



OpenDoors®

# Persecution Update

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## WORLD

### Top 10 Compass Direct News Stories from 2011

Unceasing, accelerating incidents of bloodshed in Nigeria topped list.

#### 1 – NIGERIA

A presidential election and an acceleration in Boko Haram Islamic extremist attacks led to firestorms of violence against Christians in Nigeria in 2011. Hundreds lost their lives as a result of their identification with Jesus Christ.

#### 2 – PAKISTAN

Shahbaz Bhatti was gunned down on Mar. 2 by suspected Islamic extremists. He was Pakistan's only cabinet-level Christian and an outspoken critic of the country's widely condemned "blasphemy" laws.

#### 3 – IRAN

A death sentence was upheld for a pastor in Iran convicted of "apostasy," or leaving Islam, even though a court determined that he was never a practicing Muslim. Yousef Nadarkhani was arrested in Oct. 2009.

#### 4 – EGYPT

The political chaos that followed the Feb. 11 resignation of President Hosni Mubarak helped unleash Islamist aggression that culminated in an Oct. 9 massacre of 27 people, including at least 23 Christians.

#### 5 – SUDAN

The secession of South Sudan in July left Christians in the north more vulnerable to the Islamist bent of President Omar al-Bashir, and Christians were targeted in territorial warfare in states along the north-south divide.

*Jerry Johnson was shot in the legs on Jan. 5 at the Deeper Life Bible Church in Gombe.*



#### 6 – CHINA

Shouwang Church members were subjected to weekly arrests when they began worshipping outdoors on April 10. Authorities had pressured landlords to keep the large unregistered Protestant church out of their purchased and rented properties in Beijing.

#### 7 – AFGHANISTAN

After intense diplomatic pressure, a Christian convert was released in February. Said Musa, 46, left the country after spending nearly nine months in prison on charges of apostasy, or leaving Islam.

#### 8 – INDONESIA

A suicide bombing of a church in Central Java on Sept. 25 pointed not only to a new level of attacks on religious minorities in the world's largest Muslim-majority country but to a political bent accommodating Islamist extremism.

#### 9 – SOMALIA

Islamic extremists from the al Shabaab militia are vying with the government for control. In their campaign to rid the country of Christians, they seek out secret believers and publicly execute them.

#### 10 – LAOS

Eight Christian leaders were arrested on Dec. 16 after they had gathered some 200 church members for a Christmas celebration. They had secured permission for the event but it was "quite clear that they were arrested for gathering people for worship," said a spokesman.



*Shahbaz Bhatti's sister, Nomi (on right), grieves after her brother's assassination in Pakistan.*

#### AFRICA

Egypt.....	2
Nigeria.....	2
Somalia.....	2
Sudan.....	2
Uganda.....	2

#### ASIA

Bangladesh.....	3
Burma.....	3
India.....	3
Indonesia.....	3
Sri Lanka.....	3
North Korea.....	4

#### LATIN AMERICA

Colombia.....	4
Mexico.....	4

#### MUSLIM WORLD

Afghanistan.....	4
Pakistan.....	4
Turkmenistan.....	4

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# Africa

## EGYPT

### Election Results

**January 31** – The final results in the parliamentary elections confirm an overwhelming victory for Islamist parties. Many Christians accept this, although some church leaders believe this election was not sufficiently objective. Christians might be facing a hard-line radical government that does not care for the rights of Christians.

## NIGERIA

### Death Toll Climbs in Islamist Attacks in Northeast

**January 23** – Seeking to impose Islamic law in Nigeria, the extremist group Boko Haram published an ultimatum in a newspaper on Jan. 3 threatening violence if Christians did not leave predominantly Muslim northern Nigeria in three days. By Jan. 9, the group claimed responsibility for killing at least 44 people in four states. Bomb attacks in Kano, Bauchi and Tafawa Balewa over the weekend of Jan. 21 and 22 may have killed over 200 people. Many Christians were injured and church buildings were destroyed. Open Doors' operations in the cities have been suspended.



*The Living Faith Church in Yobe state was bombed by the terrorist group Boko Haram.*

## SOMALIA

### Convert Whipped in Public

**January 10** (Compass) – Sofia Osman was paraded before a cheering crowd of hundreds and publicly flogged on Dec. 22 as a punishment for embracing a “foreign religion.” Islamic extremist al Shabaab militants took the Christian woman, 28, into custody in Nov. 2011; the public whipping was meant to mark her release. “I saw her faint. I thought she had died, but soon she regained consciousness and her family took her away,” said an eyewitness.



