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**DOSSIER ON
DISCRIMINATION AND INTOLERANCE AGAINST
CHRISTIAN FAITH**

OSCE REGION

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PRESENTATION

The present dossier offers the description of different acts of discrimination and intolerance against Christians in the countries that conform the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe). It does not pretend to be an exhaustive description, but an approach to the rising situation of discrimination and intolerance against Christians and Christian symbols.

The dossier is divided into two parts. The first part presents recent cases of public mockery against Christian Faith in countries not usually considered intolerant against Christianity. Each case is described under a specific title indicating the country where the act of mockery is taking or had taken place. Before the brief description of the case we have indicated its source. Most cases offer more than one source, in which case we have reduced the references to the most important one.

The second part of the dossier considers situations of Christian intolerance in specific countries belonging to the OSCE. Most descriptions of specific acts of discriminations or intolerance are quoted chronologically. When discrimination or intolerance of Christians refers to a general national situation a broader explanation has been introduced. The main source is indicated after each case or description.

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RECENT CASES OF PUBLIC MOCKERY AGAINST CHRISTIAN FAITH

Rock Star Madonna's Crucifixion in "Confessions" Tour

COUNTRY: USA, United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and others

SOURCE: <http://news.bbc.co.uk> May 23-24, 2006 – August 2, 2006 (and others)

DESCRIPTION: Rock star Louise Veronica Ciccone (alias Madonna) in her concert tour "Confessions" appears suspended from a giant mirrored cross with a phoney thorn-crown in her head, while images of poverty in the developing world are shown on video screens and numbers ticked away to represent the 12 million African children orphaned by Aids. The Rome concert showed photographs of the pope after those of former Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. UK and US church groups condemned the stunt after the singer began a 51-date world tour in Los Angeles. German Church groups have also condemned it during the tour in Germany, as well as Italian Church groups before and after the Rome concert. The artist has defended a controversial mock crucifixion in her stage show, saying it is part of an appeal to the audience to donate to Aids charities.

BBC Series on "The Miracles of Jesus"

COUNTRY: United Kingdom

SOURCE: <http://www.cinews.ie> July 17, 2006

DESCRIPTION: The Catholic Bishops of Scotland have severely criticised the BBC for its "negative" views of Christianity as it launches a new series examining the miracles of Jesus. The new series in three parts is entitled "The Miracles of Jesus". According to the BBC's own blurb this series will examine the so-called "secret-codes" of the miracles as believed by first century Christians and explore who Jesus considered himself to be. Among the miracles explored will be the feeding of the five thousand, while actors will be used throughout to recreate familiar accounts in the Gospel of some of the miracles performed by Jesus. However, the real source of controversy is its Muslim presenter, journalist Ragi Omar. According to a report in the Catholic newspaper *The Universe*, the spokesman for the Catholic Bishops in Scotland, Peter Kearney, said there was an increasing danger the BBC was regarded as presenting negative images only of Jesus and Christians while treating other religions "more lightly". Mr Kearney described a number of controversial shows including Jerry Springer – The Opera, as well as programmes that attacked the story of Noah's Ark or

which claimed Jesus was the child born of Mary after she had been raped by a Roman soldier. "It always seems that it's Christianity which gets the investigative and negative treatment," said Mr Kearney. "I also remember a highly offensive documentary on Mother Theresa. Yet you would struggle to think of a programme giving the same treatment to Mohammed or Buddha. In fact, I don't think there have been any. "I'm not suggesting for a moment that Ragi Omar is anything but a professional journalist who I am sure has been hired because of his skills as a presenter and journalist. But can you imagine the BBC asking prominent Christians like Cliff Richard or Jonathan Edwards to present an investigative and critical look at Mohammad? "You just know it would not be allowed. That is why there is a danger the BBC is being increasingly regarded as only taking a pop at Christians. I am all for criticism, but let's at least have a level playing field."

