

**Thank you for praying for this prisoner in North Korea, who has no way to receive mail:**



**Zhang Wen Shi**, also known by his Korean name and title as **Deacon Jang**, is an ethnically Korean Chinese citizen who lived in the border town of Changbai, China. He worked alongside Korean-Chinese pastor Pastor Han Chung-Ryeol, ministering to the North Koreans who often visit Chinese border towns illegally to purchase goods for reselling in North Korea, to seek medicine or other help, and to conduct business.

Deacon Jang regularly hosted these visiting North Koreans for days and weeks at a time before they returned to North Korea, giving them warm clothing, feeding them and providing supplies they might need for their return to North Korea. He saw this as his Christian duty to welcome the stranger, clothe the naked and care for the sick. As a believer, he also shared about his faith to those who were willing.

Many of these North Koreans accepted the message and became Christians. Some returned to Deacon Jang's home repeatedly for more Bible training, and Deacon Jang and Pastor Han also taught them how to share their faith with their loved ones. Their goal was always to see North Koreans return home.

In November 2014, Deacon Jang was kidnapped from China and put in a North Korean prison. Fifteen months later, Pastor Han was lured from his home and brutally stabbed to death in Changbai. Deacon Jang was sentenced to 15 years in prison for his ministry to the North Korean people.

Since North Korea does not participate in the international postal system, The Voice of the Martyrs requests letters to the North Korean Ambassador to the United Nations on Zhang's behalf to respectfully ask for his release, using his Chinese name. Our field workers in the region advise that you keep the letter brief and limit the request to the following: We request the return of Zhang Wen Shi to China.



**The Islamic Republic of Iran** is a theocratic Shiite republic where Muslims are 99% of the population and Christians less than half of 1%. Religious freedom has been crushed even though the constitution guarantees such freedom. Christians may not proselytize, and anyone defecting from Islam may be punished by death. All foreign missionaries were expelled shortly after the government overthrow in 1979. There was been a dramatic uptick in arrests in Iran during 2019-20.

**Naser Navard Gol-Tapeh** was arrested in June 2016 when 30 intelligence agents raided an engagement party at a house near Tehran. Everyone present was detained, including three Azeri Christians from Azerbaijan. Most of the Christians were released after questioning, but Naser and the Azeris were transferred to Evin prison; some sources suggest that Naser was not released because he was perceived as the leader, since he was older than the other Christians present.

The four Christians were held in solitary confinement for two months and subjected to intense interrogation while being denied consular assistance and legal counsel. Ultimately, they were all charged with "illegal gathering, collusion and evangelism." In September 2016, they were transferred to shared cells, and the next month they were temporarily released on bail. The three Azeris were allowed to leave **Iran** in November 2016, forfeiting their bail.

At Naser's trial in May 2017, the court convicted Naser, basing its decision on a Ministry of Intelligence report that allegedly provided evidence that he attempted to undermine national security by establishing an "illegal house church network." The court refused to present the report to Naser's lawyer Hossein Ahmadi Niaz, who was not allowed access to any document in his case file.

**Naser was sentenced to ten years in prison, beginning in January 2018.**

In February 2020, he sent out a letter from prison. He wrote, "I am confident in all hardships and I believe I will become free by Him who I have hope to (my Lord) because the Lord our God does not forget his children ... so let me be bold and say, 'The Lord is my helper.'" "Remember me in your prayers always – you know that your prayers are a sweet smelling offering to God and a sacrifice which is accepted and pleasing to him." He also requested prayer that his family would come to follow Jesus and for the spread of the Gospel in **Iran**.



Address:

**Naser Navard  
Gol-Tapeh**  
Evin Prison  
Saadat Abad  
Tehran  
Islamic Republic of Iran

**Yousef Nadarkhani** is familiar with Christian persecution and Iranian prisons, having spent nearly three years behind bars under a death sentence for apostasy. He was acquitted in September 2012.

This time, the pastor and three of his church members are serving 10-year sentences for “acting against national security” and “promoting Zionist Christianity.” They were sentenced in 2017 and began their prison time a year later after violent arrests in their homes.

Pastor Yousef became a Christian at age 19. His wife is also a Christian convert from Islam, and the couple have been fighting for more than a decade for the rights of their two boys to be recognized as Christians. The boys have been denied certificates showing they completed their studies, because they refused to take Islamic classes.

In June 2020, the pastor’s sentence was reduced to six years; further areas for appeal are also being explored.



