

■ CSI-International Annual Report 2021



Weep with those who weep...



■ Introduction

Dear friends of CSI,

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion are universal human rights that are enshrined in Article 18 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. But what seems so self-evident – the right to hold and freely express opinions, and the right to believe - is contested.

Standing up for religious freedom is in CSI's DNA. Our mission is urgent: the world is becoming an increasingly dangerous place for Christians and other religious minorities. Christians in particular face open discrimination; they are driven from their homes, persecuted and killed.

All too often, the powers that be turn a blind eye to their suffering. In many CSI project countries, we see how people cannot practice their faith freely and live in fear. Whole Christian communities are targeted. Terror and war threaten their existence. For them, every expression of solidarity and offer of practical help, every prayer and donation is a great encouragement in their faith. With your help, we can stand up against injustice, inform, protest and help.

In standing by people in difficult situations and highlighting injustice we can, with God's help, bring about change. This

annual report provides an insight into how CSI carried out its mission in 2021. This work would not have been possible without the generous support of CSI's donors. Our sincere thanks go to you all.



Dr. John Eibner
International President

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Front cover

A Pakistani mother weeps for her daughter who has been kidnapped. Every year hundreds of young women in Pakistan are victims of forced marriage and forced conversion to Islam. Through its partners, CSI is providing assistance. [csi](#)

Pages 2 and 5

p. 2: A people on the run: members of the persecuted Karen minority in Myanmar hide out in a forest. CSI is providing food aid to these displaced Christians. [csi](#)

p. 5: Practical instruction at a CSI-supported school in Syria. [csi](#)

Back cover

Drought in South Sudan: CSI food aid is gratefully received. [csi](#)

■ About CSI

Mission statement

CSI is an international Christian human rights organization, campaigning for religious liberty and human dignity, and assisting victims of religious persecution, victimized children and victims of catastrophe.

Principles

- “For we are all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body... If one part suffers, every part suffers with it.”: 1. Cor 12: 13, 26
- The Parable of the Good Samaritan: Luke 10: 25-37
- The UN Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

International structure

Christian Solidarity International (CSI) has its international headquarters in the canton of Zurich, Switzerland, and has national affiliates in the USA, Switzerland, Germany, France, Czech Republic, Hungary and South Korea.

International Advisory Council

Msgr. Obiora Ike, Nigeria

The Hon. Pascale and William Warda, Iraq

Dr. Nabil Antaki, Syria

Msgr. Michael Nazir-Ali, United Kingdom

Prof. Dr. Habib Malik, Lebanon

The Hon. Sarah Ocheke, Nigeria

Prof. Dr. Mariz Tadros, Egypt/UK

Vishal Arora, India

Godfrey Yogarajah, Sri Lanka

Yamini Ravindran, Sri Lanka

Bishop Macram Max Gassis, Sudan/South Sudan



■ Contents

Introduction	3
About CSI	4
Emergency Aid	
■ Nagorno Karabakh	6
International Project Activities	
■ Nigeria	8
■ South Sudan	10
■ Egypt	12
■ Iraq	14
■ Syria	16
■ Bangladesh	18
■ India	20
■ Indonesia/West Papua	22
■ Myanmar	24
■ Nepal	26
■ Pakistan	28
■ Sri Lanka	30
■ Nicaragua	32
Advocacy Actions	35-37
Financial information	38
Donations	39

■ Nagorno Karabakh



Nagorno Karabakh is part of the ancient homeland of the Armenian people, the first nation to adopt Christianity as its official religion. When the USSR disintegrated in the early 1990s, the Christian Armenians of Karabakh attempted to claim their independence from the former Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan responded by trying to conquer Karabakh and drive out its Christians, which led to war with Armenia. Since the ceasefire concluded in 1994, Nagorno Karabakh has been de facto independent, but is not internationally recognized.

Overcrowded car hit by a drone

On September 27, 2020, Azerbaijan launched a new war to conquer Nagorno Karabakh. Some of the first bombs fell on the village of Martakert. Anush, her five children, and her neighbors squeezed into a car to flee. At one point in their flight, they were warned by police to take cover under some trees. Just then,



the overcrowded car next to them exploded. A drone had hit it. None of the occupants survived. Anush and the children watched people die.

In Armenia, they received a friendly welcome and were taken in by a stranger. Now they live in safety in Yerevan. CSI's support has giv-

Armenia is the oldest Christian nation in the world. csi



These children were driven from their homes by the Azerbaijani military assault in 2020. csi



en Anush and her family prospects: “Thanks to the help, we were able to get back on our feet. My chil-

“MY SON WHO IS SEVERELY TRAUMATIZED IS RECEIVING PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP.”

dren are going to school. One of my sons, who is severely traumatized [from the war], is receiving psychological support.”

Help for refugees

Approximately 35,000 Armenian Christians were displaced

Dr. John Eibner was a speaker at the Conference for International Religious Freedom and Peace at Etchmiadzin, Armenia, in fall 2021. csi

from villages that were ceded to Azerbaijan at the end of the 2020 war. They have no choice but to remain in Armenia for the time being. Some have the means to start over on their own in Armenia, but many will continue to rely on humanitarian assistance. CSI has launched a project to help refugees in need resume their former occupations (in many cases farming).

