christians is expected to increase significantly in the year 2008 and beyond.

## How You Can Help

- Pray for the Christians of Egypt that they may continue to be protected from harm and that the Christian message may be heard and received by all.
- Help the expansion of gospel in Egypt with a donation to International Christian Concern
- 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 your legislators (Senators, Congressman, etc.) as well as the U.S. State Department and express your concern for the well being of the Christians in Egypt, asking them to make an inquiry into their status.
- Please keep us informed of any replies or results you may receive! Contact ICC by email at [icc@persecution.org](mailto:icc@persecution.org).

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# India



## Introduction

With a Hindu president, a Muslim vice president, a Sikh prime minister, and a Christian heading the most powerful political party, the Indian government is committed to a policy of tolerance and diversity on a national level. A growing Hindu nationalist movement, however, is threatening this nation-wide policy of tolerance and making deep inroads in several state governments. Their philosophy? India is a Hindu nation, and every other religion threatens Indian cultural purity. Christians are especially a target for the fears of Hindu nationalists. Christian missions that started on a large scale in the 1800s have had incredible success in converting large numbers of Indians, such that there are well over 25 million Christians in India today, amounting to over 2.3% of the total population.

ICC receives more persecution reports from India than from any other country. While this may be a shocking statement, it does not necessarily mean that India is the worst place to be a Christian. One of the reasons that there are so many reports is that there is a functioning free press in India, unlike virtually every other country where Christians are persecuted. While Christian persecution is a definite problem that has not been adequately addressed on a national level, it is still legal for churches to operate quite openly, and the courts will often take the Christians' side against Hindu extremists. That said, Hindu nationalists seem to be gaining momentum and gradually stepping up their opposition to Christians. This can especially be seen in light of the massive assaults on Christians during Christmas 2007 in Orissa.

Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Hindu extremists groups who believe that to maintain cultural purity, they must rid India of all non-Hindus.	Officially about 2.3% or over 25 million.	Varies	Increasing

## Their Stories



### Orissa Christmas Attacks

*Fr. Rabi Sabhasundar, a Catholic priest at the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes in Orissa, conscientiously requested and obtained permission from the local superintendent of police to display a nativity scene outside the church. In response, at 10 a.m. on December 24, 2007, Bikram Rautho, other members of his Hindu extremist organization (RSS), and local Hindu traders forced Christian shopkeepers at the Monday market to close in the Bamuniqam area of Kandhamal district.*

*A sub-inspector of the Bamunigam police station and five village heads of the locality tried to pacify Rautho and his team, but as soon as they left, a mob carrying sticks and guns gathered and started vandalizing shops and attacking Christians. Rautho and his team beat Christians with sticks and iron bars in the market. Then, they came running to the Church with guns, spears, axes, and many other traditional weapons, and completely destroyed it. They broke, looted and burned all the Christian shops they could find. In addition, they poured petrol on three motor bikes, a generator set, and the sound system, and set them on fire.*

*The violence then spread to several villages in Kandhamal district. Not having satisfied their rage, the mob unleashed a reign of terror in almost all the villages of Baliguda Block. It is estimated that at least a dozen Christians have been killed, hundreds of houses and dozens of churches burned, and thousands displaced in the violence that continued until January 1, 2008.*

*Even still, priests, nuns and other Christians are still in the forests or in refugee camps due to fear and anxiety. Though the government has promised to provide relief to the people of both communities, unfortunately Christians are being neglected. Local Christians say tensions persist in the region despite the presence of hundreds of police personnel.*

### **Evangelist Killed and Sacrificed for Hindu Goddess**

*A young Indian evangelist has been killed by Hindu priests seeking human sacrifices for a Hindu goddess, the latest in a series of attacks against Christians in India. Vipin Mandloi had reportedly been missing since October 14, 2007, when he left his house to graze his goats and sheep near a Hindu temple. Reports state that priests were angry that he had converted to Christianity and was preaching the gospel.*