Jesus Christ The Musical Video clip

COUNTRY: Spain – The Internet

SOURCE: ACPress.net February 28, 2006

(<http://www.protestantedigital.com/new/leernoticiaEsp.php?1661>)

DESCRIPTION: On 18 February 2006 Spanish TV Channel "Telecinco" transmitted the video clip "Jesus Christ The Musical" in its children-TV schedule programme "Visto y no visto". The video, diffused though the Internet, shows Jesus Christ singing Gloria Gaynor's "I will survive" and dancing around in the streets, until finally he is run over by a bus. Several Christian associations have formally complained, including the Spanish Evangelical Alliance.

Popetown – MTV Cartoon Series against the Vatican

COUNTRY: Germany – New Zealand – Great Britain

SOURCE: <http://www.iblnews.com> April 16, 2006

DESCRIPTION: On May 2006 an animated cartoon series was released containing a satire on the life of the Pope in the Vatican. The series didn't only ridicule specific aspects of Christian faith, but presented Church authorities as criminals involved in different kind of malicious activities.

Even though many Christians protested against this cartoon series, the TV production has been broadcasted in several countries and its distribution in DVD has increased due precisely to the protests of different religious entities.

The promotion of the series reads: «Office politics exist in any workplace, but in Popetown there's a bizarre twist : the company is

the Vatican and the Chief Executive happens to be the Pope. The long-suffering Father Nicholas runs the back-office at Popetown, a job that includes anything from ordering Friday's frozen fish fingers to planning prestigious public masses. Each day he struggles against the insane and chaotic bureaucracy of Popetown. He is so much a part of the fabric of Popetown that he can no longer see just how bizarre the others are : the sinister, corrupt and mysteriously wealthy Cardinals; the fame-obsessed TV reporter Sister Penelope ; the 77 year-old eccentric Pope with all the charm of an obnoxious seven-year-old (who likes Father Nicholas so much that he takes baths with him); and Sister Marie, Father Nicholas' devoted and innocent assistant, who all too often acts before, or even without, thinking».

Stage Play "La Revelación" against Christ and Judaism

COUNTRY: Spain

SOURCE: Europa Press – "El Mundo" Journal – February 24, 2006
(<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2006/02/24/madrid/1140817858.html>)

DESCRIPTION: On 24 February 2006 a stage play entitled "The Revelation" by author Leo Bassi opened its doors to the public at the Alfíl Theatre in Madrid. Centred in the person of Jesus Christ and Judaism, the stage play ridiculed Christ's message as if it were something absurd and derisory for the contemporary man. The organizers defended themselves affirming that "Humour is a part of Social Debate".

Sculpture representing Christ with a Missile

COUNTRY: Spain

SOURCE: «El País» Journal February 10, 2006 -
<http://www.20minutos.es> February 09, 2006

DESCRIPTION: On the 10th February 2006 the "Ferran Cano" Art Gallery in Madrid opened an exposition presenting, besides other sculptures, a representation of Christ with a missile instructing Second World War German soldiers generated several disputes in an Art Gallery. The author, Spanish artist Oscar Seco, sustained that irony and transgression are the only way to demonstrate that Modern Art is not tamed but critical towards social and religious symbols.

South Park "Bloody Mary" Episode

COUNTRY: USA

SOURCE: <http://www.catholicleague.org> December 30, 2005 - <http://www.tv.com> December 7, 2005

DESCRIPTION: An episode of the cartoon series "South Park" shows irreverent treatment of catholic symbols, where a statue of the Virgin Mary begins to bleed out of her anus and people begin to flock around it to find a cure for their diseases. Pope Benedict XVI comes to investigate, and discovers that the blood is not actually coming from the statue's anus – but her vagina. Since "chicks bleed out their vaginas all the time," this is no miracle. The episode was aired on December 7, 2005, which is the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, a Catholic observance related specifically to the Virgin Mary. The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights condemned this episode for its treatment of the Virgin Mary. They demanded an apology to Roman Catholics and that the episode "be permanently retired and not be made available on DVD." In particular they also demanded that Joseph A. Califano, Jr., a member of Viacom's board of directors and a practicing Catholic, issue his own statement of condemnation. Califano did later release a statement calling the episode an "appalling and disgusting portrayal of the Virgin Mary," and pledged to have it reviewed by Viacom's president and CEO, Tom Freston. Bishop William Skylstad, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, sent a letter to Freston saying the network showed "extreme insensitivity" when it aired the episode. When Comedy Central re-aired all the episodes from South Park's Fall 2005 season on December 28, 2005, "Bloody Mary" was noticeably absent from the broadcast. Comedy Central responded to e-mail inquiries about the fate of the episode with the assurance that "Bloody Mary" has not been retired and would not be pulled from the DVD release. However, still missing are screen captures from the episode on Comedy Central's press site and the South Park section of comedycentral.com. In February 2006, leaders from the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference, the Council of Christians and Muslims, and other religious groups together lobbied media conglomerate CanWest to stop a planned airing of the episode in New Zealand on the music channel C4. The network rejected the plea and aired the episode on February 22, 2006.