Working through local partners, CSI provides refugees in Armenia with food and other essentials

(blankets, pillows, clothes and medicines, etc.), as well as assistance with paying rent, medical treatment and finding long-term solutions. Anush and her family are among around 900 people supported by CSI through an emergency project run by the Armenian Catholic Church. ■

Priorities:

- **Housing assistance for refugees**
- **Income-generating measures for refugees**
- **Medical assistance**
- **Psychological support**

■ Nigeria



Victor Markus was the victim of an attack and lost a leg. Here he is practicing walking with a prosthesis funded by CSI donors. csi

The situation in Nigeria is tense. Attacks on Christians and moderate Muslims by Islamist militias, including Boko Haram and elements of the Fulani herdsmen, are continuing unabated. They kill, pillage and drive people from their villages to steal their land. The struggle for land and power is leading to the eradication of the Christian faith in large areas. CSI has warned of a genocide of Christians in northern and central Nigeria. But the world public has yet to take notice.

Villagers ran for their lives

On December 2, 2021 at around 9.30 pm, some 100 Fulani herdsmen attacked the village of Ungwan Urogoh in Kaduna State, shooting and shouting “Allahu Akbar”.

The startled villagers ran for their lives. Among them were Iliya Markus (41), his family and his

81-year-old father, who was struck down by a gunshot. One of Iliya’s sons tried to help him. In the process, he too was hit by a bullet. He and his grandfather both died.

“THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT SUPPORT US AFTER THE ATTACK.”

No support for victims

What Iliya Markus tells CSI of the Christian victims’ experience gives pause for thought, “The government did not support us after the attack.” The authorities downplay the violence.

CSI helps the victims and tries to give them a voice. For example, Iliya Markus’s family has received clothes, food and other essential items. Iliya wants to go back to his village to rebuild his house.

CSI is strengthening human rights work in this key African state and is keeping up pressure on the government to influence policy change. ■

Displaced people in a camp near Kafanchan. Their houses were burnt down and many people were killed. csi



Iliya Markus stands in front of his burnt-out house. csi



Priorities:

- Food distribution and medical care for IDPs
- Financial start-up aid for displaced people
- Scholarships and material support for the children of victims of violence
- Human rights work in Nigeria and abroad

■ South Sudan



South Sudan became an independent country in 2011, after decades of civil war between the majority-Muslim north and the majority-Christian south. But the impact of the war is still being painfully felt today. Tens of thousands of South Sudanese people who

were captured by northern jihadists remain enslaved in Sudan and their children are being born into slavery. CSI started its slave liberation campaign in the 1990s. To date more than 100,000 people have been freed from slavery and returned to their homes.

Former slaves receive CSI start-up aid, including a goat. csi



Abducted as a baby

Arek Achiech Thiel is one of them. Now 26 years old, she was still a baby when her family was abducted and enslaved by Islamist militias from the north. On their journey to northern Sudan, Arek's father and two of her siblings tried in vain to overpower their guards.

"I WAS TREATED LIKE AN ANIMAL, NOT LIKE A HUMAN BEING."

They were shot dead. Arek's mother was sold to a brutal slave master. He often beat her in front of her daughter.

Even as a child, Arek had to clean, fetch water and cook. If she made a mistake, she was punished harshly. One day she witnessed another Dinka slave being killed by his owner because he had tried to escape. I could



Medicines are distributed to those in need. csi

be next, Arek realized. From then on, she lived in constant fear. She would lie in bed at night crying and praying to God to save her.

A new life for Arek

Arek worked hard all day and never received any praise. "I was treated like an animal, not like a human being," she says. She endured

verbal abuse and was repeatedly beaten and raped. "My Arab master destroyed my life," she says.

When Arek heard that a CSI slave liberator was in the area, she knew her chance had come and quickly made her escape. With CSI's support, Arek is starting a new life in South Sudan, her real home. ■

Priorities:

- **Slave liberation and repatriation**
- **Support for liberated South Sudanese people to start a new life (food, survival pack, goat, counseling)**
- **Medical care for victims**
- **Food support for the local population**

Mary and her children received food aid. csi



■ Egypt



CSI's partners in Egypt work in three areas: emergency relief and support for the poor; education for children and young people; and education on social issues. One of these issues concerns female genital mutilation, or FGM for short, which is deeply rooted in Egyptian society.

The percentage of women made to undergo FGM in Egypt is one of the highest in the world. It is almost ubiquitous in the rural areas of Upper Egypt. The nationwide ban enacted in 2008 has had little effect. CSI supports local partners who raise awareness of this issue in particularly affected communities.

Awareness-raising among women

What this young mother describes is experienced by thousands of teenage girls: "It was horrible, I thought I was going to die." When she gave birth to a daughter, she vowed to protect her from FGM. But she couldn't stop it. Her mother-in-law simply took the girl

one day and circumcised her without her consent.

Since then, this young woman has been working in her neighborhood to change attitudes towards FGM. Core elements of the project are women's discussion groups, where the topic is openly

discussed, information is provided, and it is explained that FGM is not a religious commandment.

There is great social pressure to circumcise girls in rural Egypt. Many believe that a girl who does not undergo FGM is impure and not suitable for marriage. Although



Education provides prospects: learning to read and write. csi

such information is false, FGM is a deeply rooted tradition. A CSI project partner says, "It is counterproductive to condemn the choices made by women or their families. That is why we put a lot of emphasis

"WE PUT A LOT OF EMPHASIS ON SHARING EXPERIENCES."

on sharing experiences. When they hear from other women that they have decided against FGM, they learn that there is an alternative."

