



THE End Time News

THE WAKE-UP CALL

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INDIAN CHRISTIAN DAY
 yeshu bhakti divas
 LOVE | SERVE | CELEBRATE

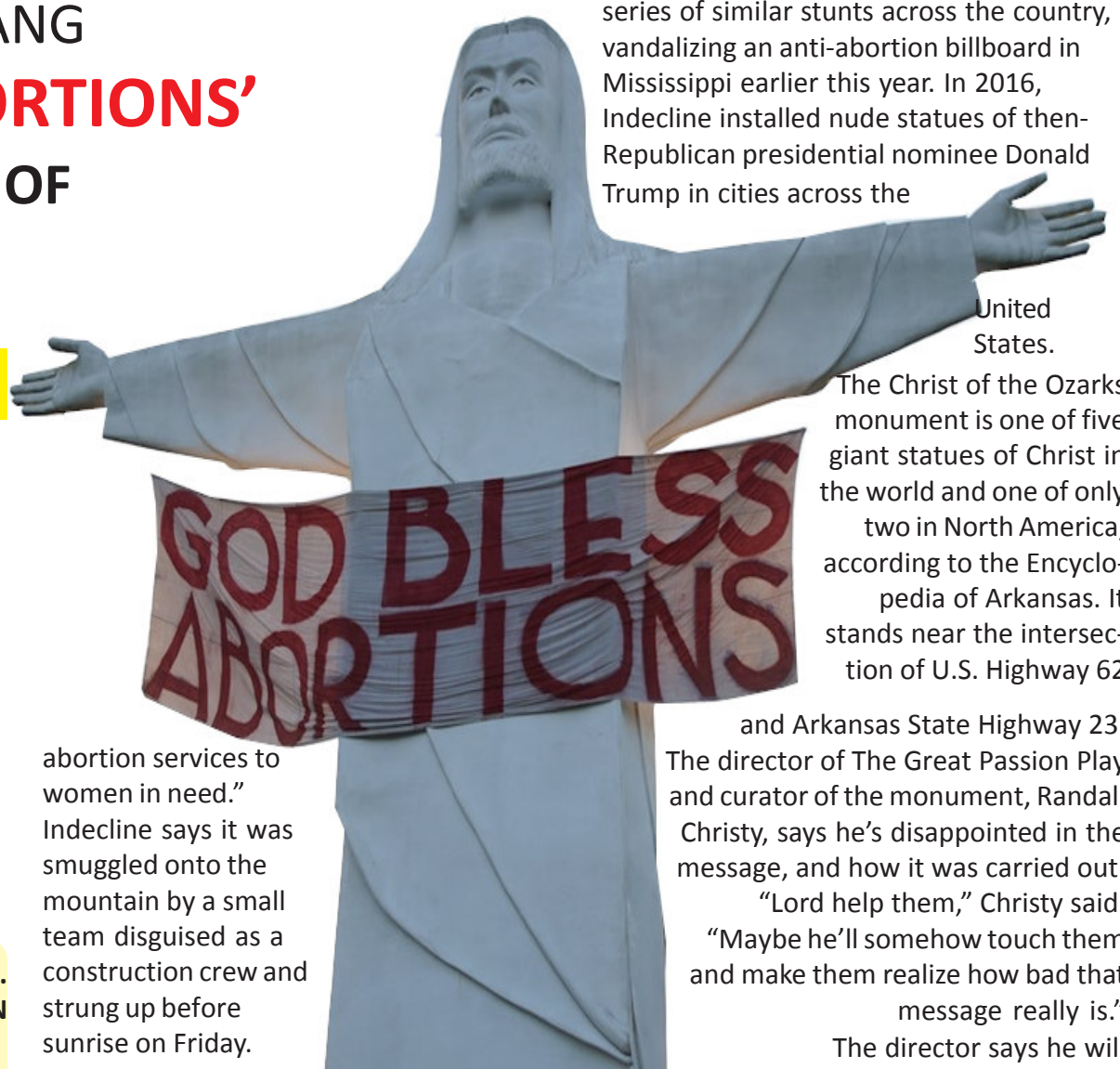
CHRISTIANS IN INDIA CELEBRATE FIRST INDIAN CHRISTIAN DAY

FULL STORY ON - 05

ACTIVIST ARTISTS HANG 'GOD BLESS ABORTIONS' BANNER ON CHRIST OF THE OZARKS MONUMENT: PROTEST

TOP NEWS ▶▶▶▶

Eureka Springs— A group of activist artists is claiming responsibility for a banner strung across the Christ of the Ozarks monument in Eureka Springs overnight on Friday. Guerilla art collective Indecline said in a press release that it is responsible for a "God Bless Abortions" banner hanging across the 67-foot statue of Jesus located atop Magnetic Mountain. The group calls the banner a piece of protest art in "direct response to the dramatic attempts being made in Arkansas and throughout the South, to ban



abortion services to women in need." Indecline says it was smuggled onto the mountain by a small team disguised as a construction crew and strung up before sunrise on Friday.

The activist art collective has performed a series of similar stunts across the country, vandalizing an anti-abortion billboard in Mississippi earlier this year. In 2016, Indecline installed nude statues of then-Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump in cities across the

United States.

