

CHINA

ALIMUJIANG YIMITI

More than ten years ago, Alimujiang Yimiti converted from Islam to Christianity. In 2007, the Chinese government closed down his business, and in January 2008, they accused him of “subversion of the national government and endangering national security,” a crime punishable by death. Eventually, he received a 15-year sentence, and this court decision has been upheld as recently as February 2011, despite numerous appeals.

Alimujiang Yimiti
Section 11
The Xinjiang No. 3 Prison
No.1339, Dongzhan Road
Urumqi City
Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region 830013
China

GAO ZHISHENG

A Christian human rights lawyer, Gao Zhisheng has spent his career defending the basic freedoms and human rights of others, yet has suffered himself at the hands of the Chinese government for years, including numerous arrests, harassment, and torture. In open letters to the United States Congress, this Nobel Prize nominee documented some of his horrific treatment at the hands of his persecutors. In 2010, his ordeal intensified with another arrest, his family having to flee China for their safety, and finally with his forced disappearance for 20 months, and then his original sentence being lengthened by 3 years for breaking his “probation.” Throughout this time, Gao has routinely been denied access to legal counsel, prohibited from seeing his family, and subjected to torture.

Gao Zhisheng
Shaya Prison
Shaya County Aksu Prefecture
Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
People's Republic of China
842208

YANG RONGLI

After a raid on the Linfen-Fushan Church by 400 military police, where numerous buildings were destroyed and more than 30 people critically injured, Pastor Yang Rongli and four other church leaders were arrested and accused of disturbing public order. Sentenced to seven years, she is due to be released in 2017. Only halfway through her sentence, Yang

Rongli is suffering from severe medical complications, including diabetes, high blood pressure, and hepatitis. Prison authorities have denied her medical care.

Yang Rongli
Women's Prison
Yuci City
Shanxi Province
China

WENXI LI

In 2012, Wenxi Li was a bookstore worker in Beijing, who moved to Taiyuan to open Enyu Bookstore—another Christian bookstore with local Christians. However, shortly into their endeavor, police raided the bookstore, confiscating thousands of dollars of books and equipment. The police then summoned Wenxi Li to the police station under the pretense of picking up the materials, arresting him immediately upon his arrival there. He and other coworkers were threatened by the security forces for “bringing Christian culture” to their “turf.” He was denied bail and sentenced to two years in prison. His wife and two children have also been harassed and fear for their safety.

Wenxi Li
2nd Detention Center
Xiaodian District, Beige Town
Taiyuan City
Shanxi Province
China

LACHENG REN

Lacheng Ren is a Christian businessman who was one of the sponsors of the Enyu Christian Bookstore in Taiyuan. After the raid, which resulted in the arrest of Wenxi Li, Lacheng Ren was also arrested and then sentenced to 5 years in prison.

Lacheng Ren
2nd Detention Center
Xiaodian District, Beige Town
Taiyuan City
Shanxi Province
China

ERITREA

HAILE NAIZGI

At the time of his imprisonment on May 23, 2004, Reverend Haile Naizgi was serving God as the chairman of the board of the Full-Gospel Church of

Eritrea, the largest Pentecostal church denomination in the nation. Previously, he was a senior accountant with World Evangelical Alliance in Eritrea. Reverend Haile Naizgi, who is married with four children, was one of the key organizers of the Church's activities in Eritrea.

Haile Naizgi
Karsheli Prison
2nd Police Station
Zone 7 Northern East
Zoba Maakel
Asmara
Eritrea

KIDANE WELDOU

Pastor Kidane Weldou was the senior pastor of the church of the Asmara Full Gospel Church in March 2005, when his vehicle was found abandoned downtown, and he was presumably imprisoned by Eritrean security forces. His wife and children have been unable to visit him in prison, and his exact whereabouts remain unknown. He has a degree in science from Asmara University and had been a high school biology teacher. In addition to his church's work, he was also involved in many gospel-related activities among students and professionals from various churches in the nation.

Kidane Weldou
Karsheli Prison
2nd Police Station
Zone 7 Northern East
Zoba Maakel
Asmara
Eritrea

DR. KIFLU GEBREMESKEL

Dr. Kiflu Gebremeskel was the pastor of South-West Full-Gospel Church in Asmara until his imprisonment on May 23, 2004. Dr. Kiflu, a former dean of science and lecturer of mathematics at Asmara University, left his job to serve the Lord as a pastor and Bible teacher in 1999. He has a Ph.D. in mathematics from the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. Dr. Kiflu was also the chairman of the Eritrean Evangelical Alliance, a union of all the churches belonging to the Baptist, Mennonite, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, and other Charismatic churches.

Dr. Kiflu Gebremeskel
Karsheli Prison
2nd Police Station
Zone 7 Northern East
Asmara, Zoba Maakel
Eritrea

IRAN

BEHNAM IRANI

A pastor from Kraj, Iran, Behnam Irani is serving six years after being convicted of "crimes against national security." A Christian for almost 20 years, he has been a pastor since 2002. He is married with two children, all who eagerly await his return home.

Behnam Irani
Ghezel Hesar Prison
Karaj, Albourz State
Iran

FARSHID FATHI

This husband and father of two was first arrested in a wave of detentions of Christians throughout Tehran in December 2010. By April he was the only one from this wave of arrests who was still in prison, and he had spent nearly a year in solitary confinement. His conversion to Christianity is seen as an act against national security, and in March 2012, Farshid was sentenced to six more years in prison. Throughout this time, he has been subjected to extreme mistreatment, including mental torture—being told lies about his wife being arrested and his father being hospitalized for a heart attack. In fact, none of this was true and his wife and children have fled Iran for their safety. Despite these trials and acknowledged times of sadness and discouragement, Farshid has continually cited the plight of other believers and the faithfulness of His Lord as his strength and encouragement.