Courageous women

Women who do not let their daughters undergo FGM and talk about it with others are extremely courageous. They are breaking a social taboo. The CSI partners support them and help them to continue making a positive change in society. ■

Workshops for women: topics include genital mutilation and early marriage. csi



Ezbet Shenouda in the hairdressing salon she was able to open with start-up help from CSI. csi



Priorities:

- **Material and psychosocial support for underprivileged Egyptians**
- **Workshops on important social issues (FGM, early marriage, emergency aid, etc.)**
- **Educational programs for children and youth**

■ Iraq



Iraq is a troubled country, and it is the poorest who are hardest hit by the instability. The religious distribution has shifted: in 2003, there were 1.2 million Christians living in Iraq. Since the U.S.-led invasion, over two-thirds of Iraqi Christians have left the country. Many fleeing from Islamic State (IS) in 2014 have not dared to return. Some churches are struggling to survive, yet they are promoting reconciliation and dialogue with Muslims. CSI supports such initiatives, in addition to centers providing aid.

Christians driven out

In the town of Bartella in the Nineveh Plain between Mosul and Erbil, which was almost 100 percent Christian until the 1980s, Christians are now in the minority. But the kindergarten run by Sister Marie Joseph gives encouragement. After years of IS terror when everything was destroyed, the facility was reopened with CSI support. "I am very grateful to the support-

ers of CSI," says Marie Joseph, adding proudly, "We currently have 78 children aged three to five and five teachers."

Support for a kindergarten

In these tense times, the Dominican sisters' kindergarten is a

beacon of hope for the Christians in Bartella. CSI supports all efforts to make the returned Christians feel at home again. It co-finances the salaries of the kindergarten staff and covers the school bus transport costs. CSI also pays for the children's school materials.

Iraqi children:
What does the
future hold for
them? csi



Shining a light

William Warda from CSI's partner organization Hammurabi underlines the value of this commitment, "The support for this kindergarten

**"THIS SUPPORT
MAY ENCOURAGE
CHRISTIANS
TO STAY."**

is important; it may encourage Christians to stay in Bartella." Sister Marie Joseph also expresses her gratitude. The whole region has been Christian since the first century, she says, and it is vital that the Christian community remain. The kindergarten, which she runs with great commitment and courage, is a light not only for the Christians in Bartella but throughout Iraq. ■

Protection against the cold: CSI partners distribute winter clothing. csi



Alqosh cave church: Alqosh comes from the Aramaic for "god of righteousness". csi



Priorities:

- **Material support for persecuted religious minority groups**
- **Strengthening religious minorities through human rights work in Iraq and abroad**
- **Legal and medical assistance for impoverished Iraqis**

■ Syria



The Covid-19 pandemic hit the elderly especially hard. CSI provided ventilators. csi

Eleven years of civil war, foreign military intervention, and draconian economic sanctions imposed by Western countries have taken a heavy toll on Syria, and the Covid-19 pandemic has only made things worse. Today, this once middle-income country suffers from mass poverty and hunger. It is the weakest in society, such as elderly people, who are most affected. They tend to be forgotten about, even though they are among the most vulnerable and in need of help. Together with local partners, including Sister Marie-Rose, CSI is overseeing new projects in Syria to enable the older generation to live in dignity.

The older generation is abandoned

Traditionally in the Middle East, care for the elderly is left to families. But since war broke out in 2011,

many young people have left Syria. Without their care, the elderly are often left to fend for themselves, and some experience neglect. It is a phenomenon that CSI's Syrian partner Sister Marie-Rose and her community of nuns are increasingly confronted with: "Recently we came across an elderly man who had been living alone and had no one to care for him." They immediately took him to the hospital, but it was too late. The man died.

Delivering food and medicine

In the spring of 2020, the sisters launched their first project to care for needy elderly people from Tartus province. They deliver four meals a week to the homes of around 150 elderly people. In addition, people suffering from cancer or in need of dialysis are receiving

**"AN ELDERLY
MAN WHO HAD
BEEN LIVING
ALONE HAD NO
ONE TO CARE
FOR HIM."**

medical assistance. At the end of August 2021, Sister Marie-Rose launched a similar project in the Damascus region.

Reconstruction of a center in Aleppo

Growing old with dignity is a focus of the Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese of Aleppo too. The Dar al-Rahma retirement home, which opened in 2009, provided a shelter to people without relatives. It was one of the few facilities of its kind in Syria. In 2012, the home was damaged by two car bombs exploding nearby. Since then, the security situation in Aleppo has stabilized and CSI's partners have started to rebuild the home. When completed, it will accommodate some 50 people. The inauguration is planned for 2022.

During the year, CSI also made a commitment to educational and recreational programs for children, helped needy families pay for life-saving medicines, supplied ventilators for Covid patients, and

assisted unemployed people in starting small businesses. Internationally, CSI drew attention to the negative impact of economic sanctions on the population. ■



A collapsed ceiling in the center for the elderly; now the home is being rebuilt. csi



Children's programs bring some joy into everyday life. csi

Priorities:

- Educational and recreational programs for children
- Aid programs for the elderly
- Workshops and mentoring for women and children
- Support to start up small businesses
- Medical help for families in need
- International awareness-raising about the negative impact of economic sanctions on the population

■ Bangladesh



In 2021, Covid was rampant in Bangladesh. “People are dying on the streets and in front of hospitals,” reported CSI project partner William Samadder. Even many young people fell victim to the virus. Increasingly, the pandemic spread to rural areas. The situation was precarious: full intensive care units, and people dying at home for lack of oxygen or because they could not afford treatment. The strict lockdown deprived people of a daily income. Prices skyrocketed and a kilo of rice became unaffordable for millions of people.