The Christ of the Ozarks monument is one of five giant statues of Christ in the world and one of only two in North America, according to the Encyclopedia of Arkansas. It stands near the intersection of U.S. Highway 62

and Arkansas State Highway 23. The director of The Great Passion Play and curator of the monument, Randall Christy, says he's disappointed in the message, and how it was carried out.

"Lord help them," Christy said. "Maybe he'll somehow touch them and make them realize how bad that message really is."

The director says he will be pressing charges against Indecline for trespassing and vandalism. Indecline says this will not be its last project about the issue of abortions.

GEORGE FLOYD MURDER: FORMER U.S. POLICE OFFICER JAILED FOR MORE THAN 22 YEARS



Former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin was sentenced to 22 1/2 years in prison for the murder of George Floyd,

FULL STORY ON - 05

ASIA BIBI REVEALS DESIRE TO BE THE VOICE OF THE PERSECUTED CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY



Asia Bibi, a Christian woman once sentenced to death for al-

leged blasphemy in Pakistan but eventually freed, now wants to be a voice for Christians around the world. Bibi, who addressed the International Religious Freedom Summit on

FULL STORY ON - 07

The church at Philippi would have been more than happy to receive that letter from Paul and receive their brother Epaphroditus who brought the letter from Rome. The letter of joy had a predominant thought, rejoicing in the Lord, which was repeated by the writer himself several times throughout. The mind of Christ is another germ that we get from this epistle. However, the epistle also included several admonitions to the church and to us. As the apostle reminds, we have to be careful about:

1. Leading a life rejoicing in God.

Paul repeatedly reminds us all throughout the letter that we should always rejoice in the Lord. He wrote: Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe (Phil. 3: 1). Let's not forget that this letter was composed from prison! How could Paul be so happy though his freedom to preach gospel was hindered? He indeed was happy that he could speak to the guards of the palace and he could

receive his guests. The circumstance has nothing to do with our choice in rejoicing in the Lord. Wherever you are and in whatever situation you may be, you have to rejoice in the Lord. Find the joy in Christ and not in anything in the world. Though Paul had a lot of things to be happy about and boast, his sole reason for the excitement was Jesus and His cause.

2. The activities of the False Teachers. Dogs is a word of contempt the Jews would use against the gentiles and the apostle used the same word to refer to the teachers who are completely influenced by the Jewish legalists. Paul said: "Beware of dogs" (Phil. 3: 2a). These legalists troubled the believers in Philippi demanding that they should be practicing all the rituals of the Jews in order to be a part of the church of God. This is absolutely unscriptural. The false teachers are real and they exist even today. It is a challenge of the church and of all the believers to stay away from teachings that have been contrary to what you have been taught.

3. Evil Workers: This describes both what these legalists *do* (working evil), but was



Rev. Manuel Joseph Th.M.
Sub-editor, End-Time News

also a word against their emphasis on righteousness with God by *works*. Paul would admit that they have a concern for works, but they were *evil* workers. These people are the 'Cranks' of our Churches; they introduce fads and hobbies; they exaggerate the importance of trifles; they catch up every new theory and vagary, and follow it to the detriment of truth and love. A true Christian is always characterized by good works and those good works do not have to be considered as leading to salvation, rather they are results.

▶▶▶ FULL STORY ON - 04

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Gladys Biju George

HARVEST FOR JUDAH

The word 'Judah' is of great importance in the whole of scripture. In the Old testament it begins as the name of the fourth son of Jacob. Leah said, "Now I will praise the Lord." Therefore she called his name Judah (Gen :29:35). Later on Judah was considered as one of the tribe among the twelve tribes. When Jacob blesses his children before his death, he mentions - Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as lion, who shall rouse him? (Gen :49:9).

Viewing the history it states that, Lord brought Israelities from Egypt under the leadership of Moses, followed by Joshua. Then judges reigned them, after which they requested a king. Saul being the first followed by David and then Solomon. Since Solomon provoked God to anger through his works his kingdom was torn into two. One tribe for his son Rehoboam was

'Judah' and rest all tribes went to Jeroboam. Only for the sake of David, God extended his mercies by giving one tribe to Rehoboam. Even after the death of Joshua when the children of Israel asked the Lord, "Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanities to fight against them?". And the Lord said, "Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand." (Judges: 1:1,2). But later on we see that this Judah went astray from the presence of God. They went into captivity. Still the love of God did not leave them. He spoke to them by sending his servants and prophets. God planned to change their situations. Also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed for you when I return the captives of My people. (Hosea: 6:11). Yes, Almighty Father appointed a harvest for them.

Even though Solomon did wicked works yet God remembered David because of his covenant and mercies. In the New testament we see that Jesus Christ is also known

as 'The Lion of Judah'. Apostle John was in the island of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. In chapter 5 John wept much because no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look at it which was in the right hand of him who sat at the throne. At that time we see one of the elders spoke to him. But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." (Rev: 5:5). Yes, the death of Jesus Christ brought victory and reconciled us to the Creator. He is worthy, the one whom we serve. There awaits a harvest for Judah when Lord remembers them. Circumstances may blow the winds of impossibilities but let us never lose hope and faithfully follow our Master who has appointed a harvest in our lives too. God bless all.



