



DOING TIME FOR GOD



LETTER-WRITING GUIDE
& PRISONERS' LIST



The Voice of the Martyrs Canada

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While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information presented here, VOM is not accountable for errors made in its compilation. The actual number of Christians in prison is higher than we can list. News of arrests and releases can take weeks, if not months, to reach the West and must be verified. There are many prisoners whose names we do not know but of whom we hear about indirectly or in general reports. Remember to pray for them too.

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Introduction

Letter writing remains a highly effective method of raising awareness, encouraging action and also delivering hope to those who otherwise might feel forgotten.

Today, thousands of Christians are languishing in prisons worldwide simply because they have refused to bow a knee to dictatorial governments and ideologies, insisting instead on pledging their allegiance to Christ.

As Christians, we have a duty to **“remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you are also in the body”** (Heb. 13:3).

Pastor Richard Wurmbrand (d. 2001), the founder of The Voice of the Martyrs, spent 14 years in prison in Communist Romania because he refused to deny his Saviour. While in prison, the idea of an organization that would speak up on behalf of the voiceless was born. He wrote in his 1967 book *Tortured for Christ*:

When I was beaten on the bottom of my feet, my tongue cried. Why did my tongue cry? It was not beaten. It cried because the tongue and the feet are both part of the same body. And you free Christians are part of the same Body of Christ that is now beaten in prisons in restricted nations, that even now gives martyrs for Christ. Can you not feel our pain?

Please consider taking up your pen and demonstrating in a highly practical and productive way your love and concern towards your brothers and sisters in chains.

Become a voice for the voiceless and “do time for God”!

Information in this publication is also available online at:
www.persecution.net/write.htm

Writing to Government Officials

Letters show officials that there are people who know and care what happens to prisoners. Their conditions may be improved as a result. If the authorities think no one cares, the Christian may be imprisoned with dangerous criminals, abused, deprived of food or denied rights to their mail, parcels and visits. Here are some tips for writing to government officials:

- Be brief.
- Use the correct honorific (see Appendix A).
- Be yourself.
- Be polite. You are representing Jesus Christ.
- Do not write about politics or criticize governments.
- State a general concern for persecuted believers.
- State a specific concern for one or more prisoners.
 - (a) Whenever possible, give the full name and hometown of the prisoner(s).
 - (b) State why you are concerned (perhaps they have been beaten).
 - (c) State what you would like to see done (released, given medical treatment, etc.).
- Remember to thank them in advance for their positive actions.
- Refrain from quoting Bible verses or preaching.

Do NOT mention VOM or other organizations as it may be used against the prisoner.

Never underestimate the power of your letter! Irrespective of location or economic situation, governments are extremely concerned about their reputation on the world stage. VOM believes that originality in writing is important. For this reason, we do not generally endorse the use of letter templates other than in occasional cases where repetition might be beneficial (i.e. postcard campaigns, etc.). We have provided a few sample letters to guide you. Please refer to Appendix B.

Write to your Senator or M.P.

Please consider writing letters to your Senator or Member of Parliament (M.P.). Mail may be sent postage-free to any Senator or M.P. at the following addresses:

Name of Senator
The Senate of Canada
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A4

Name of M.P.
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Find names, email addresses and phone numbers for your Senator or M.P. at
www.parl.gc.ca/

Write to foreign embassies in Canada and the United States

Please consider writing letters to government officials on behalf of prisoners listed in this guide.

CHINA

His Excellency Junsai Zhang
Ambassador
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
515 St. Patrick Street
Ottawa, ON K1N 5H3
Canada

ERITREA

His Excellency Ghirmai Ghebremariam Abbai
Ambassador
Embassy of the State of Eritrea
1708 New Hampshire Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C., DC 20009
USA

EGYPT

His Excellency Wael Ahmed Kamal Aboul Magd
Ambassador
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt
454 Laurier Avenue East
Ottawa, ON K1N 6R3
Canada

IRAN

Mr. Kambiz Sheikh Hassani
Chargé d'affaires, a.i.
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
245 Metcalfe Street
Ottawa, ON K2P 2K2
Canada

PAKISTAN

His Excellency Akbar Zeb
High Commissioner
High Commission for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
10 Range Road
Ottawa, ON K1N 8J3
Canada

UZBEKISTAN

His Excellency Ilhomjon Nematov
Ambassador
Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan
1746 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C., DC 20036
USA

VIETNAM

Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
55 Mackay Street
Ottawa, ON K1M 2B2
Canada

Find links to regularly updated lists of government addresses at:
www.persecution.net/writegovernment.htm

Writing to Newspaper Editors

Writing short, yet concise, letters to newspaper editors is an effective way of raising awareness of current issues in the global Church.