Address:

**Yousef Nadarkhani**  
Evin Prison  
Saadat Abad  
Tehran  
Islamic Republic of Iran



**Saheb (Zaman) Fadaee** (left) and **Yasser**

**Mosayebzadeh** are members of Pastor Nadarkhani’s church in Iran and have suffered the same fate as their pastor. Their 10-year sentence have also been reduced to six years.

Along with the prison sentence, these men are among the faithful who were sentenced following their trials to 80 lashes each for drinking wine during Communion.

In June 2020, Saheb Fadaee’s sentence was reduced to six years; further areas for appeal are also being explored.



**Saheb Fadaee**

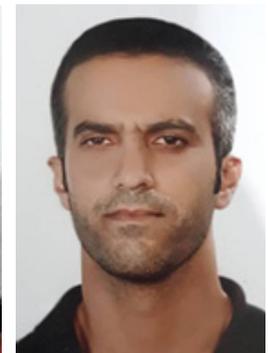
Evin Prison  
Saadat Abad  
Tehran  
Islamic Republic of Iran

Addresses:

**Yasser Mosayebzadeh**

Evin Prison  
Saadat Abad  
Tehran  
Islamic Republic of Iran

A group of nine converts who were helping to lead the Church of Iran in the absence of Pastor Nadarkhani were arrested in 2019 in an extensive roundup of Christians. The accusation against Behnam Akhlaghi and the others was “acting against national security” and “promoting Zionism.” At a court hearing in July 2019, Judge Mohammed Moghisheh called the men “apostates” and argued that the Bible was “falsified.” Legal maneuverings as they faced this Iranian judge nicknamed “Judge of Death” resulted in five-year sentences for each at the notorious Evin Prison in Tehran. They lost their appeal, though neither they nor their lawyers were allowed to attend a February 2020 hearing. Pictures, names and addresses continue on the following page.



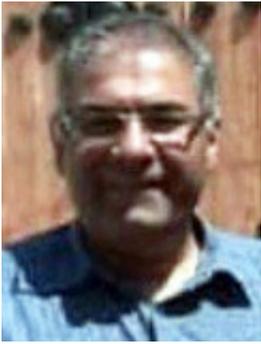
**Behnam Akhlaghi**

**Hossein Kadivar**

**Mehdi Khatibi**

**Babak Hosseinzadeh**

**Shahrooz Eslamdous**



**Abdolreza  
(Matthias)  
Hagh**



**Mohammed  
Vafadar**



**Kamal  
Naamanian**



**Khalil  
Dehghanpour**

All nine of these men are imprisoned at Evin.

Address:  
Evin Prison  
Saadat Abad  
Tehran  
Islamic Republic of Iran



China continues to arrest, torture and jail Christians associated with illegal house churches as they attempt to control or eliminate all religions. 1.3 billion people inhabit the oldest Communist republic, with an estimated 90 million being Christians.

Though many religions are being persecuted, Christians appear to be the hardest hit. The Three-Self Patriotic Movement and The Chinese Catholic Patriotic Society are the government-approved churches where Christians may worship legally. The loyalty of these groups is first to the government and then the church. Children under age 18 may not legally attend any church. Millions of believers choose to worship at illegal house churches rather than register with the government, despite the threat of persecution, torture and prison.

China's present crackdown is putting more believers in prison or under detention than in any other country. The confiscation of church property and Bibles continues—even Bibles officially printed by the government. Yet the Church continues to grow with an estimated 3,000 Chinese coming to Christ each day.



**Pastor John Cao**, a Chinese pastor known for his work among Myanmar's poor, was arrested in March 2017 and charged with "organizing illegal crossings of national borders." One year later, **authorities sentenced him to seven years in prison.**

Pastor Cao, 58, is married to an American citizen and was a long-time resident of North Carolina. The pastor had been crossing the border between **China** and Myanmar for three years without incident and with the knowledge of Chinese officials. In the Wa State of northern Myanmar, Pastor Cao helped build 16 schools that serve 2,000 impoverished children. He also established educational projects to help alleviate poverty among local minority groups.

Experts believe his arrest and sentencing are related to the ruling Communist Party's attempts to control the house church movement.

Pastor Cao became a believer in his 20s. After he married an American citizen, attended seminary and settled in the U.S., he felt led to return as a missionary to his home country. He worked for many years establishing schools in China before turning his attention to Myanmar in 2014.

Pastor John Cao was able to "meet" with his mother during August 2020 via video link. She said John looks fine. He told her he prays daily for his brothers and sisters in Christ and everything going on in the world. He said he is also aware of what has happened to Pastor Wang Yi. He reassured his mother that he does not have to do field work, and that he has time to read and interact with other inmates.

