The **February 2021 Caucus for the Persecuted Church Newsletter** (available from [c.v.r.blacker@btinternet.com](mailto:c.v.r.blacker@btinternet.com)) understandably continues to focus on the genocide(s) in **China** and the attempts by many UK parliamentarians to persuade the Government to include the genocide amendment to the Trade bill.  Now that the US administration have recognised the Uyghur genocide - and passed a bill constraining US businesses from exploiting forced labour there – it is becoming increasingly difficult to justify the UK Govt position. There is a further vote in the Commons soon; do please read the recent debate in the Lords and use the information therein to lobby your MP.

The systematic rape of Uyghur women – and men and boys – is brought to light through witness statements and a documentary by the BBC. However, similar state-sponsored abuses of human rights by the CCP against the Falun Gong and Christian communities goes largely unnoticed by the western media. There is a special report on the plight of members of the Church of Almighty God, of another Christian pastor arrested, new Govt restrictions on what clergy can and can’t do, and the installation of facial-recognition surveillance across Chinese churches; as the levels of persecution continue to ramp up Open Doors report that Christians in China are now bracing themselves for “terror”. All this demands an international response which is unlikely to come from the UN or the International Court of Justice or International Criminal Court for reasons that Lord Alton explains in this edition.

There is a report of the US congressional hearing on the ‘genocide’ of Christians now well underway in Nigeria – the country where the most Christians in recent years have been killed for their faith.

But there is good news from **Pakistan** concerning Maira Shabaz and Farah Shaheen who featured in several previous Caucus newsletters. Fiona Bruce MP, the new UK special envoy for freedom of religion and belief, has taken this up with the UK Govt. Do please use this information to write to your MP to argue for asylum for these girls and their families as they are now under significant threat of harm.

From **Ethiopia** come details of a seeming massacre of 750 Christians by Eritrean and Ethiopian soldiers outside an Orthodox church in Tigray. It has been hard to get confirmation of this, but witnesses are now coming forward and it appears that it has a basis in fact. There is an appeal by the Ethiopian Anglican Church.

Human Rights Activists in **Iran** have published their [“Annual Statistical Report of Human Rights Conditions” there](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Lowe8QsJjouC34rHjV6D9nMoqpSsrYT6-mmCYdLIJfdXRM8XxQgv9fUFriOMYHP-sRTPuosJDrCWDNnomeX0ZDoz8Zxh-C4uhLotihAgZyMnsF-rPRsUoU1Vqoh16i659n2gnvEcdSMnUPFrn-FFqJzuPXfm0yc_4KXHNJWN229WqyX10WzyB7yZt-zN6mDKgGA3tR6IEL4V0tjAhoaOBC2ex6dfmtOFYwN-6xrgOrk=&c=klnNO0j5b78g3IlyfmwaOocc--UTn4D59hzQpOxkU797BMjlSS7c0Q==&ch=Po3cNEewlZDoyZtxRH6gvwBFZAi7j2a6k2zXrE7i2m0rnFTlwzrjkQ==) and which documents abuses against the Bahai and Christian population.

From **Malta** comes an attempted assassination “for apostasy” of a Muslim convert to Christianity.

From **India** comes a revelation of efforts to discriminate against Christian and Muslim (but not Hindu) Dalit converts from entering politics. Meanwhile, the leader of the Evangelical Fellowship of India describes how the nationalist ideology of Hindutva puts Christians at risk. The Churches have been very active in helping the population through the Covid crisis which has hit India very hard.

**Algeria** features for the second time as a Christian concert is sentenced to 5 years in prison for “blasphemy”.

There is a report and a prayer guide from our friends in HART (Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust) and, finally, an update on the case of UK Pastor Paul Song who experienced persecution in his longstanding role as Chaplain to Brixton Prison.

There are many things all of us can do to help - through prayer, consciousness-raising, writing to your political representatives, and donating to the faith-based NGOs who support the victims of this persecution all around the world. Who these NGOs are, and the heroic but often unsung work they do, is the “positive news” behind all this reporting. Do please visit their websites at the foot of this newsletter and discover what good work they are doing and how your donations are making 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.