What should I write?

- Keep your letter friendly. Remember, you are Christ's ambassador.
- Keep your letter short. Concise letters with a single point are more likely to be published.
- Keep your letter clear. State your subject and purpose in the opening paragraph.
- Keep your letter relevant. Editors typically print letters that respond to recent articles in their papers or that address current issues of interest.

What should I NOT write?

- Avoid being confrontational, abusive or offensive.
- Avoid quoting Scripture. A wise and well-balanced biblical perspective, which serves to address a crisis, problem or other evil, can be conveyed without using Scripture.
- Avoid preaching. Readers do not buy newspapers to read a sermon.

Read a helpful *National Post* article on writing to newspaper editors here:

www.persecution.net/writemedia.htm

Writing to Prisoners

Your words are never wasted when it comes to writing a letter on behalf of the persecuted Church. Mail sent by concerned believers can have a profound impact on those who are suffering and even on their persecutors.

Your letters to prisoners can do five things:

1. Indicate to authorities that you are aware of a Christian's situation, and you care!
2. Testify of the love and unity found among followers of Jesus Christ worldwide. This is especially true when letters are opened and censored. God can use your letter to work in the lives of those in authority.
3. Prove our persecuted family is not forgotten. Through isolation and loneliness, the devil can prey on imprisoned Christians' faith. When a prisoner receives a letter, whether they can read it or not, they know someone cares.
4. Lead to better treatment of Christian prisoners.
5. Provide tremendous encouragement.

May I write in English?

Yes, you may write in English. Please print or write clearly. Your note must be legible to be translated. Many people study English, so there will likely be someone to translate your letter. VOM's sister mission in the United States offers www.PrisonerAlert.com, an online resource that provides prisoner names and addresses along with a translation tool that offers you the ability to write to imprisoned brothers and sisters in their own languages.

What should I write?

- Share your name and that you know about the prisoner's situation.
- Be respectful and encouraging.
- Tell prisoners that they are not forgotten and that you are praying for them.
- Include a Scripture verse.

What should I NOT write?

- Do NOT discuss politics or criticize a government, as this could place prisoners in danger.
- Do NOT include your mailing address. (You may state your name and country.)
- Do NOT send money or respond to requests for money. Unscrupulous individuals, claiming to be the prisoner or a family member, may steal letters and solicit funds.
- Do NOT mention VOM or any other source of information.

Anything else I need to know?

You can send notes, postcards, bookmarks and Christian greeting cards. Express your Christian love and mention that you are praying. You may also include a snapshot of yourself, your family or prayer group.

Please do not send your letters to VOM's office for mailing. The letters are more effective when officials see persons have sent them from many different parts of Canada.

Write letters to imprisoned Christians in their own language using a translation tool found at:
www.prisoneralert.com.

The Prisoners' List

CHINA

**Location**

Asia

Population

1,336,718,015 (July 2011 est.)

Religion (%)

Non-religious (44.36), Chinese (28.50), Buddhist (12.50), Christian (7.92), Other (6.72)

Leader

President Hu Jintao

Government type

Communist state

More Christians have been and continue to be detained in China than in any other country. The government officially recognizes five religious groups: Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Protestant and Catholic. It strictly controls the Church through the state-monitored Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) and the Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA). During the Cultural Revolution, even these submissive structures were banned, and all religious activity was forced underground, giving birth to the house-church movement.

Today, there is much debate related to the current number of Chinese Christians, as the government releases only data from TSPM or CPA churches. While the government says there are officially 28.6 million Christians, experts estimate the real number to lie somewhere between 80 and 130 million.

You can write to the following prisoners in China:

AIQING ZHU

Aiqing Zhu was arrested for “illegal evangelistic activities” on June 9, 1996, at age 40. She was sentenced to a 20-year prison term.

Prison address:

Aiqing Zhu
The Public Security Department
Xiang Xiang City
Hu Nan Province 411400
China

ZHONG CHEN

Zhong Chen was arrested for “illegal evangelistic activities and disturbing social safety” in 2000, at age 32. Her prison term is unknown.

Prison address:

Zhong Chen
Shu Yang Detention Center
Jiang Su Province 223600
China

WANG ZHAOMIN

Wang Zhaomin has been imprisoned since June 1999.

Prison address:

Wang Zhaomin
Team #2, Qishan Lao Gai Camp
Datong District
Huainan City, Anhui Province 232000
China

HU YONG

Mr. Hu Yong, a leader in the South China Church, was sentenced to life in prison in 2002.

Prison address:

Hu Yong
Jingzhou Prison
Jingzhou City, Hubei Province 434020
China

XU FUMING

Mr. Xu Fuming, a member of the South China Church, was sentenced to life in prison in 2002.

