



Focus on Religious Freedom

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“Rise in Christian Persecution Worldwide” continued:

"It has been a tough year for billions of people. However, for many of the 340 million Christians worldwide who face persecution and discrimination, things have been worse still," said Open Doors CEO H. Blyth.⁽¹⁾

This year, the top 10 persecutors are: North Korea, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Pakistan, Eritrea, Yemen, Iran, Nigeria, and India. Nigeria, with Africa's largest Christian population, is new to this list. Of the 4,761 Christians killed for their faith in 2020, over 2,200 Christians were murdered by radical Islamists in Nigeria alone.

"We've been all fighting a virus that we cannot see with the naked eye. Less known but equally as viral has been the discrimination, isolation and violence against Christians by using Covid-19 as a leverage and justification," said Open Doors President Curry.⁽²⁾ "Extremists ... are emboldened by governments weakened by Covid-19 restrictions, knowing they can steal food and medical supplies from already embattled Christian communities. ...Violence by Islamists in Nigeria amounts to genocide," he said.⁽³⁾

In India, the nationalist political party has encouraged persecution of Christians by sanctioning Hindu extremism and telling the nation only Hindus are truly Indian.

In China, the Communist Party (CCP) uses surveillance technology to track its people and punish them for attending church. A recent report from Radio Free Asia revealed that Chinese Christians are being detained in mobile "transformation" facilities and subjected to brainwashing, torture, and other violent measures to coerce them into renouncing the faith. "It was a mobile facility that could just set up in some basement somewhere," said Li Yeuse who was detained by the CCP for over 10 months. "They mainly target Christians who are members of house churches.... I couldn't sleep; after you've been in there a week, death starts to look better than staying there."⁽⁴⁾

(christian.org.uk, 1/15/21(1); christianitytoday.com, 1/3/21; christianpost.com, 1/14/21(2)(3);
lifesitenews.com, 4/12/21(4); thepersecuted.org, 2/22/21)

***"Jesus says, 'I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.'
Hostility is always at the beginning of persecution of Christians because
Jesus knows that the mission is opposed by the work of the evil one." - Pope Francis***

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