Distributing oxygen and emergency aid

William Samadder and his team worked around the clock to help people who have lost their jobs and been left with nothing following the month-long lockdown. They distributed many hundreds of food packages, along with protective masks, soaps and disinfectants to suffering and vulnerable people in Dhaka and

surrounding areas. When there was no oxygen or it was too expensive, they distributed hundreds of refillable oxygen cylinders.

**“THIS TRAINING
HAS OPENED MY
EYES.”**

Knowledge transfer and networking

Despite the lockdown, the CSI-supported team constantly found ways to continue its interdenominational advocacy workshops for pastors. Pastors from remote areas are often left to fend for themselves. The workshops serve to further their education and build their networks. The topics are varied: “Religious freedom in general and the reality in Bangladesh”, “What is the responsibility of the state towards religious minorities in Bangladesh?”, “Rights and duties of a church leader”, amongst others. A very important aspect of these

meetings is to connect pastors and existing networks with each other. In difficult situations, these networks can be drawn upon.

Grateful pastors

So far, over 600 pastors have taken part in the workshops, and they are very grateful for the opportunity. Pastor Amit Biswah says, “This training has opened

Refillable oxygen cylinders saved the lives of many Covid sufferers. csi





my eyes.” He had not known that he was allowed to witness to his faith publicly in Bangladesh. “Until now, I have hidden my Christian beliefs and only shared them in my community. The knowledge I have gained about the legal situation is liberating for me.” ■

The workshops play a role in knowledge transfer, networking and strengthening faith. csi



During the pandemic CSI partners distributed food to the hungry. csi

Priorities:

- **Financing of a Christian village school for over 100 children**
- **Financing of an orphanage/boarding school for six girls**
- **Interdenominational human rights workshops for pastors and lay people**
- **Support for victims of religious discrimination and initiatives to combat extremism**
- **Emergency aid**



■ India



The year 2021 was marked by a particularly high number of attacks on religious minorities, especially Christians and Muslims. More than 530 cases were reported against Christians alone; the number of unreported cases is probably many times higher. The so-called anti-conversion law was often misused to target members of religious minorities.

Legal help for persecuted pastors

CSI partner and lawyer Chaya Kumar (name changed) is very concerned about developments in the country since the Hindu BJP party came to power. She says, "We are deeply saddened to see how the situation of religious minorities is worsening by the year."

CSI teams have provided legal assistance as well as emergency

aid to persecuted pastors in various parts of India. What's more, Christians who lost their income owing to Covid prevention measures were able to attend training courses to help them become financially self-sufficient.

In the south of the country, the pastors' support network was continued and even expanded during the pandemic. In times of persecution and need the network is more important than ever. Christians feel part of a large community that supports and strengthens them.

Aid organizations penalized

It is extremely worrying that thousands of aid organizations have been prevented from re-registering with the authorities as is required by law. Non-Hindu and human rights groups are worst affected. The con-

"THE SITUATION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IS WORSENING BY THE YEAR."



Pastor Punam learned how to make soap and now earns a small income from it. CSI



A church destroyed by radical Hindus. It is being rebuilt with CSI aid. csi

sequences are devastating. Millions of people in need are no longer receiving aid. Hundreds of thousands of children are forced to live on the streets, and are again subject to violence, abuse and human trafficking.

of trafficking victims in the world. Now the numbers have risen again, alarmingly. CSI teams are working tirelessly to help trafficked persons through rescue operations and rehabilitation services. ■

More trafficking victims

Even before the spread of Covid and the introduction of restrictions India had the highest number



This victim of trafficking found sanctuary in a rehabilitation center. csi

Priorities:

Aid for persecuted religious minorities

- Legal and material support for victims of religious violence and discrimination
- Support for a large network of lawyers
- Training members of religious minorities regarding fundamental rights, laws and wise conduct

Aid for victims of human trafficking

- Prevention work in schools with pupils, teachers and parents
- Rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims
- Promoting a national network against human trafficking
- Microcredits and support to small business ventures to help families escape poverty

■ Indonesia/ West Papua

West Papua boasts one of the few remaining intact rainforests in Southeast Asia. The province, part of Indonesia, is home to the exclusively Christian indigenous Papuan population. But the island's demography has changed in recent

decades. A resettlement policy has resulted in more and more Indonesian-born Muslims moving to West Papua. Indigenous people now make up just 51 per cent of the population. For years, the Papuans have been demanding inde-



Remote, wild, rich in natural resources: West Papua (or Western New Guinea) belongs to Indonesia. Unsplash/Asso Myron

pendence from the government in Jakarta in addition to increased political and civil rights. But Indonesia is resisting such moves. Too much gold and copper lies beneath the still untouched rainforests, not to mention the thousands of hectares of land that can be used for palm oil plantations.

Worsening situation

The indigenous Papuans are fighting for their freedom and rights with all means at their disposal. In 2021, the National Liberation Army was classified as a "terrorist" organization, leading to an intensification of the armed conflict. Church leaders and civil society groups responded by calling for peaceful dialogue to resolve the conflict that had been simmering for years. However, both the Indonesian civilian and the military government have further exacerbated the conflict by targeting civilians and creating a refugee crisis. The West Papua Council of Churches report-





Stronger together:
participants in a
human rights work-
shop. csi



Reverend Benny
Giay, head of the
Kingmi Church,
talks to children in
Tage village. csi

ed in 2021 that more than 60,000 indigenous Papuans had fled their homes in the highlands. This tragic development is little reported on as West Papua is closed to foreign journalists.