▶▶▶ FULL STORY ON - 02

4. The Mutilation: Here is another severe mention to the insistence of these Jewish legalists on requiring circumcision for Gentiles who wanted to become Christians. This was all done with the idea that someone must become a Jew *first* before they could become a Christian. They did not deny that Jesus was the Messiah, or that His Gospel was the power of God unto salvation, but they insisted that the Gentile converts could only come to the fullness of Gospel privilege through the Law of Moses. However, Paul did not see their insistence on circumcision as something beautiful or noble; he regarded it as an ugly example of mutilation, an act that is performed on the body without any devotion to God.

The Christians have to be very cautious as they live and they have to trust in God so that they can survive all the attacks of the devil through his agents.



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E-TRACTS

A Country Called Heaven

I want to tell you of a strange and wonderful country, a country where there are no tears or heartaches, a country in which there is no sickness, pain or death. The people who live in this country never get tired. They carry no burdens and they never grow old. No one ever says goodbye, for separations are unknown, and there are no disappointments.

In the country of which I am speaking there is no sin, for no one ever does wrong. There are no accidents of any kind. You will travel for thousands of miles and never see a cemetery or meet a funeral procession. There are no undertakers and no morgues. You will never see crape on the doors for no one ever dies. There they need no gravediggers and coffins are unknown. The clothes that are worn are bright and glistening and no one dresses in mourning.

It is a country where nothing ever spoils. The flowers never lose their fragrance and the leaves are always green. There are no thunderstorms, no erupting volcanoes, and no earthquakes. Upon those fair shores hurricanes and tidal waves never beat. There are no germs or fevers, no pestilence of any kind. The sun never shines and yet it is always light for there is no night there. It is never too hot and never too cold. The temperature is exactly right. No clouds ever darken the sky and harsh winds never blow.

There are no drunkards in this country for no one ever drinks. None are immoral; men as well as women are pure. There are no illegitimate babies. Prisons, jails and reformatories never darken the landscape. Doors have no locks and windows no bars for thieves and robbers never enter there. No lustful books are read, and as for unclean pictures, they are never seen. No taxes are paid and rents are unknown. It is a country free from war and bloodshed. Yes, and let me tell you something else. There are no cripples to be seen anywhere; none are deformed or lame. Nor is anyone blind, deaf or dumb; hence, homes for incurables have never been built for all are healthy, all are well and strong. No beggars are seen on the streets for none are destitute and all have enough. Leprosy and cancer, palsy and tuberculosis are words that this country has never heard. No asylums are there for none are feeble-minded. Doctors are never needed and hospitals are unknown.

You ask me how I know all this? Have I been there? No, I have not yet had the privilege of visiting this wonderful country of which I speak, but others have. And One, at least, who has lived there for a long, long time, has come, and told E-Tracts www.mannaforyou.org

me a great deal about it. He says it is called Heaven, and this is His description of it: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." Revelation 21:3,4.

Do you want to go there? Then why not get ready now? It isn't difficult. All you have to do is open your heart to Jesus Christ, the Lord of the country, and ask Him to come in. Then, when the journey of life is ended, you too will go to this wonderful country and dwell there forevermore. Will you do it? Do it —NOW? "Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." John 14:6.



CHRISTIANS IN INDIA CELEBRATE FIRST INDIAN CHRISTIAN DAY



India – According to Asia News, July 3, the feast day of Saint Thomas, has been chosen by Indian Christians as the first Indian Christian Day in India. The event, which celebrates the life and ministry of Saint Thomas the Apostle, is designed to stress that Christianity is not a foreign religion in India. On July 3, Christians of all denominations in

India will celebrate the first Indian Christian Day. According to the founders of the event, July 3 was chosen because it is traditionally observed as Saint Thomas Day, the day celebrating Saint Thomas the Apostle who came to India in 52 AD and brought message of Jesus.

It is historically accepted that Saint Thomas was martyred near Chennai, located in India's Tamil Nadu state, in 72 AD. "By marking it in 2021, and every year henceforth, we, as followers of Jesus, can preserve our identity within India's cultural heritage, while uniting with all those who wish to celebrate it, irrespective of language, custom, creed, region,

or religion," the event's founders claimed.

Father Babu Joseph, a former spokesman for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, said the initiative will also help Christianity overcome the false narratives spread by Hindu nationalists.

"This is an important step in making Christianity part of Indian history and ethos," Father Joseph told Asia News. "In light of attempts by some right-wing organizations to create the impression that Christianity is foreign in India, it is necessary to highlight its antiquity in the country."

FULL STORY ON -01

whose dying gasps under Chauvin's knee led to the biggest outcry against racial injustice in the U.S. in generations.

The punishment — which fell short of the 30 years that prosecutors had requested — came after Chauvin broke his more than year-long silence in court to offer condolences to the Floyd family and say he hopes more information coming out will eventually give them "some peace of mind."

With good behavior, Chauvin, 45, could be paroled after serving two-thirds of his sentence, or about 15 years.

In imposing the punishment, Judge Peter Cahill went beyond the 12 1/2-year sentence prescribed under state guidelines, citing "your abuse of a position of trust and authority and also the particular cruelty" shown to Floyd.

Chauvin was immediately led back to prison. As with the verdicts in April, he showed little emotion when the judge pronounced the sentence. His eyes moved rapidly around the courtroom, his COVID-19 mask obscuring much of his face.

