**December 2019 Caucus for the Persecuted Church Newsletter**

**Dear Friends Colleagues and Supporters.**

Wishing you a very blessed, happy – and useful – 2020! The December 2019 edition of the Caucus for the Persecuted Church Newsletter is now available from Dr Russell Blacker <<c.v.r.blacker@btinternet.com>>. It opens with an address by The Prince of Wales on behalf of persecuted Christians and another by Prime Minister Boris Johnson promising to uphold the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro Report.

Christmas has often been a time when attacks are launched on churches but this year there have been mercifully few of these although in three separate incidents in Kenya, Burkina Faso and Nigeria, groups of Christians were selected and brutally killed by Islamists. Dealing with this in respect of Commonwealth countries – particularly Nigeria and Pakistan (see below) - will be an early test of the Foreign Office commitment to the Truro recommendations.

Simultaneously there have been displays of gross anti-semitism plus violent attacks on Jewish communities in the USA, UK and across Europe. It is noteworthy that these attacks are occurring in the more liberal countries but the politicians and media continue to sidestep the true source of this antisemitism.

Persecution is not unique to developing countries: in **Norway four** men kidnap and beat up a Christian Preacher, demanding that he convert to Islam or die. In the UK, politician and Caucus-supporter Rob Flello sues the Lib Dem party following de-selection because of his Christian beliefs.

From the refugee diaspora comes yet *another* disclosure by Syrian Christians stating that they are excluded from access to services by Muslim officials employed by UNHCR. Data on this has now been presented to UNHCR several times but apart from in Greece the organisation has yet to accept its responsibility and bias and review its policies.

At the same time, European countries (especially Sweden) who are desperate to be seen as ‘non-partisan’ are deporting a third of Christian refugees back to Muslim nations where they are likely to be imprisoned or killed.

Hungary, so often despised by the European elites, hosts the Second International Conference on Christian Persecution at which a distinguished assembly of Middle East Patriarchs and Archbishops continue to issue warnings about the survival of their communities - as IS regroups and the West stands aside. However, as told to us at the Vatican a year ago, the same Patriarchs report that a significant number of Muslims, sickened by the depredations of IS and witnessing the courage and faith of persecuted Christians, are turning to Christ.

In northern Iraq Lord Alton visits the site in Semele where Christians were butchered during the earlier genocide, and interviews survivors of the current genocide as well as those still living, years on, in refugee and displacement camps. From the same area comes a new programme to raise awareness of many thousands of displaced *Yezidis* who continue to languish in camps unable to return to their homes under the growing influence of Shiite Iran.

From Iran itself comes a renewed crackdown on church leaders in the run-up to Christmas although SAT-7 are able to report on how the churches continue to grow both here and in Tajikistan.

Page 27 contains a detailed report of the longstanding persecution of Christians in the *Palestinian* territories – a story that Palestinian politicians and our own liberal elites don’t want you to hear.

From Pakistan comes a serious and detailed report about the trafficking of Christians girls into China and what happens to them when they get there.

In China itself religious publications are banned, the ten Commandments removed from Churches, believers are jailed in Psychiatric Hospitals where they are forcibly given medication and subject to beatings, and 20 ‘Bitter Winter’ journalists who report such abuses have now “disappeared”.

Do feel free to pass on this newsletter to friends and colleagues or use the material for presentations, fund-raising, prayer groups, and writing to your political representatives.

As before, if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please reply with a simple ‘No thank you’.

Kind regards

Dr Russell Blacker and colleagues:

The Caucus for the Persecuted Church