Pray for the pastor's wife, Jamie Powell, and their sons, Benjamin and Amos.

Address:

**John Cao**  
P.O. Box 48-2,  
Wang Daqiao, Dongjiao,  
Kunming city,  
Yunnan province,  
650216  
People's Republic  
of China

**Pastor Li Juncai** of the Yuanyang County Central House Church in Xinxiang, Henan Province, **China**, is serving a prison sentence after protesting the government's attempts to remove the cross atop his church building in 2019. Mass removals of crosses from church buildings began in Henan Province in 2018, with police removing at least 4,000 crosses over the course of a year. Even the crosses of government-run churches were removed, and smaller churches were completely shut down. It is rare to see a cross in Henan province these days.

When authorities brought a crane to remove the cross from Pastor Li Juncai's church in February 2019, a group of Christian senior citizens, mostly women, met the plainclothes policemen and their crane. The Christians sang hymns and prayed while attempting to keep the authorities from taking the cross. Police beat and arrested the protestors before forcing the church gate open and removing the cross. Pastor Li Juncai told the workers they should proceed according to the law and that he opposed the removal of the crosses. He was arrested and accused of disrupting public service.

Pastor Li Juncai was charged with embezzlement and obstructing government administration, sentenced to **five and a half years in prison** and given a fine of more than \$7,000 USD.



Address:

**Li Juncai**

No. 3 Prison Section  
Jiao'nan Prison  
Yinghu Road,  
Jiefang District,  
Jiaozuo city,  
Henan province  
454003  
People's Republic  
of China



**Pastor Zhang Shaojie** of Nanle County Christian Church in Henan Province, is currently serving a 12-year prison term for “gathering a crowd to disrupt the public order” and a fabricated fraud charge.

Pastor Zhang was initially detained in November 2013 when authorities asked to meet with him at his church. Instead, authorities bound Zhang, who served as the local head of the **China** Christian Council and Three-Self Patriotic Movement, and took him into custody.

In the week around Zhang's detention, authorities detained more than 20 church members, related to a land dispute between the church and the Nanle county government. Zhang's daughter, her husband and their baby fled the area to avoid arrest, and she later told China Aid that she'd received more than ten threatening phone calls. Callers threatened to “wipe out her entire family” if she continued to speak out about the church.

**Zhang was sentenced to 12 years in prison on July 4, 2014**, and his August appeal to a higher court was rejected. Zhang was 49 when he was arrested.

**Zhang Shaojie** was transferred to another prison in January 2021. According to an official letter received by his sister, Zhang Shaojie spent the next two months in “concentrated education” at the Zhengzhou City prison. After the initial two-month period, prisoners are allowed one family visit per month.

He still has **more than four years left** in his 12-year prison sentence.

Address:

**Zhang Shaojie**

Xinmi Prison of  
Zhengzhou,  
Henan Province  
P O Box 841  
Xinmi Post, No. 61,  
Songshan Avenue East  
Xinmi City, Henan  
Province  
People's Republic  
of China

**Alimujiang Yimiti**, a former Muslim, became a Christian many years ago and was an active Christian in the growing Uyghur church in **China**.

He was arrested in January 2008 and accused of “subversion of the national government and endangering national security,” a crime punishable by death.

In 2009, the Kashi District Intermediate Court secretly sentenced Alimujiang to 15 years imprisonment on the charge of “illegally providing state secrets to foreign nationals.” In 2010, the Higher People’s Court of Xinjiang **Uyghur Autonomous Region** tried the case in private, refusing to let Alim’s lawyer appear in court. They upheld the ruling from the Kashi District Intermediate Court, sentencing him to **15 years of imprisonment**.



Address:  
**Alimujiang Yimiti**  
Section 11  
The Xinjiang No. 3 Prison  
No.1339, Dongzhan Road  
Urumqi city  
Xinjiang Uyghur  
Autonomous Region  
830013  
People’s Republic of China



**Pastor Wang Yi** is the influential leader of Early Rain Covenant Church in the city of Chengdu, Sichuan province — one of the best-known house churches in **China**. He and his wife, Jiang Rong, were detained in December 2018 and charged with “inciting subversion of state power” and “illegal business operations.” A former law professor, Pastor Wang has been vocal in calling on the state to uphold religious liberties.

Address:  
**Wang Yi**  
Jintang Prison,  
Sichuan Province,  
Huopan Road,  
Qingjiang Town,  
Jintang County,  
Chengdu City,  
Sichuan Province,  
610409  
People’s Republic  
of China

Early Rain Covenant Church had been under pressure from the authorities for some time, but matters escalated in December 2018. That night and the next day, police raided church members’ homes and arrested them. By the end of the week, about 150 church leaders and seminary students were in police custody, and the church had been forcibly closed.