*Sudanese pastor*

## SUDAN

### Government Threatens to Arrest Church Leaders

**January 18** (Compass) – Three men were detained on Dec. 23 in Khartoum because they were Christians. Officials ordered them not to carry out Christian activities in the Islamic nation. In a Jan. 3 letter, church leaders were threatened with arrest if they didn't provide names and contact information for their church members. Sudan President Omar al-Bashir told cheering crowds on Jan. 3 that, following the secession of largely non-Islamic south Sudan last July, the country's constitution will be more deeply entrenched in *sharia* (Islamic law).

## SUDAN

### Police Arrest Evangelist

**January 20** (Compass) – Police beat and arrested a church leader in Khartoum on Jan. 17, apparently because he lives at a church site. Another church leader was arrested on Jan. 16 in a Sudanese church property dispute in which police and courts have been unjustly biased in favor of Muslims. Christianity is now regarded as a foreign religion following the departure of 350,000 people, most of them Christians, to South Sudan since the secession.

## UGANDA

### Convert from Islam Survives Societal Hostilities

**January 23** (Compass) – A false accusation put Hassan Muwanguzi in jail in April, as Muslims attempted to close the Christian school he started a year ago in a predominantly Muslim area. After months of appearing in court, his case was dropped. The convert from Islam lost his family and job because of his Christian faith.

## UGANDA

### Former Muslim Extremist Flees Wrath of Ex-Colleagues

**January 27** (Compass) – After dreams and visions in which Jesus appeared to him, a Muslim sheikh made a full commitment to follow Christ in June 2011. “I sold some of my belongings to build the church structure at Chengera, outside Kampala,” said Hassan Sharif Lubengaa. As a result, threats on his life grew more shrill, and he fled to Kenya, where his movements are severely restricted.

## UGANDA

### Girl Tortured for Christ Regaining Use of Legs

**January 16** (Compass) – In March 2010, Susan Ithungu trusted Christ for her salvation – prompting her father to threaten to slaughter her publicly for leaving Islam. Neighbors notified authorities when they discovered that she was locked in a room with almost no food or water. They took her to a hospital on Sept. 6, 2010, as she had lost the use of her legs; she stayed in hospital care until Oct. 19, 2011.



*Susan, 15, now lives in an undisclosed location and has begun to take tentative steps.*

# Africa

## SUDAN

### Priests Kidnapped

**January 25** (Compass) – Smashing through the gates of a Catholic Church compound on Jan. 15, South Sudanese militia kidnapped two priests at gunpoint in Rabak. On Jan. 19, the two priests were forced to call their bishop with a ransom demand. The incident caused panic and terror among Christians.

## SUDAN

### Violent Ethnic Clashes

**January 26** – Around 120,000 people have been displaced by the violence between the Nuer and Murle Tribes since late December 2011. Several churches were caught up in the conflict and numerous Christians lost their lives. Open Doors provides training to help unify the Sudanese people across ethnic borders.



*Training at the Emmanuel Christian Training Center equips church leaders.*

# Asia

## BANGLADESH

### Teacher's Wife Beaten

**January 31** – Muslim villagers in Kushtia beat up the wife of a Christian literacy teacher on Jan. 29. The victim sustained injury to her head and was admitted to a nearby hospital.

## BANGLADESH

### Christians Tortured

**January 20** – Villagers tortured three Muslim-background Christians in an effort to bring them back to Islam. Open Doors visited the traumatized believers and their families on Jan. 19 to bring encouragement. Right now, they are isolated from their community.

## BANGLADESH

### Beaten for Attending Christian Seminars

**January 11** – A Muslim background believer, Atahar Ali, 47, was beaten in his home by locals on Dec. 31 because he participated in two Christian seminars during the last two months of 2011.

## INDONESIA

### Christians Ordered to Stop Their Activities

**January 25** – A village chief ordered two Christians from Muslim backgrounds to stop their prayer, worship, and Bible study activities in a kindergarten hall in Wagir, East Java on January 18.

## BURMA

### Christian Civilians Attacked

**January 9** (Compass) – Burmese Army troops killed an unarmed farmer and destroyed church property in the Christian-majority state of Kachin despite President Thein Sein's order to



*A Baptist church in Loije held a funeral on Dec. 27 for Maran Zau Ja, who was shot dead without provocation by the Burmese Army on Christmas Day.*

stop the war against insurgents who seek autonomy in the Buddhist country.