## **The Issues**

### **Anti-Conversion Legislation**

Hindu nationalists have adopted a legal strategy in their attempt to slow the growth of Christianity in India. Through the political party that most closely represents their interests, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP – English translation: Indian Popular Party), Hindu nationalists have introduced legislation to prevent conversions in nine of 28 states. Ironically, the official title for most of these laws is the “Freedom of Religion Act.” Rather than protecting religious freedom, however, this legislation attempts to prevent fraudulent conversions from one religion to another, and puts a significant burden on those who desire to legitimately change their religion. The main problem with the laws is that they define their terms much too loosely. For example, in the Orissa Freedom of Religion Act of 1967, the definition of ‘force’ includes the “threat of divine displeasure.”

Anti-conversion laws are currently in force in Orissa, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh. They have been introduced and are awaiting the governor’s signature in Gujarat and Arunachal Pradesh. In Rajasthan, the State Legislature passed an anti-conversion law, but it was vetoed twice by the governor and

is awaiting legal review from the President of India. One positive development has occurred in Tamil Nadu, where an anti-conversion law adopted in 2002 is now in the process of being repealed.

Anti-conversion laws are further problematic in that their introduction often corresponds with an increase in attacks on Christians. Hindu nationalists view the legislation as a sort of permission to engage in more blatant anti-Christian activities. In addition, while these laws ostensibly govern conversions from any one religion to another, they have never been used to oppose the so-called “re-conversion” of Christians to Hinduism.



### Dalit Status

India is still attempting to deal with the fallout of the ancient caste system. While the caste system is officially outlawed in the Indian Constitution, most Indians continue to operate as if it is still in force. As a result of outlawing caste discrimination, the Indian government has transitioned from calling “outcastes” to calling them “Dalits.” To help counter the centuries of discrimination they have experienced, the Indian government reserves particular positions in schools and government positions specifically to help

Dalits in their economic development. However, current law denies this privilege to Dalits who convert to Christianity or Islam, on the basis that since they have removed themselves from the caste system, they should no longer receive benefits for the injustice they suffered under the caste system. This issue is currently under appeal in a case before the Indian Supreme Court, but the court has been dragging its feet on the issue for four years now. This denial of equal benefits to Christian Dalits is a significant reminder to Indian Christians that they are second-class citizens in India.

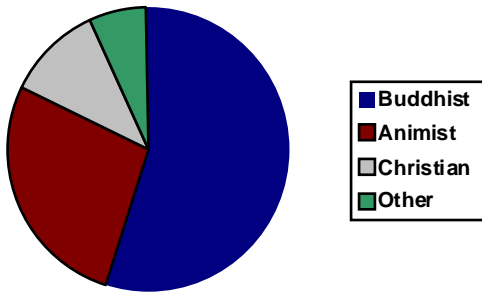
## A Look at the Future

This year has started out with a flurry of arrests of pastors, in addition to a massive outcry over the treatment of Christians in the state of Orissa over Christmas. The state government has refused to grant access to the violence-hit areas to NGOs and aid organizations, and there have been reports that Hindu hardliners are planning to continue stoking tensions. With recent news that the Supreme Court has again postponed making a decision on the case of Dalit Christians appealing the government to receive the same benefits that other Dalits receive, the situation looks bleak for Christians in India. However, there is hope in the fact that India has a functioning democracy and rule of law. The majority of Indians are law-abiding and peaceful. It is the responsibility of the media to tell the truth of what is happening, and the responsibility of Indians to continue to educate each other in the principles of rule of law and equal treatment for all members of society.