Since then, most of those arrested have been released, including Pastor Wang’s wife Jiang and church elder Li Yingqiang. However, several others remain incarcerated. Some Early Rain church members have been sent back to their hometowns and banned from Chengdu. Others have lost jobs or been evicted. Some of those who were released say they were abused and deprived of food and water.

Early Rain may have been targeted because of its open approach to church mission, which included posting sermons online and street evangelism. The church also ran a Bible school for about 100 students and had a primary school. Its meetings around the city regularly attracted more than 800 people each week. In 2018, Pastor Wang wrote a declaration signed by hundreds of Chinese pastors, which includes a statement of Christian beliefs and a call for an end to persecution; it also recognizes the Chinese government’s authority. Many of those in China who have signed the ‘Declaration for the Sake of the Christian Faith’ have suffered persecution since.

In December 2019, Pastor Wang Yi was sentenced at the Intermediate People’s Court of Chengdu City, Sichuan province after a secret trial. He was charged with “instigating subversion of state power” and “illegal business management” for being the senior pastor of Early Rain Covenant Church. Along with the **nine year sentence**, he was sentenced to deprivation of his political rights for three years plus a \$7,000 penalty. Wang Yi was much thinner than before, but he was in a good mental state. His lawyer said, “God is continuing his ministry ... by moving him from the courtroom to prison,” and he will not appeal the sentence.

Though Chengdu prison officials have stated that Wang Yi is doing well in prison, a secret source says that’s not true. According to the source, prison authorities are holding Pastor Wang Yi in “closed” imprisonment. He is not allowed to meet or speak with other inmates, except for two criminal offenders who are charged with watching him. Pastor Wang eats and sleeps in the same cell with these two men, and guards refer to the group as the “three person mutual supervision group.” In addition, Pastor Wang is fed moldy rice, and when medical treatment is necessary, he is given prison medications which are expired, inferior drugs that prisons “buy back” from hospitals which cannot use them. Please pray for his health while he serves his sentence and for the Early Rain Church.

# This page and the next for prayer only.

The country of Eritrea has been returning all mail (with return addresses) since the beginning of the pandemic.



**Eritrea** has been dominated by war and drought over the past four decades. An Italian colony, Eritrea was given to Ethiopia in 1951 by the United Nations. Independence was finally achieved in 1993, with Eritrea retaining the entire coastline of Ethiopia, along the Red Sea, where the climate is hot and dry. A small African nation, Eritrea is about the size of Pennsylvania, with a population estimated close to 4.5 million. Religious freedom supposedly exists in this country, with the population being roughly half Muslim and half Christian. Most of the Christians are Orthodox. Fear of Islamist extremism and Christian evangelicalism has led

the government to impose severe restrictions on international aid workers and non-government organization (NGO) projects.

During 2002, the government banned most Christian denominations; however, the Roman Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran and Orthodox churches seemed to escape persecution and continued to function normally until recently, when three Orthodox priests were detained, two wedding ceremonies interrupted, and a New Year's Eve celebration broken up. Many attendees at these functions were arrested.

Eritrea has no privately owned radio or television stations. In September 2001, the government closed the private press for "endangering national security." News is delivered through state-run agencies, and criticism of the government is not tolerated.

**Pastor Kidane Weldou disappeared in March 2005** and is presumably detained by **Eritrean** security forces. His vehicle was found abandoned in downtown Asmara. He is a senior pastor of the Full Gospel Church and has been a leader in the church for many years. Weldou is married and has four daughters. Pastor Weldou is also a member of the executive committee of Gideons International in Eritrea.

The most recent update posted by Voice of the Martyrs for Dr. Gebremeskel is dated September 28, 2012: Three Eritrean pastors remain in dire conditions in prison in Eritrea, along with about 2,000 other Christians. **Dr. Kiflu Geremeskel, Kidane Weldou and Haile Nayzgi remain in prison** and believers in Eritrea have heard nothing from the three men for many years.

However, one of Dr. Kiflu's church members glimpsed her pastor from a distance during a medical check-up at the hospital. She reported that he had lost a lot of weight and looked frail. She was unable to get closer because of the security detail that accompanied him. **Please continue to pray for these men and the other Eritrean believers in prison. Pray that they know they are not forgotten.**



**Dr. Kiflu Gebremeskel**, a leading figure of Full Gospel Church of **Eritrea**, founder and senior pastor of Southwest Full Gospel Church and member of the executive committee to the Full Gospel Church of Eritrea, was **arrested in May 2004**. He was taken from his home in Asmara Gejeret, at approximately 5 a.m. Dr. Gebremeskel was a mathematics lecturer, department and faculty head at the University of Asmara until 1999, when he became a full-time pastor at the Southwest Full Gospel Church. He has a Ph.D. in mathematics from University of Chicago. His wife and four children have not been able to visit him.