## INDIA

### Karnataka Most Dangerous State for Christians

**January 13** (Compass) – With 49 cases of violence and hostility against Christians in 2011, Karnataka remained the state with the highest incidence of persecution, according to the Evangelical Fellowship of India's annual report. At least six anti-Christian attacks occurred between Christmas Eve 2011 and New Year's Day.

*The detail in this painting is symbolic of assaults on Christians. It was displayed at an exhibition in New Delhi last year*



## INDIA

### Incidents of Persecution

**January 31** (Compass) – Hindu extremists are continuing to attack churches and beat pastors in Orissa, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh states. Police frequently arrest pastors on false charges of forced conversion. Seven attacks were recorded in these states in January.

## INDIA

### Christians Fleeing After 'Guilty Verdict,' Fatwa

**January 20** (Compass) – Christian workers are fleeing Kashmir Valley after a *sharia* (Islamic law) court issued a "guilty" verdict against three Christian leaders, issued a fatwa against Christian schools and allegedly launched a door-to-door campaign to bring converts "back" to Islam.

## SRI LANKA

### Monk Leads Assault

**January 12** - About 15 Sri Lankans, led by a Buddhist monk, assaulted Christians while they were gathered for worship on November 20, 2011, in Rukmalgama. At a police inquiry, the pastor was ordered to discontinue his meetings.

## Asia

### NORTH KOREA

#### Sharing the Gospel in Kim Jong-Il's Death Camp

**January 12** – Like some 25,000 other refugees from the north, Hea Woo\*, 70, now lives in South Korea. She arrived not long ago. Shortly after coming to faith in China, she found herself back across the border in a North Korean gulag. She

survived several years of detention in a Nazi-like labor camp before being released three years ago. Hea Woo says, "I almost died in prison. The guards were relentless." God helped her survive and gave her a heart to evangelize other prisoners. A secret fellowship of Christians came into existence. "All five of us survived the camp, because we looked after each other," she said.

\*pseudonym



*An old North Korean woman sits by the roadside.*

## Latin America

### COLOMBIA

#### Bomb Attacks Hinder Church Work

**January 30** – FARC guerrillas have carried out several car-bomb attacks in the last few days in northeastern Colombia. Access to the area is now restricted for the civilian population, making it difficult for the church to communicate with members.



*Colombian paramilitary soldier*

### COLOMBIA

#### Pastor, Church Threatened

**January 30** – On Jan. 25, a member of the right-wing armed groups operating in the south of Cordoba ordered a pastor of a small church to collect one million pesos or they would burn his church with the church members inside it.

*The pastor and his family were threatened by guerrillas and displaced from their home.*



### MEXICO

#### Freedom for Acteal Christian Prisoner

**February 1** – The Ministers of the Supreme Court of Justice reopened the case of one of the Christians charged in events on December 22, 1997, in the community of Acteal, municipality of Chenalhó. He is being acquitted of all charges and 6 other prisoners are also being released with this resolution.

## Muslim World

### AFGHANISTAN

#### The Situation of Believers

**January 2** – Despite the complete lack of religious freedom for Afghan Christians, God has slowly but steadily built His church in the last 30 years. All believers come from a Muslim background, and most believers have personally experienced pressure from relatives and their social network, or they see and hear about it in other believers' lives. It is too dangerous for them to keep a copy of the Bible in their own home. Some training about persecution is given on Christian radio and television and in discipleship training.

### TURKMENISTAN

#### Pastor Still in Prison

**January 27** – Pastor Ilmurad Nurliev was sentenced on October 21, 2010, to four years in labor camp. He is in reasonably good health and has a good reputation in prison. Late in 2011, the regulations for visiting Ilmurad were changed. Ilmurad and his wife Maya realize that he probably will not receive amnesty. They will have to wait another 2 years before he will be released.



*Pastor Ilmurad Nurliev*

### PAKISTAN

#### Christian Charged with 'Blasphemy' Denied Bail

**January 30** (Compass) – A judge has denied bail to a young Christian man charged with desecrating the Quran under Pakistan's controversial blasphemy laws despite the lack of evidence against him. Khuram Masih was arrested on Dec. 5 and has said that he was falsely accused in the case because he had an argument with his landlord. The judge refused to grant bail to Masih on grounds that the case was "very sensitive, and bail to the accused would fan religious sentiments and cause a great mishap."