Documenting human rights violations

“We need to achieve a non-violent peace,” says Benny Giay, Kingmi Church leader and CSI project partner. “We draw the strength to do this from our faith, because Jesus shows us how to stand up for peace and justice.” In this endeavor, CSI supports the Kingmi Church-run Center for Human Rights and Social and Pastoral Studies. Here, pastors and students from far-flung areas

come together for training. They learn to gather data, document eyewitness accounts and monitor human rights violations. Reports are

“WE NEED TO ACHIEVE A NON-VIOLENT PEACE.”

produced that are used by various newspapers. “In this ongoing military operation with such a complex political and economic background, the church remains the only actor in West Papua able to support the indigenous Papuans,” explains one of the students. ■

Priorities:

- **Support for the Kingmi Church Center for Human Rights and Social and Pastoral Studies**
- **Support for the church movement in West Papua that is working for a non-violent solution to the conflict**

■ Myanmar



Since the Myanmar military took power by force on February 1, 2021, advocates for democracy in the major cities and members of various ethno-religious minorities in the jungle region have been attacked, arrested and killed.

A member of the Karen ethnic Christian minority reports, "We are

**"THE REFUGEES
CAUGHT UP IN
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IMMENSELY
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OUR HELP."**

Persecuted in their own country, displaced members of the Karen people are in hiding. csi

literally being hunted down. When we hear the helicopters coming, we run for our lives. But we often don't know where to go. We are completely defenseless against the missiles." By the end of 2021, more than 11,000 deaths had been re-

CSI has provided food to Karen refugees. [csi](#)



ported; more than 350,000 people are refugees in their own country. And the war is continuing.

Encouraged by aid deliveries

With CSI's help, local partner Kakreh Moo (name changed) has organized deliveries of emergency aid for the Karen who have fled. "The refugees caught up in this tragic situation are immensely grateful for the medicine, food, drinking water, tarpaulins and blankets," reports Kakreh Moo. Those who have been displaced are touched and encouraged to know that other people are thinking of them.

Support for school children

Since 2020 CSI has been supporting Karen IDPs living in a camp on the border with Thailand. Support for the 28 students from the camp in Myanmar who are attending school in Thailand also continued in 2021. According to Kakreh

Moo, "The children have not seen their parents for over two years because of the pandemic and the war. During this extremely difficult time, taking care of the children was especially important." ■

Priorities:

- Covering Thai boarding school costs for children from a refugee camp in Myanmar
- Emergency aid for internally displaced persons (food, medicine, sheets, blankets, drinking water)



Future prospects: these young people can study in safety with CSI help. [csi](#)

■ Nepal



Although it has largely escaped international attention, Christians in Nepal are experiencing increasing restrictions on their religious freedom. The anti-conversion law enacted in 2017 is often misused by the government to impede the free practice of religion, especially by Christians.

“MY HUSBAND AND I ONLY ATE EVERY OTHER DAY SO OUR CHILDREN DIDN’T GO HUNGRY.”

Pastor Keshab is one of hundreds of people to have personally experienced this oppression. He was arrested in November 2021, accused of proselytizing, detained, and sentenced to two years in prison. Thanks to the huge efforts of CSI partner Stephen Adhikari and other lawyers, Pastor Keshab



was released on bail after several weeks. To date, he has been charged in three different districts for “missionary activities”. CSI is supporting Pastor Keshab’s family and other families facing financial

hardship by covering legal fees and helping them to set up in business.

Churches demolished

Legal restrictions on registering churches in 2021 have made it

What kind of life can this girl expect? csi

virtually impossible for Christians to build churches and community centers. A dozen churches were even demolished by order of the state. Aid activities by Christian social welfare organizations and NGOs are increasingly obstructed or banned altogether. Stephen Adhikari is working tirelessly at the political and legal level to ensure respect for the right to religious freedom enshrined in the Nepalese constitution.

Survival aid

In 2021, as in 2020, countless Nepalese struggled to survive as a result of Covid prevention measures. CSI helped with food, medicine and blankets. "CSI's help literally saved us. My husband and I only ate every other day so our children didn't go hungry. We are immensely grateful to the donors for their help," says Sharmila Ramtel from Bhartapur district. She is one of the many people to have received emergency food aid from CSI during the pandemic. ■



The pandemic left many people without enough to eat. CSI helped distribute food. csi

Pastor Keshab and his wife. CSI partner Adhikari campaigned for his release. csi

Priorities:

- Training members of religious minorities in basic rights and laws affecting their everyday life
- Legal support for people persecuted for their faith
- Practical help for persecuted people: shelter, medicines, first aid
- Establishing a network of parliamentarians who advocate for human rights
- Help to set up small businesses for financial empowerment
- Emergency assistance for those affected by Covid-19 measures



■ Pakistan



In Pakistan, there are signs of growing Islamic radicalization following the overthrow of the Afghan government by the Taliban, especially in areas near the Afghan border. Increasingly, Islamist groups and parties are putting pressure on the government to enforce their demands. Violent mobs are rarely held accountable. Violence and discrimination against religious minorities are on the rise.