Animated Video Glorifies Violence Against Pro-Life Christians

COUNTRY: USA

SOURCE: www.prolifeblogs.com August 8, 2005

DESCRIPTION: An animated feature called 'Superhero for Choice' placed at the Planned Parenthood website is glamorizing violence against people of faith. Posted on an official Planned Parenthood web site, the eight-minute animated feature video shows the organization's 'superhero' drowning an abstinence educator in a trash can and killing peaceful Christian pro-life activists by blowing them up outside of a Planned Parenthood facility. A pro-life protestor is mercilessly decapitated during the closing credits.

Mockery of Crown of Thorns by Spanish Politicians

COUNTRY: Spain

SOURCE: Libertad Digital May 20, 2005

(<http://www.libertaddigital.com:83/historico/2005/05/20/>)

DESCRIPTION: On the 20th April 2005 a group of Catalan politicians in an Official Visit to Israel joked about the Passion of Christ while one of them placed a Crown of Thorns over his head while other members of the committee took photographs and made sarcastic commentaries. The case was submitted to the Catalan Supreme Court, that later on decided not to carry on with the legal process due to the fact that "the photographs where made with a Crown of Thorns sold as a souvenir".

How to Cook a Crucifix – Canal Plus Gag against Christian Symbols

COUNTRY: Spain

SOURCE: <http://www.libertaddigital.com> January 3, 2005 (and others)

DESCRIPTION: On 15 December 2004, in the context of a Variety Show called "Lo + Plus", Spanish TV Channel "Canal Plus" had broadcasted what was supposed to be a gag that presented a housewife explaining how to cook a Crucifix as if it where a kitchen recipe programme.

DESCRIPTION OF PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIAN IN SPECIFIC COUNTRIES

Azerbaijan

The authorities continue to persecute the members of the mosque in Juma, the leader of which, Ibrahimoglu Allahverdiev, is also an activist in defending human rights, and in particular freedom of religious expression for Christians and Muslims. Ibragimoglu in fact coordinates the group for freedom of worship called Devamn and is the secretary general of the Azeri chapter of the International Association for Religious Freedom. *Report 2005 on Religious Freedom in the World – Aid to the Church in Need*

- 2005 Telman Aliev, the Minister of the Baptist community in Neftchala, has repeatedly been the victim of interrogations, threats and insults from the police. Conditions experienced by the Baptist community in Aliabad, in the north-western region of Zakatala, are difficult too. *Report 2005 on Religious Freedom in the World – Aid to the Church in Need*
- July 2003 - Local police raided Baptist service in a flat in Gyranja, confiscated Bibles and fined 2 members. *Forum 18 News Service, 23/7/2003*
- April 2002 - Over Easter Christians fined and deported and church closed. *Barnabas Fund, 17/4/2002*
- April 2002 - Baptist church in Baku liquidated. The pastor of the church accused of 'insulting Islam'. *The Voice of the Martyrs, 10/4/2002*
- April 2002 - Protestant missionary deported after being arrested and forced to sign confession written in Azeri, a language she did not understand. *Catholic World (CW) News, 5/4/2002*
- January 2001 - Police threatened and detained 2 Baptist pastors. *Compass Direct, 18/2/2001*

Belgium

In Belgium the government's work addressed at opposing possible abuse by neo-religious associations or un-recognised "irregular" groups have included some protestant Christian groups.