**Mussie Ezaz** was arrested in September 2007 when Eritrean authorities came after him for his work as a youth minister with the Kale Hiwot (Word of Life) Church. He worked as an evangelist for 14 years and served with Youth for Christ for a number of years before developing a ministry to youth at the Kale Hiwot Church, and other believers describe him as a kind, generous and gifted leader.

Mussie was taken to a small village prison staffed by young soldiers. He managed to escape and tried to flee the country with the aid of fellow Christians. From the border town of Adi Kaih, about 60 miles away, he called his family to let them know he had made it. Shortly afterward, authorities caught up with him, and he was rearrested.

Subsequent reports indicate Mussie is located at the maximum-security crime investigation unit (Wenjel Mermera) in the capital city of Asmara. Many other pastors and church leaders are and were imprisoned there, some for more than 10 years. As with other Christians imprisoned in Eritrea, **Mussie has never been tried or charged.** His family has no idea whether he will ever be released.

Mussie is married and has three children waiting for him to come home.



**Pastor Meron Gebreselasie** was arrested in June 2004. Meron, also known as Million, was pastoring Massawa Rhema Evangelical Church in Massawa, a Red Sea port city. He was also serving the general population as an anesthetist at Massawa Hospital.

His arrest followed shortly after a visit from Pastor Tesfatsion Hagos of Asmara, who was arrested less than two weeks ahead of Meron's arrest. Meron was on his way to return Tesfatsion's belongings to his home in Asmara. He was detained at a checkpoint and has languished in prison ever since.

His first two months of detention were spent at Asmara's 2nd Police Station; he was subsequently moved to the maximum security Wenjel Mermera Central Criminal Investigation Interrogation Center, **where many of Eritrea's prominent Christian leaders are believed to be held since the 2002 religious crackdown. None has been charged, tried or given prison sentences.**

The pastor is not married.



During the early morning hours of May 23, 2004, **Haile Nayzgi** was arrested and taken to Police Station #1 in Asmara. He was the leader of Eritrea's Full Gospel Church, which is comprised of 120 to 150 house meeting groups. The church groups were closed by government decree at a meeting with a government official in May 2002. At that time the church groups were given an application form for government registration. The Full Gospel Church filled out the form and returned it to the appropriate offices, but no reply was ever received.

Haile is married and has three children. He was previously an accountant with World Evangelical Alliance. During his incarceration, Haile has been refused any personal contact with his family. When family and friends went to take food and clothing to the prison for Haile in August 2004, they were told that he was no longer there. Mr. Nayzgi has been moved to various locations since his arrest, but the actual charges against him have not been released, if they have even been determined.

The Voice of the Martyrs posted an update on March, 2016:

After Haile Nayzgi's wife was warned she might also be arrested, she and the children decided to flee. After an arduous journey, they reached another country, where they have been safely living for the past several years. The Voice of the Martyrs has been supporting them and visiting regularly. Some time ago, in a message from Haile smuggled out of Eritrea, he thanked VOM for our support of his family. It was encouraging for him to know they were well while he remains in prison.

## The Voice of the Martyrs has reported some prisoner releases since December 2020

Christian convert from Islam **Ebrahim Firouzi** has been in and out of prison in Iran since 2011. His officially noted activities include “propagating against the **Islamic regime of Iran**, organizing evangelistic activities, contact with foreigners and anti-Islamic revolutionary networks outside the country, and administering a Christian website. More recently, he was imprisoned for “acting against national security, gathering, and collusion,” which brought him a five-year sentence in 2015. In October 2019, Ebrahim was released to internal exile and sent more than 1,000 miles away. He was required to check in weekly with police. His initial two-year term of exile was then extended by 11 months after an “unauthorized” absence.

After he received an unexpected package of Bibles in the mail, Ebrahim was summoned to a court hearing in early February 2021, after which he was rearrested. He could be returned to prison for another three years. Before his court appearance, Ebrahim said, “I ask Christians to pray not for my acquittal, but for the great name of God to be glorified.”