Prison address:

Xu Fuming
Jingzhou Prison
Jingzhou City, Hubei Province 434020
China

XIAO YANLI AND DENG XIAOLIN

Ms. Xiao Yanli, a member of the South China Church, was sentenced to 10 years in prison in 2002. Ms. Deng Xiaolin is in the same jail.

Prison address:

[Name]
No. 2 Division, Section 2
Wuhan Female Prison
Wuhan City, Hubei Province 430032
China

GONG BANGKUN

Mr. Gong Bangkun, a member of the South China Church, was sentenced to 15 years in prison in 2002.

Prison address:

Gong Bangkun
No. 3 Division, Section 6
Jiangling District
Jingzhou City, Hubei Province 434110
China

YI CHUANFU

Mr. Yi Chuanfu, a member of the South China Church, was sentenced to 10 years in prison in 2002.

Prison address:

Yi Chuanfu
No. 2 Division, Section 6
Jiangling District
Jingzhou City, Hubei Province 434110
China

DONG DAOLAI

Mr. Dong Daolai, a member of the South China Church, was sentenced to 10 years in prison in 2002.

Prison address:

Dong Daolai
No. 1 Division, Section 6
Jiangling District
Jingzhou City, Hubei Province 434110
China

CHI FAMIN

Chi Famin was handed a 10-year sentence for being a member of an “evil cult” (refers to South China Church) by the People’s Court of Yunyang County, Chongqing City, on May 14, 2002.

Prison address:

Chi Famin
Yongchuan Female Prison
Yongchuan City, Chongqing City 402164
China

ALIMUJIANG YIMITI

In January 2008, Alimujiang “Alim” Yimiti, a Muslim convert to Christianity, was arrested and accused of “subversion of the national government and endangering national security,” a crime punishable by death. On May 27, 2008, Alim’s case went to trial but it was referred back to the Public Security Bureau’s prosecutors due to insufficient evidence. On October 27, 2009, Alim was handed a 15-year prison sentence for “providing state secrets to overseas organizations.”

In November 2010, the Higher People’s Court of Xinjiang accepted an appeal by Alim’s wife and mother and decided to retry his case. In February 2011, the Higher People’s Court of Xinjiang notified Alim that they upheld the original sentence of 15 years of imprisonment.

Prison address:

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

MEMBERS OF LINFEN-FUSHAN CHURCH IN SHANXI

Before dawn on Sunday, September 13, 2009, a crowd of 400 government officials, police and hired ruffians launched an attack on the Linfen-Fushan Church in Shanxi. With no warning, members who were sleeping at the church construction site were mercilessly beaten, with more than 30 left in critical condition. Bulldozers razed the factory and church building, and the mob looted any valuables and smashed the remaining property. Following the brutal attack, the Fushan governing officials arrested more than 10 Linfen church leaders. They include:

YANG XUAN

Yang Xuan led the construction for Jindengtai, the prominent “Golden Lampstand Church” in Linfen City. Well-known for his preaching and leadership, Yang Xuan, 54, became a target for church persecution. On November 25, 2009, he was sentenced to three and a half years in prison and fined. His wife, Yang Caizhen, was also arrested and sentenced to two years “re-education” through labour. She was released in February 2011 due to poor health. Write a letter of encouragement to Yang Xuan, care of his sister-in-law.

Prison address:

Yang Xuan
c/o Yang Linli
Room 101, Fuyuan Central Building
Shuiche Xiang, Xiangyang Road
Linfen City, Shanxi province 041099
China

ZHANG HUAMEI

A faithful leader in the Linfen Church, Zhang Huamei, 50, helped organize special activities and worked in various ministries of the church. On November 25, 2009, she was sentenced to four years in prison. Her lawyer fears she has been beaten for witnessing to fellow prisoners. Write a letter of encouragement to Zhang Huamei, care of her mother.

Prison address:

Zhang Huamei
c/o Yu Feng-Liu
2nd House on last row
Zhong An Ping Village, Tiantan Town
Fushan County, Linfen City
Shanxi province 042601
China

CUI JIAXING

Cui Jiaxing, 44, served the Linfen Church by managing church finances and helping with the distribution of funds to members according to need. On November 25, 2009, he was charged with unlawfully occupying land and tax evasion, and was fined and sentenced to five and a half years in prison. Write a letter of encouragement to Cui Jiaxing, care of his son.

Prison address:

Cui Jiaxing
c/o Cui Zhichao
Room #301, No. 3 Building, Home of Cement Factory
Yimin Road, Yaodu District
Linfen City, Shanxi province 041099
China

GAO ZHISHENG

Since 2005, Gao has been repeatedly arrested, imprisoned and severely tortured by Chinese authorities, mostly for his human rights work. In 2006, he and a group of prominent human rights lawyers created the Association of Human Rights Attorneys for Chinese Christians. That same year, Gao was sentenced to five years of probation for inciting “subversion of the state.” After serving three years in prison, Gao was supposedly released on probation but he disappeared for extended periods of time.