- February 2002 - 29 American volunteers of the Assemblies of God questioned by police for allegedly violating a work permit law. 4 detained and deported, despite years working in Belgium without any trouble. *Compass Direct, 15/3/2002*
- 1997 - A parliamentary report listed a number of the country's free churches including Pentecostals as sects, who should be under

surveillance, increasing their risk of persecution. www.nccg.org/W-News-002.html

Byelorussia

In Byelorussia there are still problems concerning the respect of freedom of worship, especially due to the strict control that government authorities apply to minority religious groups. While initially President Lukashenko seemed to side mainly with the Orthodox Church, he had later promised to assist and cooperate with the Catholic Church in organising a meeting with Italian bishops. The compulsory re-registration process was achieved in a basically positive manner. The State commission for religious and ethnic affairs declared that «over 99%» of all religious communities had been re-registered – hence 2.677 out of 2.783 – on the basis of the 2002 law on freedom of conscience. The main problems in the re-registration process were faced by the Orthodox Churches working outside the Moscow patriarchate; they were prevented from registering, since to obtain state recognition, these communities were obliged to previously obtain approval from the local bishop of the Moscow Patriarchate. This totally illegal provision prevented the registration of the “Real Russian Orthodox Church”, under the jurisdiction of the “Russian Orthodox Church Abroad”, and of the “Byelorussian Autocephalous Orthodox Church”.

Furthermore, the influence exercised by ideological atheism over state officials is still extremely powerful and the strict supervision they maintain over religious communities is integrally part of the state’s central policies, while the congregations belonging to the Council of Baptists Churches, an organisation refusing on principle all state registration in former Soviet states, continues to encounter various problems in organising meetings and celebrating liturgies. *Report 2005 on Religious Freedom in the World – Aid to the Church in Need*

- May 2006 - A Belarusian Pentecostal pastor has been fined for leading worship without state sanction. The head of the administrative commission which fined Pastor Radkevich totally refused to say why an individual had been punished for holding a peaceful religious service. *Forum 18 News Service, 05/26/2006.*
- March 2006 - Following Baptist pastor Georgi Vyazovsky's completion of a 10 day jail term, religious freedom lawyer Sergei Shavtsov was jailed. Shavtsov organised a Christian business leaders seminar, after being denied official permission, and was

detained after police raided the seminar. *Forum 18 News Service, 05/27/2006.*

- March 2006 - Ten-day prison term handed down on 3 March to Pastor Georgi Vyazovsky of the Minsk-based Christ's Covenant Reformed Baptist Church for conducting religious worship in his own home. *Forum 18 News Service, 03/06/2006*
- December 2005 - Catholic priest Fr. Robert Krzywicki was ordered with another priest in mid-December 2005 to leave Belarus by the end of the year. He had served as a priest in the town of Borisov, north-east of the capital Minsk, for 12 years. No reason was given for the decision. *Forum 18 News Service, 01/06/2006.*
- March 2004 - ASSIST NEWS reports severe persecution of Christians who actively profess their faith. *Christian monitor Newsletter, CM-04/03/19*
- February 2004 - Pastor Vyacheslav Goncharenko of New Life Church, Minsk, fined the equivalent of 30 times the minimum monthly wage for organising religious services without state permission. *Forum 18 News Service, 23/3/2005*

Bulgaria

The only restrictions on freedom of worship are the occasional difficulties presented to non-registered communities. Although the registration procedures for new cults are not among the easiest and the fastest, there has been an increase in the number of groups acknowledge, from 36 in 2003 to 45 in 2004, groups to be added to the Official Christian-Orthodox Church (BOC) to which about 86.6% of the population belongs. Divided between an "alternative" current that formed after the fall of the communist regime and became official in 1996 with a autocephalous synod, and a "majority" current, a minority however among the clergy, led by the hierarchy in set up by the pro-Soviet authorities after the war and now led by the Patriarch Maxim, the BOC has reported tensions between these two currents, resulting in the occupation and evacuation of places of worship in Sofia. *Report 2005 on Religious Freedom in the World – Aid to the Church in Need*