Freed after four years

But there were also glimmers of hope in 2021. Take the case of Nabeel Masih. In September 2016, the then 16-year-old was charged with blasphemy. Four precious years of his life were wasted in solitary confinement. Throughout this time CSI supporters contributed towards Nabeel's legal fees, prayed for him and sent him cards of encouragement. It was a huge relief when the news reached us in March that Nabeel had been freed on bail.



Younas Masih and his family are happy to have their freedom back. CSI

Since his release, Nabeel has been living at a new location with his father and siblings. With the help of a private teacher and counselor, he has been catching up on the missed years of schooling and talking about his trauma. Nabeel says, "I feel great anger, but also sadness, thinking about these

people who ruined four and a half years of my life. But it is not for me to judge them, it is for God. I leave everything to Him."

Modern-day slavery

There are around 20,000 brick factories in Pakistan. Most of the estimated 4.5 million workers are

Distributing food-stuffs during the lockdown CSI

at the mercy of their employer who decides on their pay and controls their freedom of movement. Being at the bottom of the social ladder, religious minorities - Hindus, Chris-

debt. Seema is a free woman again. To prevent future financial hardship, CSI gave her a buffalo cow as a start-up gift.

A new start for Younas

Another example is Younas Masih, who has a wife and three children. Frequent illness forced him to borrow money to buy medicine. To help pay off the family's debt, the children had to make bricks after school and had no time to spend on their homework. CSI repaid the Masih family's debts and bought Younas a rickshaw so that he can earn a living as a taxi driver.

CSI partner Anjum Paul is proud to be able to contribute to a positive change in the lives of many families. He says, "It gives me great satisfaction to see people like Younas Masih regain their dignity and freedom with CSI's help." ■

"IT GIVES ME SATISFACTION TO SEE PEOPLE LIKE YOUNAS MASIH REGAIN THEIR DIGNITY AND FREEDOM WITH CSI'S HELP."

tians and Shia Muslims - are particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

Widow Seema Aktar toiled for years under harsh conditions in a brick factory. The mother of five was overjoyed when thanks to a donation from Switzerland she was able to pay off her 1,200-dollar



A woman forms bricks under the baking sun. csi



Nabeel Masih is adapting to life outside prison. csi



Priorities:

- Support for a Christian school with over 300 pupils
- Legal and medical aid for victims of Islamist violence and those charged with blasphemy
- Legal aid for victims of forced marriage and conversion
- Material assistance to free enslaved brick workers

■ Sri Lanka



The economic crisis in Sri Lanka is worsening. Political mismanagement has been further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, causing prices for food, fuel and clothing to skyrocket. “More and more people are suffering from hunger, not just in remote areas but now also in the capital Colombo,” CSI’s partners report. In addition to existential hardship, there is a growing fear of

persecution among members of religious minorities.

Increasing surveillance of churches

Christians in Sri Lanka experienced a sharp increase in threats and coercion in 2021, not only from Buddhist extremists but also from government officials. Surveillance of churches and religious organi-

zations increased. Church leaders reported that their congregations were routinely visited by intelligence officers, who asked for personal details of their members. In addition, many congregations struggled against forced closure because they were unable to register

“THE CSI PROJECT PARTNERS WERE THE ONLY ONES TO STAND BY ME.”

with the local authorities, as is now officially required. CSI partners took legal action to ensure that these closures were not carried out. They also provided legal advice and assistance to many persecuted Christians. Our partners handled more than 45 legal cases in 2021.

A pastor says thanks

Pastor Prabath Joshua from Dimbulagala was one of those



Retreat into prayer: Christians in Sri Lanka are facing increased hostility. NCEASL

helped: "I started my ministry 18 years ago. Since then, I have experienced a great deal of discrimination in everyday life, including physical violence. The CSI project partners were the only ones to stand by me in all these difficulties. I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart. God bless you."

International human rights advocacy is central to the work of CSI's partners as they seek to ensure that testimonies like Prabath Joshua's do not go unheard. For example, they addressed the Oslo Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism on strategies to promote freedom of religion or belief.



This was an important milestone for religious minorities in Sri Lanka. ■

CSI supports workshops and training for church and community leaders. csi

Priorities:

- Legal support for people persecuted for their religious beliefs and members of religious minorities
- Human rights work at home and abroad
- Documentation of human rights violations
- Workshops and training for church and community leaders
- Emergency aid, practical help and support to secure livelihoods
- Disaster relief

Nicaragua



Since the suppression of a peaceful protest movement in 2018, President Daniel Ortega and his wife have ruled with brutal force. Ahead of the presidential elections in November 2021, Ortega imprisoned countless democracy supporters and influential politicians as well as journalists, entrepreneurs, former ambassadors and student leaders – a clear indication of his dictatorial intentions.

The church has not been spared the attacks and repression. Clergy are attacked and arrested, and their activities are monitored and often severely restricted. Our local partners experience this every day: “We are constantly watched and have to be careful what we say and to whom. Under no circumstances do we want to put our work at risk.”

Extreme poverty

Thousands of people in the slums suffer from extreme poverty and the violence that goes with it. Since the pandemic, the situation is



even worse. "It breaks our hearts to see how much people suffer," say our partners.

Homes for girls

CSI's local partners run homes for girls, providing much-needed care to over 40 residents. Here, the once badly neglected girls are lovingly looked after by Carmelite sisters and are able to attend school. Some have even been able to go on to university. "I come from a remote region and would have no chance of a good life," Loyda tells

us. She is immensely grateful to the sisters and CSI for the opportunity and says, "After medical school, I want to dedicate myself first and foremost to the poor in Nicaragua."