The fired white officer was convicted of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter for pressing his knee against Floyd's neck for up to 9 1/2 minutes as the 46-year-old Black man gasped that he couldn't breathe

and went limp on May 25, 2020.

Bystander video of Floyd's arrest on suspicion of passing a counterfeit \$20 bill at a corner store prompted protests around the world and led to scattered violence in Minneapolis and beyond.

On Friday, Chauvin, who did not testify at his trial, removed his mask and turned toward the Floyd family, speaking only briefly because of what he called "some additional legal matters at hand" — an apparent reference to the federal civil rights trial he still faces. "But very briefly, though, I do want to give my condolences to the Floyd family. There's going to be some other information in the future that would be of interest. And I hope things will give you some some peace of mind," he said, without elaborating. In asking that Chauvin be left off on probation, defense attorney Eric Nelson called Floyd's death "tragic" and said that Chauvin's "brain is littered with what-ifs" from that day: "What if I just did not agree to go in that day? What if things had gone differently? What if I never responded to that call? What if what if what if?"

Floyd's family members took the stand and expressed sorrow about his death. They asked for the maximum penalty. "We don't want to see no more slaps on the wrist. We've been through that already," said a tearful Terrence Floyd, one of Floyd's

brothers. Floyd's nephew Brandon Williams said: "Our family is forever broken." And Floyd's 7-year-old daughter, Gianna, in a video played in court, said that if she could say something to her father now, it would be: "I miss you and and I love you."

Prosecutor Matthew Frank asked the judge to exceed sentencing guidelines and give Chauvin 30 years in prison, saying "tortured is the right word" for what the officer did to Floyd. "This is not a momentary gunshot, punch to the face. This is 9½ minutes of cruelty to a man who was helpless and just begging for his life," Frank said.

Chauvin's mother, Carolyn Pawlenty, appeared in court to plead for mercy for son, saying his reputation has been unfairly reduced to that of "an aggressive, heartless and uncaring person" and a racist. "I can tell you that is far from the truth," she told the judge. "I want this court to know that none of these things are true and that my son is a good man." She added: "Derek, I want you to know I have always believed in your innocence, and I will never waver from that." "I will be here for you when you come home," she said.

The concrete barricades, razor wire and National Guard patrols at the courthouse during Chauvin's three-week trial in the spring were gone Friday, reflecting an easing of tensions since the verdict in April.



Pastor Shibu Thomas
Oklahoma, USA

The earth dries up
and withers, the
world languishes
and withers,
the heavens lan-
guish with the
earth.

Isaiah 24: 4

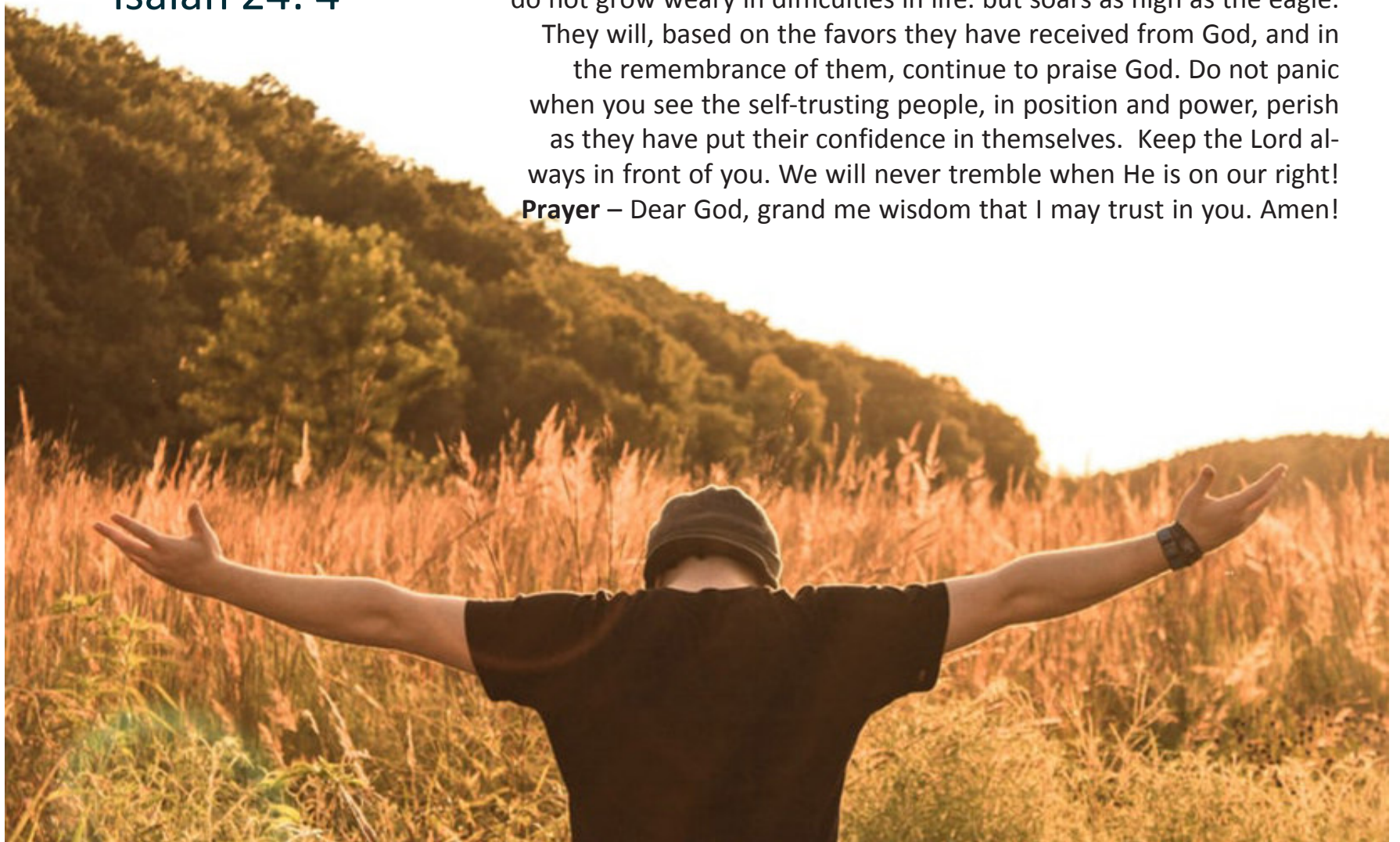
TAKING REFUGE IN GOD!

