

Brunei's restrictions

It is increasingly challenging for Christians to express and share their faith in Brunei, a kingdom on the island of Borneo. Conversion from Islam is illegal, which means that converts face enormous pressure to renounce their faith in Jesus. Protestant Christian groups cannot be registered as churches but only as secular organisations, and are required to submit their financial and operational reports to the government each year. All church activities are monitored by the authorities and surrounding community.

Central African Republic

The conflict in Central African Republic, ongoing since 2013, has resulted in thousands of Christians losing their homes and livelihoods, many now living in camps for internally displaced people. Most of the country is occupied by armed militia groups who are guilty of a range of human rights abuses. When Christian leaders denounce the violence, their homes and churches are likely to be ransacked and torched.

Open Doors

Holistic ministry in Ethiopia

From a local evangelist: "About 130 are attending our church each Sunday, which is outreaching well in an area dominated by the Orthodox Church. We focus on teaching, not on exhibitionist behaviour. I lead much of the work to empower deprived families through holistic ministries, meeting the needs of those who are poor, sick, hungry and uneducated. We give Bridgeway books to leaders in the church so they can teach their members. They get much help from these resource books."

Bridgeway

Aid to Lebanon

As Lebanon's dire economic condition threatens to get even worse, people living in neighbourhoods affected by the massive Port of Beirut explosion in 2020 are the hardest hit. This as a predominantly Christian area in a country that tries to maintain a balance between its large Christian and Muslim populations. Christian aid organisations are part of the international effort to rehabilitate the country.

Barnabas Fund

Christians in India's Punjab

Over the years there has been a steady growth in Punjab churches through many Sikhs finding Christ. Christians and Sikhs have for generations lived together harmoniously, but in recent months extremists among the Sikh majority have initiated a spate of attacks on churches. The response of the authorities has been swift and decisive, helping to maintain balance and tolerance in the communities.

Barnabas Fund

Mali – precarious peace

In Mali, a West African Muslim country whose government had a long-standing reputation of tolerance towards religious minorities, Islamic terrorists have made considerable advances towards taking over the country. In spite of this, Christians in Mali report that the government still treats them with fairness and equality. Even Muslim leaders have been preaching against jihadist aggression. Islamic terrorism remains a major threat throughout the region.

BF



More trauma for Haiti

In the Caribbean nation of Haiti, the government has collapsed and neither police nor army seem able to intervene. The country is in effect run by violent gangs, who murder, rape and kidnap on a vast scale. A growing feature is the kidnapping of church leaders and Christians found in church buildings. Almost half the population faces acute hunger, drinking water is desperately scarce and a cholera outbreak last year brought further devastation. Medical services are scarce. Christian aid organisations fly supplies in from the US, but the planes land at remote airstrips where local Christians quickly collect the items for onward distribution. This is more costly than sending by ship, but necessary because the seaports are controlled by gangs.

Mission Network News

Nigeria's mission vision

The populace of Nigeria numbers about 220 million, half of whom identify as Christian. The Nigerian church is one of the world's leading missionary-sending churches. The Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA) is a national network with 150 member agencies and 15,000 missionaries serving in 197 countries. The goal of NEMA's 'Vision 5015' is to train and send 50,000 Nigerians within 15 years as gospel bearers to the North of Nigeria, the Sahel, North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.

Religious Liberty

Life in Qatar

Qatari believers are few in number and many of them keep their faith secret in order to preserve their lives. A good number of Qataris have been converted abroad, but most do not return to the country out of fear. Converts from Islam face severe persecution, including harassment, police monitoring, loss of status and legal problems. Migrant workers, who make up the majority of the Christian population in Qatar, are not free to openly practise their faith. Telling a Muslim about Jesus can lead to prosecution and deportation.

Open Doors

Moldova's deep concern

Is it paranoia or a potential plot? Either way, Moldova is very concerned about a possible Russian-fuelled coup in the country. Russia already controls Belarus as a puppet state and in view of its current attempt to take over Ukraine, Moldova sees itself as the next target. Like Ukraine, Moldova has a strong network of churches, where believers are reportedly ready to stand for Christ no matter what happens. Moldova is Europe's poorest country.

Mission Network News

Some recovery in Iraq

The horrific experience of many Christians in Iraq during occupation by Islamic State has been the subject of a UN investigation. The conclusion is that Christian believers were victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity at the hands of IS.

After IS took control of about one third of the country in 2014, they seized Christian-owned properties, looted and destroyed churches and subjected believers to violence, forced conversions and enslavement. The report follows last year's restoration to their rightful owners of some property seized from Christians.

An estimated 75% of Iraq's Christians have left the country in the last 30 years because of anti-Christian hostility and violence. Pray that this work of the UN investigators in revealing the crimes of Islamic State may bring further improvements for Christians, both in recovery of property and in recovery from the physical and emotional trauma they endured.

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Myanmar's Christians

A number of Bible school students were injured when their building in Myanmar's northern Shan state was hit by army artillery. Since the 2021 coup, the military has unleashed a brutal clampdown on any opposition, resulting in a civil war that has engulfed the country. Myanmar's Christians, particularly in the north's majority-Christian areas, are in the firing line through attacks on their homes and churches. Many are discouraged and frustrated and need prayer:

Open Doors

Help for Niger's Christians

The Republic of Niger, located north of Nigeria, lies largely within the Sahara Desert and is one of the world's poorest countries. About 97% of Niger's population is Muslim, and Christians make up only 0.3%. There is considerable religious liberty, but Islamic radicals are seeking the introduction of sharia law.

Missionaries from Nigeria are vigorous in evangelism and provide much help in Bible colleges and secular education institutes. Poor Christian families suffer through being denied employment and being discriminated against in government schools. In response to this, Nigerian missionaries established a school to help meet the needs of Christian families – though Muslims also attend. Within a few years the school has grown to over 200 students, with classes ranging from pre-school to second year high school.

Bridgeway

Some good news from Kyrgyzstan

Churches in Kyrgyzstan are praising God that 15 of them gained official recognition in 2022. They can now operate lawfully, though the requirement for 200 members per church remains and there is still a waiting time of several years for approvals. To meet the numbers requirement, several churches may share the same building or even amalgamate. Some anti-Christian elements are agitating for stricter requirements, but so far have not been successful.

Kyrgyzstan is a predominantly Muslim country with a secular government. The strict registration requirements are largely aimed at hindering the rise of extreme Muslim groups.

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