- 2005 - New laws introduced a registration process that is long, complicated, selective and allows the Government to restrict the activities of non-Orthodox religions.

www.usembassy.bg/policy/irf_03.html

- July 2004 - 250 churches closed down and several priests detained. *Nazarene Mission International, 14/11/2004*

Cyprus

Since July 1974, when the Turkish army invaded 36% of the island, Cyprus has been divided into two parts. As far as Christian religious confessions are concerned, during these 30 years of occupation, 68 of the 82 churches have been transformed into mosques, as happened to the Cathedral of Saint Nicholas in Famagosta, or have been destroyed to eliminate the country's religious identity. *Report 2005 on Religious Freedom in the World – Aid to the Church in Need*

- 27 August 2004 – A bomb explodes before dawn in Nicosia in a Greek Orthodox Church in Turkish-occupied North Cyprus, causing damage but no injuries. The attack followed media reports that Turkish Cypriot extremists groups had vowed to try to prevent services planned for next week at the Saint Mamas church to celebrate its namesake's saint's day.

France

In 1996 the French National Assembly released a list of 172 "dangerous sects and cults." Included among these "perilous" groups are the Young Men's Christian Association, the Pentecostal Evangelical Church, and other mainstream religious organizations. Many Evangelical churches have removed the term "evangelical" from their titles out of fear of being placed on such a list and being targeted for prosecution or violence. There is no legal definition for the terms "sect" and "cult" in French law. As the list shows, the terms have been applied to any religious group whose designation as a sect or cult has suited the French government.

A bill enacted by the French government and signed into law in June 2001 (known as the About-Picard Law after its sponsors) contains repressive measures that have a chilling effect on freedom of religion, including the dissolution of targeted religious associations, the imprisonment of members of such groups, and the denial of their freedom of speech, including speech intended to persuade another person to a particular point of view, whether philosophical or religious. In essence, the About-Picard Law permits the government to prosecute or dissolve any organization that seems to establish a state of physical or psychological reliance that causes a follower to behave differently from the way he behaved in the past; it makes illegal any type of religious education or proselytizing that constitutes "abuse of a person's state of weakness"; and it gives the government and the courts great powers, including the power of dissolution, over groups whose

leaders have committed a crime, even if the crime is unrelated to the group or its activities. First, the law creates a new criminal offense: that of causing "a state of psychological or physical subjection". Second, the law allows the government to close or dissolve religious organizations for the ambiguous offense of harming a person or causing "a state of subjection,". Under the law's broad definition, activities as pastoral counseling, and the strictures of Catholic monastic life have now been made illegal in France, if the government chooses to consider them such. Third, the About-Picard Law empowers the French government to dissolve an entire religious denomination or spiritual movement should any leader accumulate more than one criminal offense. It does not matter if the offense was committed in the name of the association or not. Further, the law allows the government to decide who is a leader of a religious group. The list of potential criminal activities set forth in the law is extremely broad. This legislation violates several international principles and standards, all of which France has adopted. Among those violated are the 1981 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the Vienna Concluding Document. In 2003, President Jaques Chirac commissioned a report, by Bernard Stasi, into the wearing of overtly religious symbols by school children. These symbols include the Jewish skullcap (yarmulke), large Christian crucifixes, the Sikh turban and Muslim headscarves (hijaab). Many saw the commissioning of the report as an attack on religious freedom. The report suggested a total ban of religious symbolism in schools. Another issue picked up on by the report was that French children should not be able to reject a teacher of the opposite sex or refuse to read certain texts because of religious beliefs. In 2004, French Ministers voted 494-36 in favour of banning overtly religious symbols in schools. One French poll said that 70% of French people were in favour of the Bill. The new law came into effect at the beginning of the 2004/05 academic year. Opposition to continued secular education in French schools comes from the political left and ethnic minority groups. Many claim that the French government does not allow for a dual identity. Others label it as blatant racism. At the time the law was passed, Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) said: "The law risks limiting the freedom of all religions." *bbc.co.uk*