What is man that God may remember him? Why should a human being, taken from the mud, living in the mud houses and returning back to the same mud, must boast about? The selfishness of the man that says “all these are the works of my hands and I have earned them with my intelligence” is drawing himself to destruction. The great king Nebuchadnezzar said boasting about his own wealth and majesty, “Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?” Even as the words were on his lips, God punished him and he was driven away from people and ate grass like the ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird (Daniel 4: 29-37). At the end of that time, after seven years, he raised his eyes toward heaven, and his sanity was restored. Then he praised the Most High.

The strong and the extraordinary people of this world will surely grow weary. Those who trust in self will be perished. However, anyone who finds his praise in God, and anyone who takes refuge in him, will prosper each step at a time. Such people do not get tired or do not grow weary in difficulties in life. but soars as high as the eagle.

They will, based on the favors they have received from God, and in the remembrance of them, continue to praise God. Do not panic when you see the self-trusting people, in position and power, perish as they have put their confidence in themselves. Keep the Lord always in front of you. We will never tremble when He is on our right!

Prayer – Dear God, grant me wisdom that I may trust in you. Amen!



▶▶▶ **FULL STORY ON - 05**

Ahead of the sentencing, the judge agreed with prosecutors that there were aggravating circumstances that could justify a heavier punishment than the recommended 12 1/2 years — among them, that Chauvin treated Floyd with particular cruelty, abused his position of authority as a police officer and did it in front of children.

The three other officers involved in Floyd's arrest are scheduled for trial in March on state charges of aiding and abetting both murder and manslaughter. They will also stand trial with Floyd on the federal civil rights charges. No date has been set for that trial.

▶▶▶ **FULL STORY ON - 01**

Wednesday via a video message from Canada, expressed her gratitude for people who worked to secure her release from prison, and thanked God for her release.

"From the bottom of my heart I am very thankful to the Lord, who has rescued me from my sufferings and difficulties," said Bibi in an address that was translated into English. "He has given me a fresh start and the opportunity to start a new life with my family." Now safe in Canada, Bibi said that she "wants to be a voice for Christian people, Christians in prison, and in difficulties."

Bibi was convicted of blasphemy in 2010 and sentenced to death, following an incident in 2009.

Bibi said that while working in a field, another person saw her drinking water from a cup previously used by Muslims, and informed her it was improper for a Christian to use that cup. An argument ensued, and Bibi

was reported to a Muslim cleric five days later for her supposed blasphemy. Bibi and her family were the only Christians residing in the area, and had faced pressure to convert to Islam.

She was sentenced to death by hanging for alleged blasphemy. Pakistan's penal code criminalizes speech that insults or defiles the state religion of Islam, but it is often used against religious minorities and many accusations are reportedly false. Pakistan has among the strictest blasphemy laws in the world, as one of only four countries with the death penalty for blasphemy.

Bibi immediately appealed her death sentence, but the Lahore High Court upheld her conviction in 2014. She then appealed to the country's Supreme Court, and was acquitted in 2018. She was then granted refugee status in Canada and moved there in May 2019 with her family.

"When I was in prison, I was very worried about my children and husband," said Bibi. "I was not aware where they were and whether they were safe or not."

"At the same time, I had a hope in the Lord," said Bibi. "Thanks to all of the brothers and sisters who prayed and fasted. Because of their prayers, I am now free."

Bibi explained that her "Christian brothers and sisters worked very hard for my freedom," and said that she is "very thankful to everyone from the bottom of my heart."

"Let us join hands and stand together so we can be a voice for our Christian brothers and sisters who are suffering, and help them out of their situations," she said. "Like the Lord did for me."

At the beginning of the video, Bibi described what her life was like in Pakistan prior to her arrest and blasphemy conviction. She said that some of her happiest memories from her village in Pakistan were celebrating Easter and Christmas with her family.

Pakistan enforced its blasphemy laws 184 times from January 2014 through December 2018, the highest number of any country in the world, according to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. In 2020, there were reportedly 30 Christians jailed on blasphemy charges in Pakistan, including seven on death row. The country has not yet executed anyone for blasphemy.