For the first time since his most recent forced disappearance in April 2010, his whereabouts has been confirmed. Gao Zhisheng's older brother, Gao Zhiyi, received written notification of Gao's incarceration that was signed and dated by the prison on December 19.

Prison address:

Gao Zhisheng
Shaya Prison
Shaya County Aksu Prefecture
Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region 842208
China

PENG MING

Peng Ming is an official UNHCR refugee from China who was resident in the US from 2001. As a Christian he has worked for Chinese democracy, freedom and human rights for many years. In May 2004, while travelling to visit his elderly parents in Thailand, Peng Ming, 52, was lured to Myanmar, abducted and taken to China where he was sentenced to life in prison in October 2005, charged with engaging in terrorism activities. Imprisoned in Han Yang prison, he suffers from serious medical conditions that have been ignored by prison officials.

Prison address:

Peng Ming
No. 4. Branch
Hubei Provincial Han Yang Prison
Cai Dian District, Wuhan City
Hubei Province
China

EGYPT

**Location**

Africa

Population

82,079,636 (July 2011 est.)

Religion (%)

Muslim (86.67), Christian (12.83), Non-religious (0.50)

Leader

President Muhammad Mursi

Government type

Republic

Egypt's population of 84.4 million is the Middle East's largest Christian community. The last 10 years have seen high levels of violence. Harassment, discrimination and financial incentives for Christians to adopt Islam are used to break the morale of Christians. In most cases, vigilante Islamist groups carry out the attacks that occur with local security forces standing idly by. Believers from Muslim backgrounds tend to receive much of the persecution.

You can write to the following prisoners in Egypt:**SHAIBOUB ARSAL**

Shaiboub Arsal was given a 15-year, hard-labour term in June 2000. He has been falsely charged with two murders that took place during the 1998 violence that targeted El-Kosheh's Coptic Christian population. Write a letter of encouragement to him, care of his local bishop.

Prison address:

Shaiboub Arsal
c/o Bishop Wissa
Diocese of Baliana
Baliana, Sohag Province
Egypt

ERITREA



Location

Africa

Population

5,939,484 (July 2011 est.)

Religion (%)

Muslim (50.26), Christian (47.31), Non-religious (1.87), Ethnoreligionist (0.56)

Leader

President Isaias Afworki

Government type

Transitional government

There was a general freedom to practice religion in Eritrea until 2002, when the government announced it would recognize only four religious communities: the Orthodox Church of Eritrea, Sunni Islam, the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran-affiliated Evangelical Church of Eritrea.

From 2002 to 2010, the government has jailed, tortured and killed numerous Eritreans for political and religious reasons, and tortured and killed many of them extra-judicially. Today, it is estimated that between 2,000 and 3,000 Christians are in Eritrean prisons. Believers face deplorable conditions, including torture. Many are held in metal shipping containers with no ventilation or toilet facilities. Of thousands of Christians in detention, not one has been charged with a crime or faced trial.

You can write to the following prisoners in Eritrea:

HAILE NAIZGI

Prior to his imprisonment on May 23, 2004, Rev. Haile Naizgi was the chairman of the board of the Full-Gospel Church of Eritrea, the largest Pentecostal church in the nation. Previously, he was a senior accountant with World Vision in Eritrea. Naizgi, who is married with two children, was one the key organizers of the Church's activities in Eritrea.

Prison address:

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

KIDANE WELDOU

Pastor Kidane Weldou was imprisoned on March 18, 2005. He was the senior pastor at Asmara Full-Gospel Church. His wife and children have been unable to visit him in prison, and his exact whereabouts remain unknown. Formerly, he was a high school biology teacher. He was also involved in many gospel-related activities among students and professionals from various churches in the nation.

Prison Address:

Kidane Weldou
Karsheli Prison
2nd Police Station
Zone 7 Northern East
Asmara, Zoba Maakel
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 doctorate in mathematics from the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, Ill. 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.

Prison Address:

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

IRAN

**Location**

Asia

Population

77,891,220 (July 2011 est.)

Religion (%)

Muslim (98.64), Christian (0.51), Baha'i (0.40), Other (0.45)

Leader

President Mahmud Ahmadinejad

Government type

Theocratic republic

Iran has the largest Shi'a Islam population in the world. Christians comprise one-half of 1 percent of the population. The Iranian attitude toward religion can seem contradictory—very chaste in public but much less so in private. The courts can impose the death sentence on male apostates and life imprisonment for female apostates. Effectively, Iran is a religious dictatorship where little of consequence can occur without the approval of the Guardian Council of Mullahs.

