

## Crisis in Nigeria

A Christian-led peace-building organisation in Nigeria has launched a campaign to increase international pressure on the Nigerian government to stop the killings and bloodshed currently ravaging Nigeria's North and Middle Belt. For two decades now, the Islamic violence targeting Christians in these areas has been met with denial and silence, both inside Nigeria and internationally.

With more than 60,000 Nigerians dead and 1.9 million displaced, Global Terrorism Index now ranks Nigeria third on its terrorism index – below Afghanistan and Iraq. Local and international ministries give whatever help possible to enable Christians and churches in these regions to keep living and working – though about a thousand church buildings have been destroyed. Probably because the violence is ethno-religious and the victims are mostly Christian, world leaders are reluctant to get involved. Please pray.

*Religious Liberty/ACTS*

### Mongolian initiative

A novel but practical outreach initiative in Mongolia is through a Christian radio program that, among other things, offers help in the home to mothers with babies and other young children. Christian volunteers visit the homes to help with childcare and household chores and so build relationships where they can share the love of Christ by their work and words.

*FEBC*

### France's South American territory

The small country of French Guiana on South America's Caribbean coast is governed as an Overseas Department of France. Because of the high subsidies it enjoys from France and the EU, it has shown little desire to be independent. Its people have a higher standard of living than those in neighbouring countries, though with this has come secularism and low moral standards. Three-quarters of the people are nominally Catholic, and even the Protestant minority is weakened by nominalism. Most church growth is among minority ethnic groups.

*Operation World*

### Letters from India: distributing Bibles

*From the north: "We praise God for His faithfulness throughout the year and by his grace we have in this last year distributed more than 10,000 New Testaments and Bibles in this part of North India, also many other literatures. Please pray that the seed which has been sown may bring much fruit."*

*From the south: "We have been able to provide many Bibles for needy people in the churches and we have provided food for the poor children and widows in these regions. Also we have classes with the other pastors and evangelists and introduced in-depth Bible study with these amazing books. It is a blessing for us and our teams to reach more people in these idolatry regions. Our hearts cry for them in their poverty and spiritual need."*

*Bridgeway*

### Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam and location of its most holy sites, the national constitution is the Quran and Muhammad's words and deeds. The judicial system operates under a strict *sharia* interpretation, which includes punishments such as amputation and flogging. Religious police roam the streets to monitor adherence to Islamic dress codes and other 'morality' laws.

Non-Muslim religious buildings are not permitted and no public display of any non-Islamic religion is allowed. Blasphemy carries the death penalty and the threat of being charged with blasphemy suppresses free speech. Anti-terrorism laws define terrorism as 'calling into question the fundamentals of the Islamic religion.' School textbooks encourage *jihad* as a means of spreading Islam and present Christians and Jews as enemies. Saudi Arabia's organisations and networks funnel oil money into projects to propagate Islam and instigate *jihad* across the world.

*Persecuted Church*

### Myanmar's unofficial Wa State

*For a number of years, the United Wa State Army (UWSA) has ruled the unrecognised, self-declared autonomous 'Wa State' in Myanmar. It has been able to do this because of the backing of China and the absence of Myanmar troops and officials in the region. During 2018 and 2019 UWSA arrested more than two hundred Christian leaders and closed more than a hundred churches. Now, in a sequence of unexpected events, UWSA has allowed fifty churches to re-open and has released all the jailed church leaders.*

*BF*

## Zimbabwe: setting prostitutes free

A free dinner offered to prostitutes in Zimbabwe saw 50 women come forward publicly 'to accept Christ.' The outreach was aimed at 'providing hope instead of despair' and 'improvement of their moral state.' Follow-up work aims to establish these women in the faith and help them rebuild their lives. They will also be taught life skills like tailoring, baking and hairdressing. This mission, in partnership with the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, also ministered to 55,000 students at 200 schools and to inmates at six prisons. Thousands made public confessions of coming to faith in Jesus Christ.

*God Reports Magazine*

## Hints of change in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, the Nahdlatul Ulama, a Muslim organisation with 90 million adherents, made the astonishing announcement that it was abolishing the Islamic legal category of *kafir* (infidel). This removes the main theological justification that Islamists use for waging *jihad* against non-Muslims. NU also announced that the current nation-state was theologically legitimate. This is against classical Islamic teaching that the only Islamic state allowed is one under *sharia*, where Muslims are superior to non-Muslims. It remains to be seen if this bold and visionary move has any effect on Indonesia and other Muslim nations.

*Barnabas Fund*

## A good life in Sweden

Like many countries of the Western world, Sweden enjoys the benefits of a good public welfare system and a prosperous way of life. It has also been an attractive destination for migrants, previously from countries of the former Soviet region and more recently from the Middle East. One of the challenges facing the church in Sweden is to reach these people with the gospel. Many migrants settle in districts where they try to maintain their former culture and consequently are not well integrated into Swedish society.

## Stirrings in Mozambique

*Nominally, 50 % of Mozambique's population is Christian and 20% is Muslim. Across the nation the church is growing, helped in places by missionaries from other African nations. But in Mozambique's northernmost province of Cabo Delgado, which is majority-Muslim, Islamic fundamentalists are militant. In April they murdered at least 57 people, smashing their way into Christian houses, schools and churches. This kind of violence is increasing in a country where there has been a large degree of religious tolerance.*

*Barnabas Fund*

## North Korea's control

In North Korea the state tightly controls the media to prevent citizens from getting any information apart from what the government provides. Christians must keep their faith completely secret. Many parents dare not even let their own children know they follow Christ, as pupils are encouraged at school to report on their parents if they see them praying or reading the Bible. Some Christians have been executed for the 'crime' of owning a Bible, and tens of thousands, sometimes entire families, have been imprisoned in labour camps where they are abused, tortured and worked to death. Often they are singled out for the worst treatment.

*Persecuted Church*

## Tanzania: how a local pastor sees education

*"One need that is important is to construct school classrooms to help children of poor families and give them a chance for life. Children here lack education, but good education reduces child labour, child and teenage marriages, child trafficking, the spread of HIV and makes it easier for children to find better paid work when they leave school. We have a project for the completion of two classrooms to replace the crude classroom in attached photo." [For just a few thousand dollars Bridgeway was able to help them build. After the classrooms were finished, the pastor wrote:] "You have encouraged the poor through these new classrooms which if we were charged to pay for, we would be very ashamed because we could not do it. Thank you for giving these children more hope."*

*Bridgeway*

