

IDOP

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

RESOURCES FOR CHURCHES

PERSECUTION.org
INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONCERN

FACTS ON CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION

FACT 1

WHAT IS PERSECUTION?

Religious persecution is the mistreatment of an individual or group because of their faith. The levels of persecution can range from acts of hatred, second-class citizenship, job discrimination, and forced conversion, to imprisonment, torture, rape and death.

FACT 2

WHERE DOES PERSECUTION OCCUR?

All over the world. From 2006-2009, Christians were persecuted in 130 countries (according to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life). The more extreme cases are found in the 10/40 window.*



*Defined by Christian missionary Luis Bush in the 1990s, referring to countries located between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator in the eastern hemisphere. These countries deal with the highest level of socioeconomic challenges and least access to the Gospel.

FACT 3

HOW ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?

Believers are persecuted by both society and the government, meaning that sometimes persecution is policy (such as detention and prison) and other times it is the cultural norm (such as harassment). Other common practices are property damages, displacement from homes, physical assault, and death.



HARASSMENT



PROPERTY DAMAGE



DISPLACED FROM HOME



PHYSICAL ASSAULT



DETENTION & PRISON



DEATH

FACT 4

HOW MANY HAVE BEEN KILLED FROM PERSECUTION?

70 million in 2000 years

(65 percent in the last century alone)

FACT 5

WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION?

- a. **State Religion:** Like Islam and Buddhism
- b. **Political Motives:** Communism
- c. **Human Tribalism**
- d. **Majority/minority**
- e. **Spiritual:** God's Kingdom is expanding as foretold and the opponent fights back

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION

QUESTION 1: WHY DOES PERSECUTION OCCUR?

ANSWER: There is an ongoing war between the Kingdom of God and Satan's fallen angels. Satan knows that the time is short and he wants to destroy humanity because we are made in the image of God. The sources of persecution come from the "kings" and the "inhabitants" of the earth who are in alliance with the "harlot" (Revelation 17). The spiritual battle manifests itself in real-time world politics, law, economy, and society. For example, dictators and the rise of communism during the 20th century that considered "religion as the opium of the masses" led to the massive slaughter of Christians. Christians continue to be imprisoned and tortured today in communist countries, such as China, Cuba, Eritrea, Laos, North Korea, and Vietnam.

The baton for the majority of the persecution in the 21st century has been passed onto fundamental Islamic states (Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan, and Somalia). Buddhist states (Cambodia, Bhutan, and unofficially Sri Lanka) also heavily persecute Christians. In all these countries, Christians are a religious minority, averaging less than five percent, and considered second-class citizens. They face employment discrimination and limited educational opportunity that translate into a cycle of generational poverty. This leaves them vulnerable to crimes, trafficking, false accusations, unfair trials, and manipulations. In addition, Christians endure daily social hostility.

However, in the midst of increasing upheaval, God has already prepared and prophesied about our victory! We know that in the end, the government will be on Jesus' shoulders. Jesus is our ruler and Savior.

Meanwhile, we may ask, "Why all this suffering and pain, and for what purpose?" Persecution is normal and expected. Apostle Paul writes, "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12). And Jesus says, "And all nations will hate you because you are my followers. But everyone who endures to the end will be saved" (Matthew 10:22). The fire of persecution

refines and purifies us as we rely solely on Jesus and experience the Holy Spirit empowering us to be fearless. As the intensity of persecution increases worldwide and God graciously pours out his Spirit onto His people, Christians become a united body and bride of Christ. Moreover, persecution reveals those who are truly devoted to Christ Jesus. In our daily lives, a lot of us are able to confidently say with conviction that we will live and die for Jesus, just like Peter and the disciples vowed, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you!" (Matthew 26:35). However, will we deny and curse Jesus when a Jesus-hating mob confronts us and asks if we are his disciples? Will we compromise in fear of our lives? Persecution challenges us to boldly claim and stand for truth in situations of great harm and hostility. Persecution is the testing of our love for and faithfulness to Jesus.

QUESTION 2: DOES PERSECUTION HAPPEN IN THE UNITED STATES?

ANSWER: Persecution in the United States is not full-fledged when compared to the horrific physical violence in other countries. However, persecution exists as Christian's rights are constricted by the government institutions, such as public schools and work places. The culture of political correctness severely restricts speech. Christians can be easily labeled as bigots and haters when people rise up to speak the truth. The Pew Forum reports that government restrictions on religious freedom (such as zoning permits for churches) and social hostility for religious groups in the United States have increased in the past four years.

QUESTION 3: HOW CAN I HELP THOSE BEING PERSECUTED?

ANSWER: There are many ways that you can help the persecuted Church (*hint: you DON'T have to be a lawyer or underground pastor!)