Greece

In Greece the predominance of the Orthodox Church, in spite of the level of freedom of worship guaranteed by the constitution, often results in obstacles to the freedom of minority cults. The Jewish and Islamic cults are both acknowledged by the law as semi-public, while Catholic and other denominations are instead considered private institutions. The Orthodox Church itself seems rather opposed to dialogue with other religious groups, especially neo-religious ones just as the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons and other evangelical groups. The Catholic Church reports restrictions to freedom of worship and – as reported by the APIC agency on March 7th 2004 – during the legislative elections won by the centre-right parties, the Archbishop of Athens, monsignor Nikolaos Foskolos, addressed an appeal to the candidates requesting that the church should receive juridical status and that all the restrictions applied to Catholics should be removed, such as the one to have to obtain permission from the local Orthodox ordinary to build a church. *Report 2005 on Religious Freedom in the World – Aid to the Church in Need*

Kazakhstan

Respect for religious freedom has further improved in Kazakhstan during 2004 and 2005 especially after a ruling by the Constitutional Court that, in April 2002, had rejected as unconstitutional a number of amendments to the law on freedom of conscience. *Report 2005 on Religious Freedom in the World – Aid to the Church in Need*

- July 2006 - A Pentecostal theological college is facing attempts by the authorities to close it, along with a media campaign against the college, and the dramatic increase in fines of unregistered Baptists has continued. *Forum 18 News Service, 06/14/2006*
- 18 October 2004 – The KNB secret police accused a ballet teacher, Vladislav Polshikh, of “corruption of children’s objective interpretation of events and adoption of certain life values”, and is investigating him under an article of the criminal code which can lead to imprisonment of up to two years. As a Christian, it was his practice to begin his lessons with the words “With God’s help”, and would dismissed his students saying “God be with you”. *Forum 18 News Service 18/10/2004*

Kosovo

The draft law concerning cults being discussed in Belgrade and that should be applied to the Kosovo region, has been the object of criticism also by OCSE from its offices in Pristina. As far as inter-religious relations are concerned, the most important event was no doubt the attack in mid March against the Serbs – already reduced from 200 thousand in 1999 to the current 80 thousand – by the Albanian Islamic majority, which began on March 15th in Mitrovica when three young Albanians drowned, probably by Serbs, in the Ibar River. Before this date relations were generally calm and the number of attacks carried out by extremist Albanians had definitely fallen, although – between July 2003 and July 2004 – 109 murders were reported in Kosovo. *Report 2005 on Religious Freedom in the World – Aid to the Church in Need*

- September 2003 - Most of the members of the Protestant Churches who are ethnic Albanians are afraid to declare themselves Christian fearing persecution from local Albanians. *Forum 18 News Service Religious Freedom Survey, 9/2003*
- July 2000 - Orthodox Serbian Christians now face systematic destruction of their Churches and monuments by Albanians. *Associated Press, 17/7/2000*
- May 2000 - The Fellowship of the Lord's People Church compound attacked by armed and masked men. 1 youth told at gunpoint to deny Jesus. www.worthynews.com/news-features/newsroom-kosovo.html

Moldova

In Moldova the Russian Orthodox Church abroad is still without registration. In May 2002 the Orthodox community had in fact won the appeal lodged with the Supreme Court against the government's decision not to give it state recognition. Without registration, religious groups cannot have bank accounts, publish religious material or build churches. The opposition of the Moscow Patriarchate could be one of the factors that prevented the Russian Orthodox Church abroad from obtaining registration: «the metropolitan Vladimir of the Moscow Patriarchate is blocking our registration, although officially the decision is made by the government», declared Arkady Kovalev, secretary of the Bishop Antoni Rudei of Beltsy and Moldavia. *Report 2005 on Religious Freedom in the World – Aid to the Church in Need*

- June 2004 – Orthodox communities have been repeatedly denied state registration, despite the Russian Orthodox Church

Abroad winning a case against the government in the Moldovan Supreme Court. *Forum 18 News Service, 06/21/2004*

- April 2003 – Police confiscated books and arrested 3 Christians, Vyacheslav Bachu, Vladimir Boligar and Dimitry Masterov in Bendery. *The Voice of the Martyrs, 30/4/2003*

