

Dear Friends Colleagues and Supporters.

The January 2020 edition of the Caucus for the Persecuted Church Newsletter is now available from Dr Russell Blacker <c.v.r.blacker@btinternet.com>.

This edition opens with a summary of this year's Open Doors World Watch List which measures different aspects of persecution across the globe. The report identifies that 260 million Christians experience high to severe levels of persecution - up from 245 million last year – and that every day, 8 are killed because of their faith, every week 182 churches or Christian buildings are attacked, and every month 309 Christians are imprisoned unjustly. There are a number of other important findings concerning abductions, trafficking, forced marriages, and rape and sexual abuse which merit reading. It is truly staggering how little political and press attention this matter receives compared to other groups issues and causes.

Understandably, women are doubly vulnerable in this respect; a 'marry your rapist' bill - already in force in several countries - is being introduced to Parliament in Turkey: a country where – according to the UN - 38% of women have suffered physical or sexual violence.

A detailed report reveals clear evidence of increasing attacks on Christians and Christian premises across Europe – especially in France. Last year around 3,000 churches, schools, cemeteries and monuments were vandalized, looted or defaced. In France the average number of attacks was 3 per day and in Germany 2 per day.

From Nigeria – incidentally the wealthiest state in Africa – come further horrific accounts of a Christian bride and her entire wedding party being beheaded by Islamists, the same day that 11 Aid workers were killed by the same. That month four seminarians were abducted (their fate as yet unknown), a previously abducted pastor was beheaded, and a Christian student was filmed undergoing execution by an IS child.

Meanwhile things go from bad to worse in totalitarian China: a series of reports show how President Xi and the CCP are seeing to replacing the worship of God with worship of themselves whilst introducing electronic surveillance and social control on an Orwellian scale. Since, apart from the Uyghar, so little of all this features in our Western press it is good to read what is really happening there.

In Iraq four French Christian aid workers have gone missing.

And in the UK Muslim MP Rehman Chishti undertakes a sponsored run in the London Marathon to raise funds for 'Aid to the Church in Need'.

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.

Kind regards

Dr Russell Blacker and colleagues:

The Caucus for the Persecuted Church