## How You Can Help

- Pray for the Christians of India, that they may be further protected from attack, and that the Christian message may be heard by all.
- Pray especially for the Christians who live in Orissa State, in the Kandhamal District. These Christians have experienced a nightmare when they should have been celebrating Christmas, and Hindu extremists continue to threaten them.
- Contact your legislators (Senators, Congressman, etc.) as well as the U.S. State Department and express your concern for the well being of the Christians in India, asking them to make an inquiry into their status.
- Please keep us informed of any replies or results you may receive! Contact ICC by email at [ICC@persecution.org](mailto:ICC@persecution.org)

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# Laos

## Introduction

Landlocked between Southeast Asia, Thailand, and Vietnam, Lao People’s Democratic Republic has suffered under Communist rule since 1975, greatly contributing to its status as one of the world’s least developed countries. The nation is comprised of the Lao Loum (lowland), the Lao Theung (upland), the Lao Soung (highland), which includes the Hmong and the Yao, and a handful of ethnic Vietnamese and Chinese. The majority are Buddhist, others ascribe to Animism, while the often persecuted minorities claim Christianity as well as other unspecified religions.

While persecution is technically banned under the articles of the Lao Constitution, abuse against religious minorities, especially that of the Protestant Christians, is government organized. The government has declared Protestant Christianity, viewed as a threat to the unity of the country, as its foremost enemy.

Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
A Communist government that remains severely dependent on Vietnam for policy direction.	Less than 2% are Christian in a population of 6,521,998.	High	Increasing

## Their Stories

### Government Sweep Cripples Village Church



*Women and children gather in secret to pray, the last remnant of a village church of 2,000. There are no more than twenty left to the once thriving church after indiscriminate government sweeps imprisoned more than 200 Hmong accused of being separatist rebels. The remaining are those brave enough to still gather while fathers and brothers face iron bars or hide in the relative safety of the surrounding jungle. No less than 13 families have buried loved ones. As adherents of a religion seen by the government as motivated only by destructive political interests in the West, the Christian Hmong fear there may be no end in sight.*

## The Issues

### Plight of the Christian Hmong

In August of 2007, an estimated 52 families from five villages were imprisoned – nearly all of the known Hmong families from Vietnam in the wide area. Their persecution, in particular, is in large part due to their cooperation with the CIA’s “secret war” in the 1960s and ‘70s against the Communists who are presently in power in Laos. These grievances were further incited this year when former General Vang Pao was charged by US officials with a conspiracy to overthrow the oppressive Laotian regime. In addition, Protestant Christianity as a whole is considered a threat to national unity and proselytizing a direct challenge to the government’s authority. Christians continue to be hunted, imprisoned and murdered in a country that’s underdeveloped size keeps it tucked conveniently out of sight.



## A Look at the Future

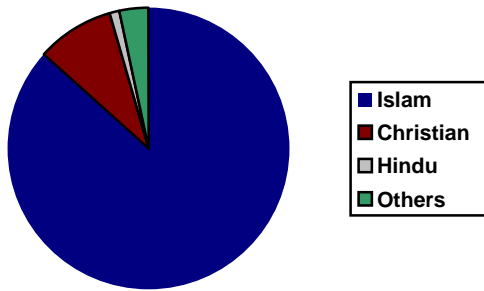
Laos continues to struggle economically as a nation, and its one-party Communist regime has only proven to hinder the development of one of the world’s poorest countries. The government fears Western influence and has made clear its intention to “eliminate Christianity.”

Although the reports of persecution have been few in the first few weeks of the new year, the Christian Hmong remain in grave danger. The one benefit of the country’s size and weak status that the government has been allowed to enjoy for too long is its ability to remain relatively unnoticed in the main stream media. For the sake of the persecuted, this must change in 2008.

## How You Can Help

- Help smuggle Bibles into Laos with a donation to International Christian Concern.
- 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 your legislators (Senators, Congressman, etc.) as well as the U.S. State Department and express your concern for the well being of the Christians in North Korea, asking them to make an inquiry into their status.
- Please keep us informed of any replies or results you may receive! Contact ICC by email at [icc@persecution.org](mailto:icc@persecution.org).