Despite obstacles and adversities, the sisters serve the people in the slum areas with love, courage and dedication. They tell us: "Thanks to the support of CSI donors, we have been able to offer compassion, solidarity and hope to those affected through the provision of food and medicines and taking care of many girls." ■

"IT BREAKS OUR HEARTS TO SEE HOW MUCH PEOPLE SUFFER."



Life is particularly hard for old people. Medicines and food help. csi

Priorities:

- Daily lunch and care for children in slum areas
- Provision of school materials and school uniforms
- Distribution of food and medicines to those in special need
- Free consultations with doctors and dentists
- Working to end violence in families
- Shelter providing psychological care and schooling to girls

Rescued from poverty and well cared for, these girls now have prospects. csi





FOOD ASSISTANCE TO
INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS
MAIDUGURI DIOCESE
2021
13TH-15TH AUGUST 2021
CARITAS AFRICA
 IMPLEMENTED BY
 JUSTICE DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE COMMISSION
 (MAIDUGURI)

FOOD ASSISTANCE TO IDPS

CSI distributes food at the Shagari IDP camp, Maiduguri, Nigeria. csi.org

■ Advocacy Actions

January

Magazine protest/support article: Protest to Pakistan president over the forced conversion and marriage of Christian girls.

Prayer topics: (India) Punita Kumari, her pastor husband and their family were victims of an attack by Hindu extremists on their village in Bihar; (Nagorno Karabakh) Over 100,000 Armenian Christians fled their homes following the Azerbaijani offensive, CSI is providing aid to the displaced; (Nigeria) Pastor Polycarp Zongo from Jos was abducted by Islamist terrorists on October 29, 2020 when on the way to a conference.

Press release: CSI joins broad-based, international appeal to President Biden to end collective punishment of Syria's civilians

February

Magazine protest/support article: Card of encouragement to project partner Stephen Adhikari, Nepal

Prayer topics: (Uganda) Pastor David Umaru was killed by Muslim extremists after comparing Christianity and Islam in a radio broadcast;

(Cuba) Following the bulldozing of his church, Pastor Palomo Cabrera was arrested and forced to sign a document saying that the destruction was legal; (Nigeria) Pastor Johnson Oladimeji was shot dead in his car in the southwestern state of Ekiti by Fulani Islamists.

March

Magazine protest/support article: Card of encouragement to project partner the Blue Marists, Syria

Prayer topics: (Pakistan) 12-year-old Farah Shaheen was freed six months after being abducted and forcibly converted to Islam and married; (Nigeria) in Zangon Kataf in Kaduna State, 33 Christians were killed in a spate of attacks between December 17 and 22, 2020; (Iran) human rights activist Nasrin Sotoudeh who was serving a 38-year jail term was temporarily released from prison.

April

Magazine protest/support article: Card of encouragement to human rights activist Solomon Dalycop, Nigeria, who has faced death threats.



CSI International President Dr. John Eibner spoke at a religious freedom conference in Armenia in September. [csi](#)

Prayer topics: (Myanmar) CSI provides emergency aid after tens of thousands of Karen Christians were displaced by a military putsch; (Pakistan) Imran Ghafoor Masih was freed from prison after serving 11 years for alleged blasphemy; (India) 18-year-old Neha suffered broken bones in her hand when Hindu extremists attacked a church in Uttar Pradesh.

May

Magazine protest/support article: Card of encouragement to the Evangelical Fellowship of India

Prayer topics: (India) A pregnant woman, Leela Bai, miscarried her baby after a Hindu mob attacked

a group of Christians they accused of forcible conversion in Madhya Pradesh; (Pakistan) A nurse in Karachi, Tabeeta Nazeer Gill, had to flee the country after being wrongly accused of blasphemy; (Syria) CSI is providing financial assistance to many unable to afford desperately needed medicines and treatment.

Press release: CSI expresses regret over US's renewal of Syria sanctions

June

Magazine protest/support article: Card of encouragement to the Lady Cox Rehabilitation Centre, Nagorno Karabakh

Nabil Antaki addresses CSI Open Day on the topic of the sanctions on Syria. csi



Prayer topics: (Pakistan) CSI's partners are working to free girls from forced marriages, including Shakaina Masih, 13, who was abducted in February 2021; (Bangladesh) Arian Mila and Shanta Begum are happy that through CSI support their Christian school could reopen following a long Covid-induced closure; (South Sudan) Achol Thiep Thiep, 28, spent 20 years of her life as a slave in Sudan after being helped to flee by CSI.

Press release: Baroness Cox, Dr John Eibner, to Biden and Putin: "Put Syrians first"

July/August

Magazine protest/support article: Card of encouragement to project partner Kakreh Moo, Myanmar

Prayer topics: (Nigeria) Suspected Fulani militants abducted 18 female students from Greenfield University in Kaduna, later killing five of them; (Pakistan) The supreme court of Lahore found a Christian couple, Shagufta Kausar and Shafqat Emmanuel, innocent of blasphemy charges; (Iran) Human rights activist Golrokh Iraee was sentenced to a year in prison for anti-state propaganda.