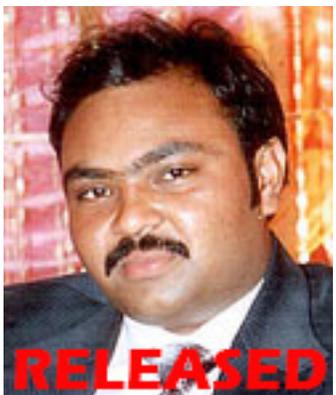


**Mussie Eyob** became a Christian while living in Saudi Arabia, where he was subsequently arrested for preaching to Muslims, a capital offense in that country. He was deported to his home country of **Eritrea**, where he was lost in the prison system, as he was not well known.

When The Voice of the Martyrs caught up with him at Me’etr prison camp (built to house Christians arrested for their faith), he was working on behalf of the sick and the weak. Before his arrest, he supported his mother and sister.

Mussie was one of many prisoners suddenly released by Eritrea during the pandemic.

**Twen Theodros** was 23 years old when she was first arrested in 2004 by the harsh government of **Eritrea**. At that time, Twen was a new believer. She became a key senior women’s leader in prison, looking after and caring for other women prisoners. People who know and love Twen say she is a precious, lovely Christian who is determined to remain a faithful follower of Jesus. They also say she was willing to stay in prison as long as God enabled her to serve Him there by helping others. Twen was another of the prisoners released by Eritrea during the pandemic.



Businessman **Imran Ghafur** was sentenced to life in prison and fined 100,000 rupees (\$1,155 U.S.) in 2010, according to The Voice of the Martyrs contacts. **Pakistan** police had arrested Imran Ghafur in Punjab province after Muslims accused him of burning pages of the Quran.

Imran said he was using his time in prison to study God’s Word. “I am happy the Lord wants to use me for His Kingdom.”

Imran Ghafur, who spent more than 10 years in prison on a false blasphemy charge, was acquitted and released late last year. During his 10 years in prison, Imran fought the blasphemy charge through the court system, with multiple delays, but on Dec. 8, 2020, the court acquitted Imran of all charges. He was released to his family on Christmas Day. He went into hiding as extremists angry about the court’s decision continue to issue threats.

## **COLOMBIA**

Despite the signing of the peace agreement, many church leaders in Colombia are regular targets of threats, forced displacement and assassination. The illegal armed groups that are present in large parts of the country continue to severely restrict religious activities, and churches are frequently extorted by them. Indigenous communities also suffer conflict-related violations, and have seen their freedom of religion severely curbed by courts ruling in favor of traditional authorities seeking to impose religious uniformity in their communities.

### **Members of Indigenous Communities**

Members of indigenous communities who have converted to other faiths or no faith, and away from the religious beliefs and practices promoted by their leaders, face suffering and severe discrimination within their communities. This includes threats of forced displacement or being excluded from receiving certain benefits by indigenous authorities, generally known as “cabildos.” Despite strong protections for freedom of religion or belief in the constitution and in international treaties that Colombia has signed up to, Colombian courts have ruled that these rights do not extend to those living on indigenous lands where collective cultural rights take precedence. In some indigenous reserves religious minority children suffer daily discrimination because the school curriculum is designed to comply with traditional beliefs.

Since there are so many, and new cases occur on a regular basis, it’s best to address your cards generally and let our contacts distribute them. Please write to them care of the following address.

### **RELIEC**

**Calle 24A # 75-83 piso 2**

**Barrio Modelia**

**Bogotá D.C**

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## **CUBA**

### **Revs Bernardo and Damaris de Quesada**

On 8 January 2016, government officials initiated the destruction of Reverend Bernardo de Quesada Salomon’s church without warning. Numerous other Apostolic Movement church leaders in Camagüey and Las Tunas, as well as other parts of the country, were arbitrarily detained or confined to their homes by state security agents at that time – presumably to stop them from going to support the churches which were being demolished. Nonetheless, the de Quesada family and their church continue to congregate and worship, and have since rebuilt their church.

### **Revs Bernardo and Damaris de Quesada**

**Calle 4ta No 27**

**Versalles, Camagüey**

**CP 70600**

**Cuba**

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### **The Rigal Family**

Ruth and Joel are the children of Reverend Ramón Rigal and Pastor Adya Expósito Leyva. They attended school online as their parents didn't want to send their children to a state-run school where they would be bullied because of their beliefs. However, parents are legally required to send their children to state-run schools and protecting Ruth and Joel in this manner is illegal in Cuba. As a result, in April 2019, both Ramón and Adya were imprisoned for their decision to home-school their children. Adya was released from detention in March 2020 after serving over 11 months of an 18-month sentence for the alleged crime of other acts against the normal development of a minor. For many months during their parents' imprisonment, Ruth and Joel weren't able to live in the same house. Ramón was released in June 2020 after serving 14 months of a two-year sentence. For much of his imprisonment, Ramón was in a maximum security unit where he was denied conditional freedom, and was allowed to receive only one visit per month.