Religious persecution of certain minorities has intensified since 2005. This is aimed at the Baha'i, Sufi Muslims and Christians, especially believers from a Muslim background. Almost all Christian activity is illegal, especially when it occurs in Persian languages—from evangelism to Bible training to publishing Scripture and Christian books. Yet, the regime's harsh treatment of Christians only further fuels the flames of church growth.

You can write to the following prisoners in Iran:**ALIREZA SEYYEDIAN**

Alireza Seyyedian is a 37-year-old former Muslim who has been a Christian since 2006. Last year, security forces confiscated his computer during a raid on his apartment. Authorities then discovered video of Alireza's baptism in Turkey on the computer. In December 2011 he was sentenced to six years in prison, for crimes against national security and propaganda against the regime.

The judge stated that since Alireza was baptized in Turkey, he was trying to express the lack of freedom in Iran and was therefore propagating against the regime. He was also accused of holding regular meetings with former Muslims and distributing Bibles among youth. They also said he had communication with Zionist satellite TV channels such as Mohabat TV and Radio Mojde and shared worship hymns he had written with them. The verdict also falsely accused him of being a member of the Jesus Only cult.

On March 14, 2012, Alireza was caught seeking to flee Iran for Turkey. He was arrested and transported back to Tehran where he was imprisoned in Evin prison. He was put in Section 350 of the prison, which is where political prisoners are held. That part of the prison is run by VEVAK, the intelligence service that reports to Ayatollah Khomeini and is beyond the control of Iran's prison authorities. According to one report, the conditions of this section of the prison are unsanitary, and each cell is overcrowded with around 30 political prisoners.

Alireza has never been married.

Prison address:

Alireza Seyyedian
Evin Prison
Saadat Abad
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

BEHNAM IRANI

Behnam Irani, a 41-year-old pastor from Kraj, Iran, was convicted of crimes against national security in January 2011 and sentenced to one year in prison. After voluntarily surrendering to authorities on May 31 to begin his sentence, he learned that he would be forced to serve five years in connection with a previous conviction. Officers from the Ministry of Intelligence and National Security (MOIS) raided Irani's house church on April 14, 2010, and assaulted him before taking him into custody. Although he was released on bail two months after his arrest, he later received the one-year prison sentence. Irani was first arrested in December 2006 and tried for crimes against national security. He was released in January 2007 but was soon re-arrested, tried and sentenced to five years in prison. Irani was never called to serve the sentence that is now being held against him.

Prison address:

Behnam Irani
Ghezel Hesar Prison
Karaj, Albourz State
Iran

FARSHID FATHI

Farshid Fathi was arrested on Dec. 26, 2010 in a wave of arrests of believers in Tehran and other areas. Of the 22 believers arrested by security forces in Tehran, 10 were released after intense questioning and after they signed agreements to refrain from Christian activities. Eleven others were also later released. By the end of April, 2011, only Farshid remained in prison, though his family had paid an enormous bail sum. He spent nearly a year in solitary confinement.

Farshid, a Christian convert from Islam, was charged with "acting against national security through membership of a Christian organization, collection of funds, propaganda against the Islamic Regime by helping spread Christianity in the country," and sentenced to six years of imprisonment on

March 5, 2012. Though the charge is for his Christian work, authorities tried to cast his activities as political offenses.

Farshid's appeal against the charges was rejected in June 2012. He is due to serve the rest of his sentence in Evin Prison. Farshid is married to Leila, and has two children, Rosana and Bardia.

Prison address:

Farshid Fathi
Evin Prison
Saadat Abad
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

SAEED ABIDINI

While visiting his family in Iran, 32-year-old Rev. Saeed Abedini, now an American resident, was imprisoned without notice of any formal charges. Since moving to the United States in 2005, Saeed periodically travelled to the country of his origin to spend time with his family and oversee the development of an orphanage, a humanitarian effort he began years ago. Prior to this, Saeed was the founder of a house church movement in Iran. Over the course of his involvement, the movement had about 100 churches in 30 Iranian cities with more than 2,000 members. "It was just growing so fast," his wife Naghmeh explains. "[Governmental leaders] see the underground churches as a threat and Christianity as a tool from the West to undermine them."

In January 2013, he was sentenced to eight years in Iran's Evin Prison. Saeed and Naghmeh have two children.

Prison address:

Saeed Abedinialangashi
Evin Prison
Saadat Abad
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

PAKISTAN



Location

Asia

Population

187,342,721 (July 2011 est.)