Submissions Invited



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ARVIND KEJRIWAL URGES CHRISTIANS TO RESTORE DILAPIDATED CHURCH IN DELHI



New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on July 16 promised to probe the demolition of a Catholic church in the national capital and try to restore it.

The leader of the AamAadmi Party said this when a Church delegation led by Archbishop Kuriakose Bharanikulangara of Faridabad met Kejriwal to seek his intervention in the church demolition case.

“Kejriwal has expressed his solidarity with the parish community that lost their church.

The Little Flower Church in Lado Sarai was demolished July 12 by the officers of South Delhi Municipal Corporation in the presence of a large number of police officers. The diocese alleges that the demolishers disregarded the parish priest’s request to move the holy relics and ritualistic materials kept in the church.

More than 2,000 Syro-Malabar migrant Catholics have used the church for daily worship for the past 12 years. The diocese al-

leges the illegal demolition violated citizens’ constitutional right to practice their religion. In an earlier statement on July 14 to the media in Panaji, Goa, Kejriwal promised justice in the church demolition case. He also claimed that the action was taken by the Delhi Development Authority that comes under the federal government. Besides Archbishop Bharanikulangara, the delegation that met Kejriwal comprised vicar general Monsignor Joseph Odanat, Lado Sarai parish priest Father Jose Kannukuzhy, pastoral council secretary A C Wilson, parish representative Sunny Thomas and Mothers’ Forum representative DijiViji. They requested the government to intervene immediately in the matter and take legal action against the perpetrators and restore the church at the site. The archbishop clarified that the diocese doesn’t intend to politicize or communalize the issue.

POLICE ORDERED TO MONITOR CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES AND ACTIVITIES IN CHHATTISGARH

Mumbai – In a circular that could spark controversy, Sunil Sharma, Superintendent of Police (SP) in Sukma district, has instructed his subordinates and the officers in charge of all local stations to closely monitor the activities of Christian missionaries and converted tribal individuals.

Tribal Christians and “Christian missionaries are working regularly in many areas of the district to prepare the tribals for conversion,” says SP Sharma. They try to entice tribals to convert, and this raises the possibility of conflict between local tribals and converted Christians. In fact, conflicts between missionaries and tribal people are a big issue in many tribal areas.

The directive tells officers to “Constantly monitor the activities of Christian missionaries and converted tribals living in the district and report immediately if any of their actions seem suspicious.”

According to the police officer, the circular is more preventive in nature than repressive. He sent it in response to religious conversion activities in the nearby districts, noting that he did not want such a situation to arise



in Sukma.

While acknowledging that everybody has the right to follow their faiths, SP Sharma added that “The police have been asked to gather their own information through their network on religious conversion activities by enticement”.

Father Babu Joseph SVD, a former spokesman for the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India (CBCI), spoke to AsiaNews about the

issue. “The circular issued by the superintendent of police in Sukma district, Chhattisgarh, ordering his subordinates to monitor Christian missionaries smacks of bias and arbitrariness,” said the clergyman. “A police officer is required by the constitution to protect the freedom of individual citizens and guarantee their safety.” “From his circular it appears that the main cause of social ten-

FULL STORY ON - 08

sions in the district under his jurisdiction is the alleged activity of religious conversion by Christian missionaries. However, as a matter of fact, social tensions are not one way – they are always two or more ways. “That being the case, the SP’s pointing at Christian missionaries without mentioning trouble-makers from the majority is nothing more than playing existing power games. A real police officer is expected to use rules to ensure justice for all, especially those who are victims.”

“Unfortunately,” Father Babu noted, “it has become routine for some organisations and some in the administration to target Christian missionaries under the pretext of religious conversion as if they did nothing else for society.” In fact, “I have always wondered why some right-wing organisations have re-discovered love for tribals whose lives have improved thanks to the intervention of Christian missionaries. “Tribals have been there all this time and no Christian missionary forbids anyone from helping Tribals improve their lot. But when a Christian missionary helps Tribals, his action is always labelled as an act of conversion for corruption. “We have to challenge such hypocrisy. Our tribal brothers and sisters are honourable citizens of this country, just like everyone else, and have every right to determine the course of their life, including their religious beliefs.”

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Sparkling Wisdom!

- ❖ “Relying on God has to start all over everyday, as if nothing has yet been done.” — **C.S. Lewis**
- ❖ “God is looking for those with whom He can do the impossible — what a pity that we plan only the things that we can do by ourselves.” — **AW Tozer**
- ❖ Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither. — **CS Lewis**
- ❖ Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light. ~ **Brené Brown**
- ❖ If through a broken heart God can bring His purposes to pass in the world, then thank Him for breaking your heart. ~ **Oswald Chambers**
- ❖ The spirit of complaint is born out of an unwillingness to trust God with today. ... spending your time looking back toward Egypt or wishing for the future all the while missing what God is doing right now. ~ **Priscilla Shirer**
- ❖ Give me the Love that leads the way, Faith that nothing can dismay, Hope no disappointments tire, Passion that'll burn like fire, Let me not sink to be a clod, Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God. ~ **Amy Carmichael**
- ❖ If to be feelingly alive to the sufferings of my fellow-creatures is to be a fanatic, I am one of the most incurable fanatics ever permitted to be at large. ~ **William Wilberforce**
- ❖ Do not have your concert first, and then tune your instrument afterwards. Begin the day with the Word of God and prayer, and get first of all into harmony with Him. ~ **James Hudson Taylor**
- ❖ Unless and until we rest in God, we will never risk for God. ~ **Mark Buchanan**



Abigail Thyvilayil John

NEW IRANIAN BILL COULD ALLOW DEATH PENALTY FOR CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY

Iran— A draft bill was passed in Iran’s parliament on June 8 that encourages the death penalty for those found guilty of spying or cooperating with enemy states, the United States in particular. Iran’s Christians and religious minorities are regularly accused of participating with enemy groups, typically house churches, and cooperating with foreign entities. Should the bill become a law, many Christians will likely face the death penalty for their faith.