Farshid Fathi
Evin Prison
Saadat Abad
Tehran
Iran

SHAHNAZ JAYZAN

After a raid on their Assemblies of God Church where all present, including children, were arrested, Shahnaz Jayzan was detained indefinitely. After being released on temporary bail, Shahnaz was summoned back to the police station, at which point she along with her husband, Farhad Sabokrouh, and

two others, were sentenced to one year for “converting to Christianity, inviting Muslims to convert and acting against state security through evangelistic activities.”

Shahnaz Jayzan
Sepidar Prison
Ahwaz
Iran

DAVOUD ALIJANI

Davoud Alijani was part of the congregation of the Assemblies of God church that was raided on December 23, 2011, and all detained by the Iranian police, including women and children. Naser was one of the four sentenced to a year for “converting to Christianity, inviting Muslims to convert and acting against state security through evangelistic activities.”

Davoud Alijani
Karoon Prison
Ahwaz
Iran

ALIREZA SEYYEDIAN

Alireza Seyyedian became a Christian in 2006, and the challenges of being a Muslim background believer reached a new height last year when his house was raided and many Christian materials and his computer were confiscated. On his computer was a video of his baptism in Turkey, which was interpreted by the judge in his case as a statement about the lack of freedom in Iran. He has been accused of holding meetings with former Muslims and distributing Bibles, all crimes in Iran. Many false accusations have been leveled against him as well, including membership in the Jesus Only Cult. In March 2012, he was arrested while fleeing to Turkey. Since then he has been detained in the infamous section 350 of Evin Prison—a dangerous, crammed, and unsanitary section of the prison reserved for political prisoners.

Alireza Seyyedian
Evin Prison
Saadat Abad
Tehran
Iran

PAKISTAN

ASIA BIBI

Asia Bibi is a wife, mother of five, and a farm

worker accused of blasphemy after a discussion with coworkers. On November 7, 2010, Bibi was sentenced to death. She is the first Pakistani woman ever to receive a death sentence for blasphemy. Despite appeals, Asia's life hangs in the balance. Prompted by Asia's case, the former governor of Punjab Province spoke out in favor of greater religious freedom and was murdered by his own bodyguard.

Asia Bibi
Central Jail Multan
Multan City-Punjab
Pakistan

IMRAN GHAFUR

Imran Ghafur is a Christian businessman who, along with his family, had managed many businesses in his home region of Pakistan. However, in July 2009, he was arrested and severely beaten for allegedly burning pages of the Koran while he was burning some trash. Shortly thereafter, he was sentenced to life in prison. His family has had to flee the region because of local hostility towards them. Despite these trials and the disheartening life sentence, Imran has reported he often prays and sings spiritual songs at midnight, and is even asked by Muslim prisoners to pray for them. Even still, Imran is eager to be released to continue missionary work in Pakistan.

Imran Ghafur
Central Jail of Faisalabad
Faisalabad
Pakistan

UZBEKISTAN

TOHAR HAYDAROV

As retribution for his work for the church, 27-year-old Tohar Haydarov was accused of the “illegal sale of narcotic or psychotropic substances in large quantities.” Church members insist that he is “a man with a pure conscience and an honest Christian.” They unequivocally assert these are fabricated charges and are further confounded by the extreme ten-year sentence. Haydarov has appealed his sentence.

Tohar Haydarov
UYa 64/49
Otryad 13
Pos. Shaikh-Ali
G. Karshi, Kashkadarya Region
180020 Uzbekistan

NEPAL

CHHEDAR BHOTE

This 37-year-old pastor, husband, and father of three was arrested and sentenced to 12 years in prison for eating beef. He and his wife are originally from a region in Nepal where eating beef is permissible, but in his local community this act enraged people, as the cow is a sacred symbol in Hinduism. Chhedar's home and all his belongings were destroyed, and his family is struggling without him. They are impoverished, and his young children are taunted for their faith and their father's imprisonment.

Chhedar Bhote
Nakkhu Kargar Sauybu-4
Cod No 44700 GPR Block
Kakkhu Lalitpur
Kathmandu
Nepal

VIETNAM

FATHER NGUYEN VAN LY

Father Nguyen Van Ly has been a vocal and powerful advocate for religious freedom and human rights in Vietnam. Because of his criticism of the government's confiscation of church property and other abuses, Father Nguyen Van Ly was arrested in 2007 and sentenced to eight years in prison. In 2010, he was so gravely ill, he was released after great public outcry for a 16-month medical parole. He was rearrested and returned to prison in 2011 to complete his sentence, despite the fact that his health is still extremely poor.

Nguyen Van Ly
Nam Ha Prison
Team 27
Ba Sao Village
Kim Bang District
Ha Nam Province
Vietnam

KAZAHKSTAN

PASTOR BAKHYTZHAN KASHKUMBAEV

Retiring from ministry in October of 2012, as pastor of the Grace Church in Astana, did not spare Pastor Bakhytzhan Kashkumbaev from being arrested after the mother of one of his members claimed exposure to the church caused her daughter to become schizophrenic. The daughter herself denies this, but churches here are often falsely charged with fraud, espionage, and unknowingly given members

hallucinogens, among other crimes. After a year in prison, he was released for pre-trial house detention, but the secret police re-arrested him right at the prison gates, and he has not been seen by his family in more than five months. The church was raided and many valuables confiscated. There were fears, too, that Pastor Bakhytzhan would be given psychotropic drugs during his interrogation and be deemed unfit to stand trial. He has been repeatedly asked why he left Allah to follow Jesus.

Bakhytzhan Kashkumbaev
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Alash Tas Zhol street 30/1
010000 Astana
Kazakhstan