Religion (%)

Muslim (95.80), Christian (2.45), Hindu (1.60), Other (0.15)

Leader

President Asif Ali Zardari

Government type

Federal republic

Pakistan is an Islamic republic with a Sunni majority. Despite its infringement of the constitution, Shariah law is increasingly applied—even to Christians and Hindus—especially in areas where Islamist groups have control or influence.

While there is a notable degree of religious freedom promised to minorities by law, non-Muslims and non-Sunnis must practice their faith cautiously. Christians in Pakistan face severe opposition from militant Islamic groups, including imprisonment, torture and even death. Many Pakistani Christians are falsely accused under the Blasphemy Law, or Law 295. Law 295a, blaspheming Islam, and Law 295b, blaspheming the Qur'an, are criminal offenses. Law 295c makes blaspheming Mohammed a crime punishable by death. Courtrooms packed with militants have often pressured judges into returning a guilty verdict or continuing trials indefinitely. Christians are regularly barred from jobs or face troubles from their employers and co-workers. Christian merchants are often harassed.

You can write to the following prisoners in Pakistan:

ASIA BIBI

Asia Bibi, 38, was arrested by police on allegations of blasphemy in the village of Ittanwali, Punjab province. On June 19, 2009, some Muslim women who work with Bibi on a farm owned by a local Muslim engaged in a heated discussion with Bibi about Islam. Bibi told them that Christ died on the cross for their sins and asked them what Mohammed had done for them. "Our Christ is the true prophet of God and yours is not true," Bibi said. The Muslim women became angry and began to beat her. Some men then locked her in a room. Local Christians urged the police not to file blasphemy charges; however, police claimed that they must go forward due to pressure from local Muslim leaders.

On November 8, 2010, Bibi was sentenced to death. She is the first Pakistani woman ever to receive a death sentence for blasphemy. Her attorney has filed an appeal. In December 2010, a hard-line cleric offered a \$6,000 CAD reward to anyone who will kill Asia Bibi if the government does not put her to death. In January 2011, the governor of Punjab province, who had recently

met with Asia in jail, was assassinated by his bodyguard for speaking out against the blasphemy law. In March 2011, Pakistan's Minister of Minority Affairs, a Christian, was assassinated while on his way to work. Shahbaz Bhatti had also spoken out against the country's blasphemy law.

Prison address:

Asia Bibi
District Jail
Sheikhupura, Punjab
Pakistan

IMRAN GHAFUR

On July 1, 2009, Pakistani police arrested Imran Ghafur in Punjab province after Muslims accused him of burning pages of the Qur'an. While cleaning his brother's retail shop, Imran removed the trash he had collected, intending to burn some of it. While burning the trash, pages of an Islamic book flew into the fire and burned. Imran's neighbour, Haji Liaqat, saw the burned pages of the Islamic book and alerted other Muslims in the area.

Imran and his father were severely beaten before police arrested Imran. Following the arrest, news of the incident spread throughout the city, and angry Muslims threw stones at the police station where Imran was being held. "Give the death sentence to him who disgraces the Holy Qur'an, and hang him who disgraces the Holy Qur'an," the Muslims said.

On July 2, 2009, Imran was moved to a jail. "The situation is very tense in Hajwari town, where the Christian families live," said a VOM contact. "Haji Liaqat and his friends are saying that they will not allow Imran's family to live in the colony or run their business." Imran and his family manage businesses in the area and are actively involved with other local Christians.

Prison address:

Imran Ghafur
Central Jail of Faisalabad
Faisalabad
Pakistan

UZBEKISTAN



Location

Asia

Population

28,128,600 (July 2011 est.)

Religion (%)

Muslim (84.93), Non-religious (13.80),
Christian (0.75), Other (0.52)

Leader

President Islom Karimov

Government type

Republic; authoritarian presidential rule

Uzbekistan is a secular state, promoting a moderate, tightly controlled form of Islam. The growing Islamist movement is handled with venom by the state. Christians are third-party victims of this struggle. Ethnic Uzbek Christians, in particular, receive harsh treatment.

Religious communities are required to officially register. Only approved religious organizations—Muslim groups, Jews, Russian Orthodox and some Protestant groups—can be registered, and registration is frequently refused or delayed. Police make surprise visits to churches and forcibly close those who cannot immediately produce registration papers. Evangelism, missionary activity and religious instruction are forbidden by law. Uzbek Christians have been fined, beaten and imprisoned for their faith.

You can write to the following prisoners in Uzbekistan:

TOHAR HAYDAROV

On March 9, 2010, a criminal court in Uzbekistan sentenced 27-year-old Tohar Haydarov to 10 years in prison for the “illegal sale of narcotic or psychotropic substances in large quantities.” Members of the Baptist church insist that the charges are fabricated and that Haydarov’s sentence was punishment for his religious activity. It is unclear why he received a 10-year sentence. Baptists insist that police planted drugs on Haydarov, and church members insist that he is “a man with a pure conscience & an honest Christian.” Haydarov has appealed his sentence.

