

Dear Friends Colleagues and Supporters.

The **March 2021** Caucus Newsletter is now available from c.v.r.blacker@btinternet.com. It opens with several general reviews – a video of Bishop Mountstephen talking to the Truro report followed by the newsletter of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Freedom of Religion and Belief documenting the ways in which marginalised communities in various countries have been sidestepped or denied treatment in the coronavirus pandemic. There then follows a global review of the violence experienced by Christian minorities across various countries and a review of the ideologically-driven violence affecting the continent of Africa.

In China, first it was revealed that Uyghur women and girls, then men and boys, and - now - Tibetan women are raped and abused in the ‘re-education’ camps. Heavier Sentences are handed out to Christians for daring to hold to their faith and the Communist party launches a campaign to discredit witnesses of its human rights atrocities. Now sitting on the UN Human Rights Council, China uses its position to ‘redefine’ human rights. Meanwhile, in the UK, the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee criticises western companies who still fail to guarantee that their supply chains are free from slave labour whilst the US Congress re-introduces a bill to stop forced organ harvesting in China.

In Eritrea some good news as two more of the 300 Christians still imprisoned without trial are released.

In Bangladesh two Protestant churches are attacked and ransacked.

In Pakistan, Christian Sajjad Gill who was already serving a life sentence from 2013 on a trumped up charge of sending an allegedly blasphemous text now finds his sentence increased to a death penalty. Meanwhile, Pakistan moves to impose an all-Islamic curriculum in schools which will further marginalise Christian Hindu and Ahmadiyya minorities – whilst Catholic groups launch a new initiative to tackle the ongoing abductions of Christian and Hindu girls.

In India, which under Modi’s influence is developing an aggressive nationalism, Police allow Hindu extremists to attacks Churches - then arrest Christians for objecting!

In Malaysia the High Court rules Christians can now use the word 'Allah'.

From North Korea survivors of the harsh regime describe the courage of Christians who are tortured, starved and abused in the prison camps.

Mozambique is the latest country to melt down under the brutal attacks of Islamist militants: the latest outrage is the beheading of children - some as young as 11.

There is some success with regard to Global Slavery as Sudan joins 49 other countries in ratifying the ILO Forced Labour Protocol. Whether this will translate into real protection has yet to be seen since China and Uzbekistan are also members of this coalition.

There are many ways in which we in the West can help the victims of all this persecution - through prayer, consciousness-raising, writing to your political representatives, and donating to the heroic NGOs who support them. Who these NGOs are, and the work they do, is the “positive news” which lies behind the other reporting. Visit their websites at the foot of the newsletter and discover how you can help them make a real impact.

Do feel free to pass on this newsletter to friends and colleagues, and use the material for presentations, fund-raising, prayer groups, and writing to your political representatives. If any friend wishes to receive this newsletter themselves do invite them to write to me for inclusion in the confidential (GDPR compliant) mailing list.

Kind regards – and Stay Safe!

Dr Russell Blacker / The Caucus for the Persecuted Church