A: Be informed! Before anything, we need to be informed of what is going on with our brothers and sisters all around

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION

the world. We are one body: "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26a NIV). Without becoming informed, we will not know what to pray. The mainstream press does not cover topics on religious persecution unless there is some larger geo-political overlay. Additionally, in news reporting, the "religious" aspect of the violence is downplayed.

For more information on persecution news, check out:

Web: www.persecution.org

Twitter: [@persecutionnews](https://twitter.com/persecutionnews)

Facebook: facebook.com/persecuted

B. Pray! Prayer is the key. The persecuted in prison regularly tell us they can feel when people are praying. Although we may not see the ongoing spiritual battle with our naked eye, prayer is powerful. After fasting and praying for 21 days, an angel told Daniel, "Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them" (Daniel 10:12 NIV). God moves in response to our prayers. We see that God does not do His good work alone, but He partners with us. Our prayers and interventions move God. We are all a part of His perfect plan.

C. Speak up! The Bible says, "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the right of all who are destitute" (Proverbs 31:8-9). Where can you begin? You can start by raising awareness through engaging with our social media platforms and sharing posts. You can also subscribe to our weekly e-mail alerts. Your next step can be getting your small group and church informed and involved with awareness, advocacy, and assistance projects. ICC gathers signatures for petitions, calls legislators, fundraises, and gives direct assistance to the persecuted abroad. ICC also recruits volunteers and interns. You can call ICC at **800-422-5441** for more information or visit our Web site: www.persecution.org.

QUESTION 4: WHY DON'T PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS JUST LEAVE THEIR COUNTRY?

ANSWER: Think about your own life...you most likely grew up in one country all your life. You have relatives and friends are here. You speak the language. It would not be simple to pick up and leave the country you call home. Some face logistical difficulties even if they want to leave their country. They may be blacklisted by the government for spreading the Gospel, making it hard to bypass airport and security checks for escaping. Others are imprisoned indefinitely. Others simply don't have the funds to relocate.

Despite various difficult circumstances, God is with them in every step of the way, and revealing Himself through their faithfulness. For many who face persecution, their first call is not to escape. They are called to endure and persist.

Let's also not forget that many individuals and groups from other parts of the world choose to leave the comfort of their own homes to partner with the persecuted brothers and sisters in hostile countries, endure suffering together, and be God's chosen workers for the harvest—the saving of many souls. And then you think of all the lost souls—unbelieving family members and friends. There are many others who want to remain in their country despite persecution for the saving of lost souls. And many are called to be martyrs for the sake of Jesus.

QUESTION 5: WHY IS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM SO IMPORTANT?

ANSWER: Religious freedom is the cornerstone to a tolerant society: allowing citizens to freely practice some of the most intimate beliefs they hold. To acknowledge religious freedom, one must also acknowledge the freedom of thought, speech, assembly and conscience. When a society acknowledges and promotes religious freedom, it promotes a free exchange of ideas and beliefs, opening the door for the Gospel to be genuinely shared.

NEXT STEPS: HOW CAN I OR MY CHURCH HELP?



ABOUT INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONCERN: ICC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to relieving the suffering of the persecuted Church worldwide. From supporting underground pastors in closed countries to bringing aid to whole communities affected by persecution, ICC delivers aid in a myriad of ways. To learn more about our targeted funds and success stories, visit: www.persecution.org.



AWARENESS:

Sign up for our resources and learn more about the plight of the persecuted Church:

Monthly newsletter

Weekly newsbites and prayer e-mail



ASSISTANCE:

Give a one-time or recurring gift to one of our nine targeted funds:

Where Most Needed

Suffering Wives and Children

Underground Pastors

Kids Care

Community Rebuild

Save Our Sisters

Bibles to the Persecuted

Broadcasting the Gospel

Hand of Hope (give to a region of your choice)



ADVOCACY:

Raise your voice for the voiceless! Because of our strategic location, ICC has the ability to advocate regularly on the legislative level for the persecuted Church. You can sign up to receive alerts of advocacy opportunities at www.persecution.org.

ICC currently has a petition demanding the government of Bangladesh increase its security for Christian children who are trafficked and sold to Islamic training centers. Enclosed is a copy of the petition and a sign-up sheet. Petitions are due to ICC by **December 1**.



VOLUNTEER:

No one can do everything, but everyone can do something! If you have gifts and talents that you would like to donate to the persecuted Church, we want to hear from you! Visit www.persecution.org/volunteer to learn about the many volunteer opportunities that are available.



PRAY:

The number one request we receive from our partners on the ground is not for aid, food, or relief, but for prayer. The persecuted Church is incredibly edified when they learn that the Body of Christ, who has never met them, knows them by name and is praying for their suffering to end and for courage in the face of persecution. To be fully informed, sign up for one of our many educational pieces.

PETITION CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF SEVEN WRONGFULLY IMPRISONED CHRISTIANS

Ambassador Nirupama Rao
Embassy of India
2107 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

August 12, 2013

Dear Ambassador Rao,

It is with great concern that we petition your government for the immediate release of seven Christian individuals falsely accused, arrested and held without trial for almost five years in Orissa, India.