September

Magazine protest/support article: Protest to the Algerian ambassador over the imprisonment of Pastor Rachid Seighir and his employee Nouh Hamimi

Prayer topics: (Nigeria) Human rights defender Obadiah Mailafia who condemned the government over the killings of Christians in the Middle Belt died suddenly in Abuja; (Algeria) Evangelical pastor and bookstore owner Rachid Seighir and his employee Nouh Hamimi were sentenced to one-year jail terms for anti-Islamic propaganda; (Indonesia) In Christian-majority West Papua CSI supports the churches in their human rights work amid increased repression.

Conferences: Nabil Antaki addresses CSI Open Day on the topic of the sanctions on Syria; John Eibner participates in a conference at Holy Etchmiadzin, the seat of the Armenian Apostolic Church, in Armenia as a featured speaker; Joel Veldkamp speaks about sanctions at a side panel of the 48th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, Geneva.

October

Magazine protest/support article: Protest to Saudi king calling for the release of imprisoned women's rights activists

Prayer topics: (India) Meenu Kaur Tank, 24, from Punjab was seriously injured when Sikhs attacked her and her mother as they were returning home from church; (Pakistan) Sadaf Khan, 16, who was abducted and forcibly married to a Muslim at the age of 14, returned home after a court nullified her marriage; (Saudi Arabia) Women's rights activists Samar Badawi and Nassima al-Sada were released from prison but others, including Israa al-Ghomgham, remain in jail.

November

Magazine protest/support article: Card of encouragement to project partner Esther, Sri Lanka

Prayer topics: (Iran) the prison sentences of Christian converts Amin Khaki, Milad Goudarzi and Alireza Nourmohammadi were reduced from five years to three on appeal; (Nicaragua) CSI partner Sister Guadalupe, who worked tirelessly to bring relief to slum dwell-

ers for over 20 years, died of Covid in August 2021; (Pakistan) Widow Seema Aktar, who along with her children was forced to work under terrible conditions in a brick factory, received help from CSI to repay her debts and start afresh.

Press releases: CSI calls on US Secretary of State to engage with victims of atrocities on Nigeria visit; CSI: Removal of Nigeria from list of religious freedom violators is a brazen denial of reality; Kaduna State journalist jailed after reporting attacks on Christians.

Conferences: Joel Veldkamp participates in a panel discussion about sanctions hosted by the UN Special Rapporteur for Unilateral Coercive Measures in Geneva.

December

Magazine protest/support article: Card of encouragement to Seema Aktar, Sadaf Khan, Arzoo Lal (Pakistan), Parul Singh (India), Kakreh Moo (Myanmar), Carmelite Sisters (Nicaragua), Pastor Buba Aliyu (Nigeria)

Prayer topics: (Algeria) A regional appeal court upheld the one-year jail terms of evangelical pastor

and bookstore owner Rachid Seighir and his employee Nouh Hamimi; (India) CSI partners freed Urmila, 12, from human traffickers and took her to a safe house; (South Sudan) Athok Bol Geng, 30, was one of 300 slaves freed in July and returned home as part of a CSI slave liberation operation.

Joel Veldkamp appears on the "Edifi" podcast with Billy Hallowell in the United States to talk about forced conversions and marriages of Christian women and girls in Pakistan.

■ CSI financial information 2021

CSI total income (donations only), in US dollars (exchange rates calculated on December 31, 2021)

- **7'440'028.75**

CSI total expenditure, in US dollars (exchange rates calculated on December 31, 2021)

- **7'142'974.72**

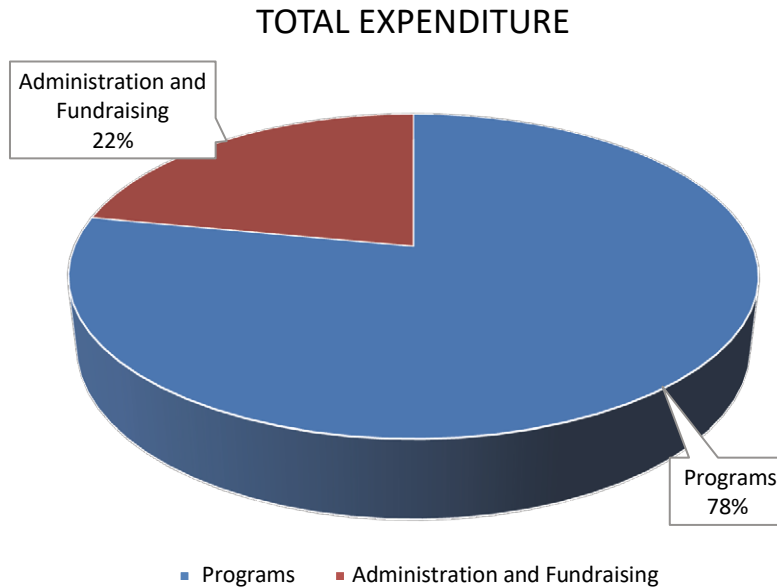
Expenditure on human rights, humanitarian and religious freedom programs

- **5'544'088.07**

Expenditure on administration and fundraising

- **1'598'886.65**

(These consolidated figures are based on the audited financial reports of CSI national affiliates.)



■ Donations

Donations to support our work can be made via our affiliate websites (scan the QR code) or using the payment details below.



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Prima banka: 837 035 3002 / 5600
IBAN (Slovakia): SK75 5600 0000 0083 7035 3002



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IBAN: FR98 2004 1000 0100 7015 4K02 081
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USA

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Thank you!



Rejoice with those who rejoice.