The bill was created to address “ambiguities” to Iran’s Penal Code, already arguably one of the harshest in the world. The bill would allow for greater involvement from Iran’s intelligence ministry, often the source for allegations against Christians’ illegal activity. A committee is suggested to be established that would include senior officials from intelligence units, the Revolutionary Guard Corps and the army. Also included in the bill are provisions to support those “on the sanctions list of hostile governments, especially



the United States. [They] will benefit from the maximum limit of protection provided ... and the necessary judicial and legal measures will be taken to protect them” as well as the criminalization of sending media of “crime scenes” to enemy groups. This last provision criminalizes actions taken to hold Iran accountable at the international level for its violent persecution of protestors and re-

ligious minorities.

Iran already increased the criminalization of Christian activity with updates to the Penal Code this year. Christians such as Nasser NavardGol-Tapeh, Ibrahim Firouzi, BitaRezaee, and many more could all have been sentenced to death for their accused crimes under the new bill.

CHINESE AUTHORITIES RAID ZOOM CHURCH SERVICE, ORDER PASTOR TO STOP PREACHING

Police officers and Chinese Communist Party officials raided a church in Guangdong Province, which advocates for justice in China, while its pastor and elder were leading an online worship service on Zoom, forcing the two to stop preaching.

Security agents, police officers and other officials surrounded the Shenzhen Trinity Gospel Harvest Church in Shenzhen city and forced Pastor Mao Zhibin and Elder Chu Yanqing to stop preaching, the U.S.-based group China Aid reported.

The incident took place earlier on July 11, about three months after a church member, Shi Minglei, also known as Hope, fled to the United States. Hope was also attending the online service that was raided.

Pastor Mao and elder Shen Ling also recently signed “A Joint Statement by Pastors: A Declaration for the Sake of the Christian Faith,” led by Pastor Wang Yi of the heavily persecuted Early Rain Covenant Church.

In April, several members of Early Rain Covenant Church were arrested for participating in an Easter worship service on Zoom and ordered to cease all religious activity. Persecution watchdog group International

Christian Concern reported at the time that the Christians were participating in a Zoom worship service from their homes on Easter Sunday when six leaders were arrested and detained by the Public Security Bureau.

The 5,000-member Sichuan house church has not been able to gather in person since the communist regime shut down the church in 2018 and arrested their pastor and other leaders. Since then, it has opted to gather online. “At that time I was also in the Zoom call, but there was a long period of time where I did not hear a thing,” a member of ERCC was quoted as saying. “I thought it’s the network connection issue at first, but I soon heard a quarrel erupt. Our co-worker Wang Jun was questioning some people, [saying], ‘Who are you to do this [to us]?’” Open Doors USA, which monitors persecution in over 60 countries, estimates that there are about 97 million Christians in China, a large percentage of whom worship in what China considers to be “illegal” and unregistered underground house churches. Authorities in China are also continuing their crackdown on Christianity by removing Bible



Apps and Christian WeChat public accounts as new highly restrictive administrative measures on religious staff went into effect this year.

China is ranked on Open Doors USA’s World Watch List as one of the worst countries in the world when it comes to the persecution of Christians.

The country has also been labeled by the U.S. State Department as a “country of particular concern” for “continuing to engage in particularly severe violations of religious freedom.”

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CHRISTIAN STREET PREACHER WINS CASE AFTER BEING FINED, PROSECUTED FOR EVANGELIZING



A court in London has ruled that a Christian street preacher who was fined and prosecuted by the police for evangelizing during lockdown did not break regulations or do anything illegal.

The London Magistrates Court ruled that Joshua Sutcliffe, 31, is “not guilty” as he “was outside and that he had a reasonable excuse as he was traveling to his place of work, as a worship leader,” said Christian Legal Centre, which supported the preacher, in a statement released Friday.

Sutcliffe was detained and surrounded by four police officers as he was preaching and handing out leaflets in North London’s Camden area on Good Friday last April. He was told he was in breach of COVID-19 lockdown regulations by being outdoors without a reasonable excuse.

Sutcliffe explained to the officers that he was a pastor and worship leader and was outdoors to provide charitable services. How-

ever, he was cautioned and received a fixed penalty notice of \$80 (£60), according to Premier Christian News.

“Whilst he was in a gathering and therefore in breach of regulation 7, however, the parties were together and were allowed to rely on articles 9, 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights,” the magistrates said in the ruling. “Their gathering was limited in duration, and they were entitled to gather for street evangelizing.” “They treated me like a second-class citizen,” Sutcliffe was quoted in the statement as saying. “I am a Christian minister of the Gospel, which not so long ago was a treasured and respected vocation in the U.K.”