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<p>Choummali Saignason, President  Office of the President  Viangchan, Laos</p>	<p>Bouasone Bouphavanh, Prime Minister  Office of the Chairman  Council of Ministers  Viangchan, Laos</p>



# Indonesia

## Introduction

The republic of Indonesia declared its Independence in 1945 after occupation by Japan from 1942-1945 and a long colonization under the Dutch from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world and Muslims constitute 86.1% of the country's population. 8.7 % of Indonesians are Christians, 1% percent of the population is Hindu, and the remaining 3.4% follow other religions.

The Christians in Indonesia have been attacked by extremely militant Muslims who also forced the closure of churches in many parts of the country. Government officials fail to protect Christians against persecution. Hundreds of churches have been destroyed by extremist Muslims, while the construction of mosques continues to boom in the country.

Source	Scope	Intensity	Trend
Muslim extremist groups, strictly conservative Muslims in government and society	8.7% are Christian in a population of 234.6 million.	Moderate-High	Increasing

## Their Stories

### Attacking Churches

*On June 4, 2007, a protestant church of 60 in West Java, Indonesia, was holding one of its Sunday services. For the congregation, this was just another Sunday in which they would worship the Lord and share the word of God.*

*During the middle of the service, more than 100 radical Muslims stormed the church and began smashing the objects*



inside the church. At the time of the attack, the wife of the Pastor was also beaten by radical Muslims. The members of the church are not new to this kind of persecution. In 2005, their church and dozens more were attacked by Muslim extremists who wanted and still desire to see their country become a wholly Islamic state.

The extremists in Indonesia have been acting as a 'state within a state' and forcing the closure of numerous churches across the country. There have been cases in which Christians were burnt to death inside their churches and still the authorities have failed to protect Christians. The government has only made attempts to appease the radicals by asking the churches to close when the extremist groups begin to mount pressure against them.

## The Issues

### Agents of Death and Destruction

Islamic groups such as Laskar Jihad and Jemaah Islamiyha are responsible for brutally murdering thousands of Christians in places such as Sulawesi, one of several islands that make up Indonesia.

There are reports that Islamic fundamentalists are joined by foreigner fighters in their killing spree which forced Christians, policemen and even soldiers to flee in the late 1990s and early 2000-2001.

Islamic militants and Indonesian police have formed an unholy alliance in their persecution of Christians. In 2007, the International Religious Freedom Report by the State Department said, "While often present, police rarely acted to prevent forced church closings and sometimes assisted militant groups in the closure."

Though the country has the highest Muslim population throughout the world, it is not an Islamic state. The Islamic extremists groups are hell-bent on changing the country's demographics by ridding the nation of Christians and all other minorities. In the process, thousands of Christians are being killed, unjustly imprisoned, and forced to flee their homes. Agents of death and destruction are on the loose in Indonesia.



## A Look at the Future

With the growth of Islamic extremists and the collaboration of some Indonesian officials with these extremists, the future of the country's Christian minorities seems to be extremely bleak.

## How You Can Help

- 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 your legislators (Senators, Congressman, etc.) as well as the U.S. State Department and express your concern for the well being of the Christians in Indonesia, asking them to make an inquiry into their status.
- Please keep us informed of any replies or results you may receive! Contact ICC by email at [icc@persecution.org](mailto:icc@persecution.org).

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President His Excellency Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono Istana Merdeka Jakarta 10110 Indonesia	Andi Mattalatta Minister for Justice and Human Rights Jl.HR RASUNA Said Kav. 4-5 Kuningan-Jakarta 12940 Indonesia Phone: 011 62 21 5253006; Fax: 011 62 21 5253090

## ***Resources for Further Research***

- International Christian Concern: Country Reports [[persecution.org](http://persecution.org)]
- United States Commission on International Religious Freedom [[uscirf.gov](http://uscirf.gov)]
- State Department's 2007 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom [[state.gov](http://state.gov)]
- Operation World [[operationworld.org](http://operationworld.org)]