

# Persecuted and Forgotten?

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## 2022-24

A REPORT ON  
CHRISTIANS  
OPPRESSED FOR  
THEIR FAITH

### Executive Summary



Aid to the  
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# KEY FINDINGS OF REPORT

## Global Overview

The report examines 18 countries where Christians face persecution, covering the period August 2022 to June 2024. Over 60% of the countries surveyed have seen increased human rights violations against Christians.

## Shift in Militant Islamist Violence

There has been a strategic shift from the Middle East to Africa, with transnational Islamist groups expanding their reach in countries like Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Mozambique.

## Authoritarian Regimes

Countries such as China, Eritrea, India, and Iran have ramped up repressive measures against Christians. These actions include detentions, confiscation of religious properties, and restrictions on worship and religious practices.

## Latin America

Nicaragua is highlighted for the first time in this report, due to extreme oppressive measures against Christians, including detentions and expulsions of clergy.



Fr George Jahola in front of his destroyed parish church in Qaraqosh, Iraq



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Sister Magdalena stands amidst the ruins of Kindimba Parish, Tanzania

## REGIONAL SUMMARIES

### Africa

The Sahel region, including Burkina Faso and Nigeria, has seen significant Islamist violence targeting Christians. Militants like Boko Haram and Fulani insurgents have conducted brutal attacks, often timed to coincide with Christian holidays.

### Middle East

Despite some stability, Christian populations face existential threats, notably in Iraq and Syria. In Iran, Christians face increased persecution with arrests rising sharply.

### Asia

Countries such as India and Pakistan have seen attacks on churches and increased abductions and forced conversions of Christian girls. China has intensified its crackdown on Christianity with tighter state control, forced Sinicization, and restrictions on unregistered religious practices.

### Latin America

The Nicaraguan government has aggressively targeted the Catholic Church, expelling clergy, closing institutions, and seizing property. This is part of a wider campaign to suppress religious freedom.

## PERSECUTION TRENDS

### Mass Migration

Islamist violence and persecution have led to the mass migration of Christian communities, destabilizing the long-term survival of the Church in several regions.

### Religious Nationalism

In countries like India and China, religious nationalism and state ideologies are driving increased persecution.

### Legislation Weaponization

Laws against blasphemy and conversions are increasingly used to target and oppress Christians, especially in countries like India and Pakistan.

### Gender-Based Violence

Christian girls and women are at high risk of abduction, sexual violence, and forced conversion, particularly in countries like Pakistan and Egypt.

# COUNTRY-SPECIFIC HIGHLIGHTS

**Nigeria:** Continues to be one of the most dangerous countries for Christians, with militant attacks resulting in mass killings, kidnappings, and destruction of churches and homes.

**China:** Increased state restrictions with mandatory alignment of religious practices to Communist Party values, leading to arrests and closures of unregistered places of worship.

**North Korea:** Christians face severe persecution, including torture, imprisonment, and execution, with practicing Christianity considered a crime against the state.

**Nicaragua:** Government repression includes the arrest and exile of clergy, the closure of Catholic institutions, and increased surveillance of religious activities.



Destruction of St George's Coptic Cathedral in Luxor, Egypt

## THE FACE OF PERSECUTION

These examples highlight the severe persecution faced by Christians in different countries, ranging from abductions and forced conversions to mass killings and destruction of property.

**Nigeria** – Christmas Eve Massacre: On Christmas Eve 2023, suspected Fulani militants massacred over 300 Christians in coordinated attacks on more than 30 villages in Plateau State, Nigeria, destroying homes and food supplies, and leaving many displaced.

**Mozambique** – Sister Killed: Islamists attacked a Catholic mission in Chipene, Nampula Province, on September 6, 2022. They killed Sister Maria de Coppi and burned down the library, boarding schools, vehicles, and the priests' and nuns' houses. Bishop Alberto Vera Aréjula of Nacala said: "The Sister they murdered worked with malnourished babies and children. They are telling us very clearly they don't want us there."

**India** – Killed for Her Faith: 32-year-old Christian, Bindu Sodi, was killed by her uncle, who was part of an extremist mob that attacked her family in Toylanka Village, Dantewada District, Chhattisgarh State on Monday, June 24, 2024. Ms. Sodi's uncle previously pressured the family to renounce Christianity.

**Egypt** – Kidnapping and Forced Conversion: Erin Shehata, a 21-year-old Christian woman, was kidnapped in 2024. Her family received a call from her, stating she was being held against her will, and there were signs that state security was complicit in her forced conversion to Islam.

**Pakistan** – Destruction of Churches and Christian Homes: In August 2023, a mob of thousands torched more than 25 churches and over 80 homes in Jaranwala, Punjab. This attack was prompted by false blasphemy allegations against two Christian brothers.

## CONCLUSION

The persecution of Christians has reached alarming levels in many regions. The report calls for governments, policymakers, and religious leaders to act decisively against this rising trend of violence and oppression to protect religious freedom worldwide.

If you'd like to download the entire report, please click on the QR Code below.