Prison address:

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

VIETNAM



Location

Asia

Population

90,549,390 (July 2011 est.)

Religion (%)

Buddhism (52.5), Non-religious (23.3), Christianity (9.4), Ethnic Religions (8.9), Other (0.4)

Leader

President Truong Tan Sang

Government type

Communist state

Vietnam is one of the world's few remaining Communist nations. After gaining independence from France in 1954, 30 years of war were followed by a re-unification of the North and South under the Communist Party in 1975.

The Communist Party retains supreme control of all state policy and activity, and the government and military are both tied closely to the party. Strong authoritarian rule brooks no dissent, especially not from ethnic or religious minorities. As a result, human rights violations continue to accrue.

Though Vietnam's constitution provides for freedom of worship, the government continues to restrict organized activities of many religious groups. Only government-controlled religious organizations are allowed. The Southern Evangelical Church of Vietnam and the smaller Evangelical Church of Vietnam North are two of the largest officially recognized Protestant churches. Unregistered churches and ethnic minority Christians still suffer harassment, discrimination and, sometimes, outright persecution.

You can write to the following prisoners in Vietnam:

NGUYEN VAN LY

On Feb. 19, 2007, Father Nguyen Van Ly was arrested in Hue, Vietnam for distributing material "harmful to the state." In March, he was sentenced to eight years in prison. He has issued statements criticizing the government's confiscation of church property, lack of seminary training and the influence of the state in church teachings and has been a powerful advocate for Christian freedom.

On March 15, 2010, Father Nguyen was released on medical parole after he suffered three debilitating strokes. He spent 16 months convalescing before the government demanded he return to complete his sentence.

Seriously ill and weak, Father Nguyen was rearrested on July 25, 2011.

Prison address:

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

Read more about these restricted nations and others at:

www.persecution.net/restricted-nations.htm

RELEASED Prisoners of Faith

Praise the Lord for the release of his faithful servants! Below is a list of individuals who were imprisoned for their faith and released. Your letters and prayers make a difference! Remember, we only know the names of a very small number of Christians who are imprisoned for their faith and then released. Please continue to lift up all imprisoned believers worldwide. You can find out more about any of the individuals below at www.prisoneralert.com.

Afghanistan

Said Musa (imprisoned 266 days)

Azerbaijan

Zaur Balaev (imprisoned 304 days)

China

Yang Caizhen (imprisoned 439 days)
Shi Weihai (imprisoned 1,169 days)
Li Mei (imprisoned 1,100 days)
Hua Huiqi (imprisoned 181 days)
Shuang Shuying (imprisoned 744 days)
Wang Weiliang (imprisoned 850 days)
Liu Fenggang (imprisoned 1,211 days)
Pastor Cai Zhuohua (imprisoned 1,094 days)
Mengyu Tang (imprisoned 1,827 days)
Yang Hongzhen (imprisoned 635 days)
Gao Qin (imprisoned 635 days)
Zhao Guoai (imprisoned 635 days)
Zhang Rongliang (imprisoned 2,466 days)
Sun Minghua (imprisoned 3,643 days)
Li Ying (imprisoned 3,920 days)
Pastor Wang Xiaoguang (imprisoned 1,050 days)

Cuba

Pastor Carlos Lamelas (imprisoned 126 days)

Eritrea

Girmay Ambaye (imprisoned 2,070 days)

India

Dr. Samuel Thomas (imprisoned 145 days)

Indonesia

Abraham Bentar (imprisoned 782 days)

Dr. Rebekka, Mrs. Ratna and Mrs. Eti (imprisoned 753 days)

Iran

Maryam Jalili (imprisoned 83 days)
Marzieh Amirizadeh Esmaeilabad (imprisoned 258 days)
Maryam Rustampoor (imprisoned 258 days)
Sonia Keshish-Avanesian (imprisoned 238 days)
Arezo Teymouri (imprisoned 238 days)
Arash Kermanjani (imprisoned 238 days)
Hamid Pourmand (imprisoned 679 days)
Pastor Vahik Abrahamian (imprisoned 360 days)
Mehdi "Petros" Forouton (imprisoned 474 days)
Youcef Nadarkhani (imprisoned 1187 days)