### **La Familia Rigal**

**1075 Luz Caballero entre Donato**

**Mármol y Varona**

**Ciudad de Guantánamo**

**Guantánamo**

**Cuba**

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### **Dr Oscar Elías Biscet**

Dr Biscet was released in early 2011 after serving eight years of a 25-year sentence, following a deal brokered by the Catholic Church. He was imprisoned because of his human rights work. He is now at home with his wife, Elsa, but they feel very unsafe so rarely go out except to attend church on Sundays, and Dr Biscet remains under constant state surveillance. He is a devout Christian and pacifist, and was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2011. CSW has been supporting Dr Biscet for over ten years.

### **Dr Oscar Elías Biscet and Elsa Morejón**

**Hernández Acosta**

**464 e/ 8va y 9va**

**Lawton**

**Ciudad de la Habana**

**Cuba**

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### **Reverend Juan Carlos Núñez**

Rev Juan Carlos Núñez's church belongs to the Apostolic Movement, an unregistered network of Protestant churches. In October 2017, he was found guilty of violating the environmental protection law following noise complaints from neighbors about his church's sound system. Following the complaints, Juan Carlos was given a one-year sentence of house arrest. This is not unusual in Cuba, where government agents sometimes try to instigate community hostility towards a local church by encouraging complaints.

### **Rev Juan Carlos Núñez**

**Maceo 19**

**Las Tunas, Las Tunas**

**Cuba**

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**Father José Conrado**

Father Conrado is a Roman Catholic priest who has suffered harassment and threats for speaking out against human rights violations and allowing the families of political prisoners to attend Mass at his church.

**Padre José Conrado**

**Iglesia y Convento de San Francisco de Paula**  
**Calle Fernando Hernández esq. a Piro**  
**Guinart**  
**Trinidad, Sancti Spíritus**  
**Cuba**

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**Pastor Reutilio Columbié**

In February 2012 Pastor Reutilio Columbié was beaten so violently that he suffered brain damage. It's believed that this attack was a direct result of his challenge to the authorities over their arbitrary confiscation of his church's truck. He was found unconscious in the street after the severe beating, and now struggles with his speech and with memory loss.

**Reutilio Columbié Leiva**

**Iglesia Evangélica Centro**  
**Cristiano Shalom**  
**Calle Cabaña, Reparto Monterrey**  
**Moa, Holguín**  
**Cuba**

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**Maranatha First Baptist Church of Holguín**

The Maranatha First Baptist Church continues to report difficulties with the government. It took them years to obtain permission to go ahead with their new building, and religious freedom violations against other members of their denomination continue to occur.

**Primera Iglesia Bautista Maranatha**

**Fomento 298 e/ Martí y Luz**  
**Caballero**  
**Ciudad de Holguín, Holguín 80100**  
**Cuba**

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**Dagoberto Valdez**

Dagoberto Valdez is a Catholic lay leader who has been the target of threats and harassment because of his activities in independent civil society, including working on independent Christian publications.

**Dagoberto Valdez**

**Polvorín #8 e/ San Juan y Raverio**  
**Pinar del Rio CP 20100**  
**Cuba**

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**Pastor Onel Pardillo Garcia**

Pastor Onel Pardillo Garcia and his church have been under pressure, including government surveillance. Please pray that they would find the economic resources they need as they seek to undertake new constructions to their church buildings; and for protection from surveillance for Onel and his family.

**Pastor Onel Pardillo Garcia and family**

**Calle 97a No. 3802A e/38 y 38a,  
Loteria, Cotorro  
CP14000, Ciudad de la Habana  
Cuba**

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**Rev Roberto Rodríguez**

In an answer to prayer Reverend Rodríguez was cleared of the charges against him. He and his family continue to live in difficult circumstances and have been unable to return to their home.

**Rvdo Roberto Rodríguez y Familia**

**Princesa No. 52 e/ Laborde y Gene  
Cardenas, 42110  
Matanzas  
Cuba**

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**Yaguajay Baptist Church**

As part of a dispute over the ownership of this church's property, the local authorities claimed that the church's land had been nationalised in October 1980. Subsequently, the church property was confiscated and handed over to government businesses. The historic church building belonged to the Western Baptist Convention prior to the Revolution.