He added, “During times of need, people need the hope of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what I do on a regular basis, I go to the streets and proclaim the hope and truth of the resurrection of Christ. I was doing this on Good Friday, one of the most important days in the Christian calendar to do

this.”

The preacher said he was “very glad the magistrates threw the case out and that reason and justice prevailed.”

Christians in the U.K. have been “easy targets” for the police during the pandemic “while other groups gathering in significant numbers have been favored by the police,” said Andrea Williams, the chief executive of the Christian Legal Centre.

“After being cautioned on Good Friday, Joshua continued to preach, even giving his own shoes to a homeless man and walking home barefoot,” Williams added. “This is what Christian witness should have looked like during this time of crisis — ministering to people’s physical and spiritual needs. Instead, we have seen Christian preachers and pastors, like Joshua, who have a heart for reaching those in great need in their communities fined, arrested and prosecuted for doing so.”

Last month, another Christian street preacher, David McConnell, who was arrested while preaching the Gospel, won his case against a police department that admitted liability in a lawsuit, agreeing to pay \$4,500 (£3,250) in damages in addition to his legal costs for wrongful arrest, false imprisonment and violating his human rights. West Yorkshire Police arrested McConnell in December 2019 for “a hate-related public order offense” and “for preaching on gay rights and abortion.”

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AT LEAST 3,400 NIGERIAN CHRISTIANS KILLED, 3,000 ABDUCTED SO FAR IN 2021, NGO ESTIMATES

A Nigerian civil society organization estimates that over 3,400 Christians have been killed by extremists since January, a number that nearly surpasses the number of Christian deaths Open Doors USA estimated in Nigeria for all of 2020.

The Anambra-based International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law (Intersociety) released a report this week estimating that at least 3,462 Christians have been killed by extremists in just 200 days, while at least 3,000 Christians have been abducted. The report also estimates that no fewer than 300 Churches and 10 priests have been attacked. The report comes as global human rights activists continue to raise the alarm about the troubling trend of deadly attacks carried out on communities in the farming-rich Middle Belt of Nigeria by radicalized Fulani herders and the country's northeast by Islamic extremists.

Intersociety, an organization headed by Christian criminologist Emeka Umeagbalasi, relies on what it deems to be credible local and foreign media reports, government accounts, reports from international rights groups and eyewitness accounts to compile statistical data.

Due to the lack of adequate government record keeping, death tolls reported by media outlets or government are estimates and often are skewed.

The number of Christians killed so far in 2021 is just 68 deaths less than the total deaths of Nigerian Christians for all of last year, which Christian persecution watchdog organization Open Doors reported as 3,530.

Intersociety estimates that Benue state has the highest number of recorded Christian deaths this year, with 450 recorded deaths. Kaduna state was second with 410 Christian deaths, the group noted.

Many have accused the Nigerian government of inadequately responding to protect its citizens. "The Nigerian Government has continued to face sharp criticisms and strong accusations of culpability and complicity in the killings and supervision of same," the Intersociety report reads. "The country's security forces have so fumbled and compromised that they hardly intervene when the

vulnerable Christians are in danger of threats or attacks, but only emerge after such attacks to arrest and frame up the same population threatened or attacked."

Advocates warn that insurgent groups often experience no accountability for their actions or receive ransoms for kidnappings, though the government denies paying ransom to terrorists.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, is No. 9 on Open Door's 2021 World Watch List for Christian persecution worldwide due to an "extreme" level of Islamic oppression. "It is deeply saddening that till date those responsible for the anti Christian butcheries in the country have continued to evade justice and remained unchecked, untracked, uninvestigated and untried; leading to impunity and repeat-atrocities," Intersociety said in the report. "The surviving victims and families of the dead victims are also totally abandoned by the Government of Nigeria." Jihadi attacks in West Africa have been on the rise since the beginning of 2021, and Nigeria is targeted more than any country in the region, the United States-based Christian persecution watchdog group International Christian Concern reports.

Islamic terrorist groups have killed thousands in the region in recent years as they seek to impose a caliphate and Islamic Sharia law. "Christians have been specifically targeted and disproportionately been affected by this violence. ... The responses by the government are clearly not enough, since perpetrators of such violence are able to continue attacking Christians, and other Nigerians, with impunity," Illia Djadi, Open Doors senior analyst on freedom of religion and belief in sub-Saharan Africa, said, according to ICC.

The Global Terrorism Index ranks Nigeria as the third country most affected by terrorism in the world. It reports that from 2001 to 2019, over 22,000 were killed by acts of terror.

In December, Nigeria became the first democratic nation to be added to the U.S. State Department's list of "countries of particular concern" under the International Religious Freedom Act. Human rights activists have

warned that the violence in Nigeria is reaching the standard for genocide. A commissioner from the U.S. Commission on International and Religious Freedom warned in its 2021 annual report that Nigeria "will move relentlessly toward a Christian genocide" if action is not taken quickly. "When the world and the U.S. ignored ... [the] genocide in Rwanda, hundreds of thousands of people died," former Rep. Frank Wolf, R-Va., said in a panel discussion on Nigeria earlier this month hosted by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.



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