Laos

KhamLa Namheng (imprisoned 345 days)
Van Thong (imprisoned 375 days)
Thong Chan

Pakistan

Gulsher Masih (imprisoned 431 days)
Sandul Bibi (imprisoned 431 days)
Amjad Masih (imprisoned 2,413 days)
Shahbaz Kaka (imprisoned 2,055 days)
Rhanja Masih (imprisoned 3,108 days)
Parvez Masih (imprisoned 1,951 days)
Younis Masih

Tanzania

Eva Abdullah (imprisoned 373 days)

Turkmenistan

Ilmurad Nurliev (imprisoned 868 days)

Uzbekistan

Pastor Dmitry Shestakov (imprisoned 1,461 days)

Vietnam

Le Thi Cong Nhan (imprisoned 1,100 days)
Nguyen Van Dai (imprisoned 1,463 days)
Mua Say So (imprisoned 1,065 days)
Pastor Y Wo Nie (imprisoned 2,652 days)

Learn more about released prisoners on this list at www.prisoneralert.com

Bible Verses in Other Languages

Arabic

John 14:27

فَلَا تَضْطَرِبْ قُلُوبُكُمْ، وَلَا تَرْتَعِبْ. عَالَمٌ أُعْطِيَكُمْ أَنَالِيسَ كَمَا يُعْطِي الْإِسْلَامِي أُعْطِيَكُمْ بِسَلَامًا أَتْرُكُ لَكُمْ.

Romans 8:31

فَبَعْدَ هَذَا، مَاذَا نَقُولُ؟ مَاذَا اللهُ مَعَنَا، فَمَنْ يَكُونُ عَلَيْنَا؟ ذَلِكَ الَّذِي لَمْ يُمْسِكْ عَنَّا ابْنَهُ،

Chinese

May your light reveal the truth to those around you.

愿你的光能向周围的人显明真理。

Job 13:15

伯 13:15

他必杀我，我虽无指望，然而我在他面前还要辩明我所行的。

Hebrews 12:2

来 12:2

仰望为我们信心创始成终的耶稣（或作“仰望那将真道创始成终的耶稣”），他因那摆在前面的喜乐，就轻看羞辱，忍受了十字架〔的苦难〕，便坐在神宝座的右边。

Vietnamese

Our Lord is with you even where you are.

Chỗ nào anh em đến, chỗ đó Chúa ở cùng anh em.

Romans 8:28

8:28 Và, chúng ta biết rằng mọi sự hiệp lại làm ích cho kẻ yêu mến Đức Chúa Trời, tức là cho kẻ được gọi theo ý muốn Ngài đã định.

Psalms 37:3

37:3 Hãy tin cậy Đức Giê-hô-va, và làm điều lành; Khá ở trong xứ, và nuôi mình bằng sự thành tín của Ngài.

Appendix A Honorifics

<u>Official</u>	<u>Salutation</u>	<u>Valediction</u>
Monarchs	Your Majesty	Yours respectfully and sincerely
Heads of State, Presidents	Your Excellency	Yours respectfully and sincerely
Prime Ministers	Dear Prime Minister	Yours respectfully and sincerely
Ambassadors or High Commissioners	Your Excellency Mr/Mrs... (if you know the name)	Yours respectfully or Yours respectfully and sincerely (if you have used the name)
Local authorities	Dear Sir/Madam	Yours faithfully
Prison governors	Dear Sir/Madam	Yours faithfully
Judges	Your Honour	Yours faithfully
Military Officials	Dear General, Colonel, etc	Yours faithfully
Members of Parliament	Dear Mr/Ms/Mrs...MP	Yours sincerely
A government minister	Dear Mr. Minister or Dear Madame Minister	Yours faithfully or Yours sincerely (if you have used the name)
A government minister (outside Canada)	Your Excellency	Yours respectfully and sincerely

Appendix B Sample Letters to Government Officials

Dear Sir,

Last year (name) was arrested for (reason arrested). The story of his/her case has been circulated around the world and thousands of Christians know about it.

We ask that he/she be released from all charges. We are praying for you as a leading representative for your country.

Yours sincerely,

Dear Sir,

We are thankful that the laws and constitution in (country) allow freedom of religion. However, we have heard that a man/woman named (name) was put in prison at (place). We are concerned for his/her welfare. We would like to ask you to please give your attention to this matter. Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,

Your Excellency,

I respectfully request your attention in the case of (name). He/she was arrested in (place) for sharing his/her Christian faith and on (date) was sentenced to (sentence given). He/she is detained in the (name of prison) prison.

I am confident that your government's international reputation will be enhanced by being seen to adhere to Article 18 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights, which clearly states everyone's right to freely share their faith.

I appeal to you for the release of (name) to enable him/her to continue his/her peaceful duties as a respected citizen of your country.

Meanwhile I ask that you use your good office to ensure that (name) is able to see his/her family. I write in confidence of your careful attention.

Yours sincerely,