**Pastor Yuri Castellanos Pérez**

**Yaguajay Baptist Church  
Calle Quintín Banderas #15  
Yaguajay  
Sancti Spíritus CP 65100  
Cuba**

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**Pastors Rolando and Elizabet Ortiz Bode**

Over the last decade, Rolando and Elizabet have been involved in leading a steadily growing house church affiliated with the Eastern Baptist Convention. Since July 2014 they have been under pressure from the government.

**Pastors Rolando and Elizabet Ortiz Bode**

**Cespedes 53 e/ Villuendas y Juan  
M. Feijó  
Jatibonico  
Sancti Spíritus  
Cuba**

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**Reverend Alain Toldedano**

Reverend Alain Toledano Valiente and his family have been experiencing severe harassment from the government and Communist party officials for many years. In 2007 and 2016, Rev Toledano Valiente's Emanuel Church was demolished by the authorities. Harassment of Alain has since intensified, with increased police summons and interrogations.

**Alain Toledano Valiente**

**Edificio: 36, Escalera B,  
Apartamento: 2, Micro: 3,  
El Salao  
Santiago de Cuba  
Cuba**

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**Pastor Tomasa Victoria Ayala Zeller**

Pastor Tomasa Victoria Ayala Zeller and her family were evicted from their home on 22 May 2009. They were originally told that the house, which also served as the church, would be confiscated in July 2008, despite the fact that Tomasa and her husband Jorge had lived there for almost 30 years and were the legal owners. When they were finally evicted, the authorities gave them documents prohibiting Tomasa from holding any religious services and the police chief threatened to imprison her for "dangerousness."

**Tomasa Victoria Ayala Zeller  
Ministerio Apostólico Internacional  
Fuego y Dinámica, Elia Calle 23,  
número 33, entre calle 8 y calle  
10, reparto Santa Lucía, Municipio  
Colombia, Elia, Las Tunas  
Cuba**

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**Reverend Arcadis**

Reverend Arcadis has been experiencing severe harassment from government and Communist party officials for many years. During the pandemic the government harassment has continued, with phone calls, official summons and interrogations from the government.

**Arcadis Rafael Solano  
Carretera Country Club,  
Nro 106 Km 1  
El Caney  
Santiago de Cuba  
Cuba**

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**Apóstol Marcos Antonio Perdomo Silva**

Apóstol Marcos is a pastor from the Apostolic Movement whose church was destroyed in July 2014. Since then he has had his house taken from him, turning him into a tenant, he has been imprisoned, his family have been abused, and his children have been persecuted in school for being pastor's children.

**Apóstol Marcos Antonio Perdomo Silva, Ministerio Apostólico y Profético**  
**‘Estableciendo el Reino de Dios’**  
**Calle C número 147**  
**reparto Acerradero**  
**Guamá**  
**Santiago de Cuba**  
**Cuba**

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**Daniel Josué Pérez Naranjo, Iglesia Bautista Misión Bereana (Berean Baptist Mission Church)**  
Baptist pastor Reverend Daniel Josué Pérez Naranjo has been waiting for over two decades, since 1997, for his denomination to be re-registered and legalized. Without registration, Reverend Naranjo cannot carry out vital repairs on his church (which is also his home) or start new churches in his local area.

**Daniel Josué Pérez Naranjo**  
**Iglesia Bautista Misión Bereana**  
**Arroyon Chaparra**  
**Las Tunas**  
**77300**  
**Cuba**

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**Reverend Yordanys Díaz**

Reverend Yordanys Díaz is a pastor and leader of his denomination. He and his family have been targeted by the government. The government attempted to get his denomination to expel him, but instead they elected him president of the denomination. Pastor Yordanys and his church continue to face harassment from the government, especially since his denomination withdrew from the government-controlled Cuban Council of Churches in late 2020.

**Reverend Yordanys Diaz**  
**Calzada 10 de Octubre #1816**  
**E/Santa Amalia y Arnao**  
**Reparto Santa Amalia**  
**Municipio Arroyo Naranjo**  
**La Habana**  
**Cuba**

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**Reverend Carlos Sebastián Hernández Armas**

Reverend Hernández Armas, a pastor and leader in the Western Baptist Convention, has been labelled a “counter-revolutionary” and prohibited from traveling outside of Cuba.

**Reverend Carlos Sebastián Hernández Armas**  
**Calle 69 #1605 e/16 y 18**  
**Cotorro, Ciudad de la Habana**  
**14000**  
**Cuba**

*All prisoners from Colombia and Cuba are sourced from CSW (Christian Solidarity Worldwide). For more information, go to [www.cswusa.org](http://www.cswusa.org).*