The accused, which include Messrs. Bijay Kumar Sunseth, Gornath Chalanseth, Budhandeb Nayak, Bhaskar Sunamajhi, Durjo Sunamajhi, Munda Badmajhi and Sanatan Badmajhi, were all indicted by authorities in the Kandhamal District of Orissa for alleged complicity in the 2008 killing of Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati, a Hindu religious and political leader. Swami Saraswati was killed along with four others on the 23rd of August, 2008, in a raid by an estimated thirty armed assailants, setting off a series of violent protests in which 38 people were murdered and 54,000 were left homeless.

However, on September 9th, the Communist Party of India (also known as the Naxalites) claimed full responsibility for the attack that killed Swami Saraswati, providing strong evidence that the seven accused Christians were innocent. Members of this group have since been arrested and formally charged with committing the same crime. In addition, at least one High Court has ruled there was insufficient material evidence against the seven Christians and ordered the "Fast-Track Court #2" in Phulbani to conclude the trial in a "speedy manner."

After conducting an investigation in Orissa earlier this year, International Christian Concern (ICC) discovered that many of the accused had no prior relationship with each other before their arrest. In addition, ICC believes there is strong evidence to suggest that the seven prisoners remain in detention simply for political motives, including the fear that their release will spark a backlash from more radical Hindu groups in the region.

Mrs. Ambassador, the signers of this petition urge you in the strongest possible terms to apply immediate pressure on the appropriate authorities in Orissa and Kandhamal to bring the case of these seven individuals to a speedy and just conclusion. All seven individuals have wives and children who have been left to provide for themselves as their fathers and husbands await a trial which has never come for a crime they did not commit. Sectarian prejudice and religiously-based discrimination should not be allowed to dictate the fate of seven innocent men. Their speedy release will help signal to the world that India is sincere both in its application of the rule of law and the promotion of religious freedom for all of its 1.2 billion citizens.

Sincerely,

International Christian Concern (and attached)

CC:
Secretary of State John Kerry
Senator Robert Menendez, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Senator Bob Corker, Ranking Republican Member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Congressman Ed Royce, Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Congresswoman Elliot Engel, Ranking Democratic Member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs

**PETITION CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF SEVEN
WRONGFULLY IMPRISONED CHRISTIANS
(Please Print & Sign Your Name Clearly)**

Full Name	Street Address City, State, Zip	Email	Sign Me Up For
PLEASE PRINT & SIGN	PLEASE PRINT	PLEASE PRINT	<input type="checkbox"/> Free Newsletter "Concern" <input type="checkbox"/> General E-mail Updates
PLEASE PRINT & SIGN	PLEASE PRINT	PLEASE PRINT	<input type="checkbox"/> Free Newsletter "Concern" <input type="checkbox"/> General E-mail Updates
PLEASE PRINT & SIGN	PLEASE PRINT	PLEASE PRINT	<input type="checkbox"/> Free Newsletter "Concern" <input type="checkbox"/> General E-mail Updates
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WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT PERSECUTION?

PROV 24:11

*Rescue those being led away to death;
hold back those staggering toward slaughter.
If you say, "But we knew nothing about this,"
does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?
Does not he who guards your life know it?
Will he not repay everyone according to what they have
done?*

MATT 5:11-12

*Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute
you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you. . . in
the same way they persecuted the prophets who were
before you.*

LUKE 21:12

*But before all this they will lay their hands on you and
persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues
and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and
governors, and all on account of my name.*

JOHN 15:19-21

*You do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you
out of the world. That is why the world hates you.
'No servant is greater than his master.' If they
persecuted me, they will persecute you also. They will
treat you this way because of my name*

1 JOHN 17:14

*I have given them your word and the world has hated
them, for they are not of the world any more than I am
of the world.*

1 JOHN 3:13

Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.

ACTS 5:40-41

*They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then
they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus,
and let them go.*

ACTS 14:22

*We must go through many hardships to enter the
kingdom of God," they said.*

1 COR 4:11-13

*To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in
rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. . . .when
we are persecuted, we endure it. Up to this moment we
have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the
world.*

PHIL 1:29-30

*For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not
only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.*

1 THESS 3:3-4

*when we were with you, we kept telling you that we
would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you
well know.*

2 THESS 1:4

*Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your
perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials
you are enduring.*

2 TIM 3:12

*In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ
Jesus will be persecuted,*

HEB 13:3

*Remember those in prison, as though in prison with
them.*

1 PETER 4:16

*However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be
ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.*

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT PERSECUTION?

REV 7:13-14

Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

LUKE 21:12

But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name.

LUKE 21:16

You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.

LUKE 21:17

All men will hate you because of me.

MARK 13:9-10

You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them.

MARK 13:12

Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

JOHN 15:18-20

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first...If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.