



"It was in prison that we found the hope of salvation for the Communists. It was there that we developed a sense of responsibility toward them. It was in being tortured by them that we learned to love them."
~ Pastor Richard Wurmbrand

NIGERIA: Hundreds of Militants Convicted

Sources: Associated Press, Deutsche Welle, International Christian Concern, Open Doors

In early April, more than 500 individuals who had committed terrorism-related crimes were brought before a federal court in Nigeria. The proceedings, which took place in the nation's capital of Abuja, were heard by a panel of 10 judges. Many of the accused submitted guilty pleas. In the end, 386 individuals were convicted, receiving sentences ranging from five years to life imprisonment. Over 100 other cases were adjourned to a later date.

Those convicted were affiliates of the Islamic State West Africa Province or Boko Haram terrorist groups. For years, members of these militant groups have committed horrific acts of brutal violence, particularly in the northern part of the country. While the Nigerian government insists that religion is

not a motivating factor behind the attacks, it is clear that churches and predominantly Christian communities have been specifically targeted. Groups seeking to establish an Islamic state consider Christianity a significant obstacle to their goals. To review previously published prayer alert reports concerning the crimes committed against law-abiding citizens in this West African nation, go to our [country profile](#).



Nigeria's Federal High Court Complex in Abuja.
Photo: Wikipedia / Ovinuchi Prince Ejiohuo

- ***Pray that Nigeria's judicial authorities will continue to pursue and legally prosecute those who have committed such horrific crimes of violence against innocent victims in Nigeria.***
- ***Ask the Lord to strengthen, sustain and comfort His suffering people as they now recover from the aftermath of the attacks – including the resulting loss and trauma.***
- ***May He also minister within the hearts of the perpetrators responsible for carrying out these acts of violence, leading them to true repentance and transformation through the redeeming power of Jesus Christ.***

INDIA: Harsh Anti-Conversion Laws in Chhattisgarh

Sources: Morning Star News, Catholic Connect, International Christian Concern

While many Indian states have instituted laws aimed at preventing coerced or forced religious conversions, the newly passed legislation in Chhattisgarh is notably more severe. Signed into effect by the governor on April 7th, the recently implemented law replaces a 1968 statute that Christian leaders say was frequently used as a weapon against minority communities.

The new law further enforces potential abuse by making it a non-bailable offence to convert anyone through force, allurement, undue influence, misrepresentation, marriage, and now also digital platforms. The ruling also mandates that individuals seeking to convert must give 60 days' advance notice, allowing opposing officials, family members, as well as others within the state, opportunities to scrutinize their intent. Police are then authorized to intervene and make arrests if any violation is suspected.



A pastor is sharing the Gospel in India.
Photo: VOM International

The law specifically exempts conversions to Hinduism, adding that reconverting to one's "ancestral religion" is not treated as a religious conversion. Punishments for violating the new statute are particularly harsh as standard offences carry prison sentences ranging from seven to ten years, along with fines of approximately \$7,000 CAD. If the converting individual is classified as vulnerable (such as a woman, youth, mentally ill person, or someone deemed a member of India's Scheduled Castes), punishments are doubled. In addition, a "mass conversion" (involving more than one convert), could result in a life sentence.

Christian advocacy groups have called the law unconstitutional and discriminatory, arguing that it is designed to harass religious minorities. Vaguely defined terms such as "allurement" and "undue influence" have been misappropriately applied in the past, often leading to false accusations. On April 13th, more than 30,000 people gathered in Jagdalpur to protest the new law and call for its repeal. Similar demonstrations have also taken place in other communities across Chhattisgarh.

While genuinely coerced conversions should be discouraged, laws of this nature have repeatedly been used to falsely accuse, harass, intimidate and mistreat Christians. For access to VOMC's previously published reports, go to our [country profile](#).

- ***Prayerfully uphold followers of Jesus in India, asking the Lord to provide them guidance, courage and wisdom as they seek to faithfully and peaceably share the "Good News" of His great love and gift of eternal salvation amid the growing restrictions.***
- ***Intercede for India's governing leaders, as well as the members of its judicial courts and police enforcement, praying that they would exercise discernment and strive to uphold true justice – not only preventing the misuse of laws for political or personal gain, but also rightfully granting religious freedom for all citizens.***
- ***Additionally, pray that India's anti-conversion laws would be overturned; and that, in the interim, all believers undergoing spiritual oppression and persecution will receive persevering strength and enduring hope through their unity in the Holy Spirit.***

REPORT UPDATE

CHINA: Christian Leaders Released from Prison

Sources: ChinaAid, Church in Chains

In August 2022, police raided a family camp run by the Linfen Covenant House Church, resulting in numerous arrests and the closure of both the church and its affiliated school. (For additional details, see [these reports](#).) Among those arrested were Pastor Li Jie, Han Xiaodong and Wang Qiang.

Since Wang had been released in September 2024, after serving a two-year prison sentence, he was present on April 19th to welcome the release of Pastor Li and Han following the completion of their respective sentences.

According to reports, the release process for each of these believers proceeded relatively smoothly, and they were not required to sign any documents that compromised their faith principles. Staff from the judicial bureau were said to be friendly and even volunteered to

assist in taking commemorative photographs. Family members added that, although their loved ones had been physically imprisoned, their spirits remained free through their steadfast faith in Christ.



Church leaders in front of a banner stating, "Dad, welcome home."

Photo: ChinaAid

Despite this encouraging news, the persecution of Christians in China remains ongoing. Believers continue to face pressure to conform to the requirements of the Chinese Communist Party, placing significant strains on the ability to freely live out their faith. For additional reports addressing persecution in China, visit our [country profile](#).

- ***Pray for Pastor Li, Han, Wang and their families as they adjust to life beyond imprisonment, asking the Lord to restore their strength, grant them healing, and guide their next steps through the restorative process.***
- ***Remember our Christian brothers and sisters throughout China whose lives and religious freedoms are continually at risk because of their commitment to Christ.***
- ***Lift up believers throughout this East Asian nation who are presently imprisoned for their faith, praying that they too would be further encouraged by God's presence, sustained by their eternal hope in Him, and given opportunities to rejoice and share the Gospel in the midst of their challenging circumstances.***

The "Persecution & Prayer Alert" is a ministry of:
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