Russia

Religious persecution assumes administrative characteristics in a line of nationalistic overtones. Bureaucratic obstacles prevail, albeit in a situation in which ecumenical relations between the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches are improving. With new managerial classes replacing the old pro-Soviet nomenclatures there appears to be greater room also for freedom of worship. *Report 2005 on Religious Freedom in the World – Aid to the Church in Need*

- June 2006 – Pentecostals, Catholics and Baptists are among religious communities to complain recently of police failure to protect them from attacks or other unwarranted intrusions during services or of police raids to prevent them conducting religious activity – such as giving out religious literature – which they regard as legitimate. *Forum 18 News Service 06/07/2006*

- June 2005 – Protestant communities wanting to build a place of worship face increasing obstruction from state authorities. For example, a protracted series of discussions and protests have still not enabled Moscow's Emmanuel Pentecostal Church to either obtain a new construction site or official rights to the land beneath a building it owns. Similar problems have been encountered by Protestant churches elsewhere in Russia. *Forum 18 News Service 08/24/2005*

- November 2004 – Catholic clerics are having mixed results in their efforts to obtain visas so that they can minister in parishes in Russia. Some regions have a positive attitude to Catholic clergy, with others having a decidedly negative attitude. Moscow's Archbishop Tadeuz Kondrusiewicz cited the different responses to visa requests as one of the main problems facing the Catholic clergy in Russia. *www.cwnews.com 26/11/2004*

- July 2004 – Several Russian regions draw up anti-missionary laws modelled on the 2001 law adopted in Belgrade. The two latest regions to adapt this law are Kursk and Madagan. The law makes it extremely difficult for foreign missionaries to enter the country. *Forum 18 News Service 12/07/2004*

- June 2004 – In Khabarovsk non-orthodox churches are unable to hold services. According to its parish priest, Father Joseph McCabe,

the Catholic parish of the Immaculate Conception in Khabarovsk is even unable to get back its own church building, which was confiscated in 1933. *Forum 18 News Service 07/06/2004*

- January 2004 – Two people were injured when a powerful bomb exploded at a Protestant church in Tula. Authorities claimed that the explosion was caused by a gas leak. However, church leaders were convinced it was a bomb. They also stated that the church had received many threatening letters in recent months. *The Voice of the Martyrs 28/01/2004*

- March 2003 – Primorsky Krai regional court ruled closure of charismatic Bible college for “conducting educational activity without a license”. *Forum 18 News Service, 21/4/2003*

- January 2003 - Government document outlining proposals for countering “religious extremism” has listed the Catholic Church and Protestant churches as the number one and two threats to national security. *Compass Direct, 13/1/2003*

Serbia and Montenegro

The civil war that ended with the 2002 agreements has resulted in a particular hostility between Serbs and Muslims, tension that results in occasional violent episodes which at times have also involved Catholic places of worship. Serious incidents between Serbs and Albanians occurred in March 2005 when the Serbs, worn out by the constant abuse inflicted by the Albanian Muslim majority on the Serbs in Kosovo, reacted by attacking in various locations the Albanians’ places of worship. *Report 2005 on Religious Freedom in the World – Aid to the Church in Need*

- August 2004 – At least ten large and expensive windows were broken at the Baptist Church and Christian Community Church in Novi Sad. *Forum 18 News Service 05/06/2004*

Tajikistan

Certain districts follow strict Sharia law opposing any Christian missionary work.

- February 2006 – Murder of an ethnic Kyrgyz convert to Christianity, Saktinbai Usmanov, was the culmination of a long series of intolerant incidents. Usmanov was the only Christian in his village. The intolerance was encouraged by the village Mullah, Nurlan Asangojaev. *Forum 18 News Service 02/17/2006*

- January 2004 - Pastor and missionary Sergei Besarab was shot dead while praying in chapel in Isfara. *Barnabas Fund, 16/1/2004*

- October 2000 – 10 Christians killed, 39 injured by bomb at Sonmin Grace Church. *Compass Direct*, 20/10/2000

Turkey

A number of constitutional reforms, approved by parliament on May 6th 2004 have modified the juridical set up of Turkey, removing the special courts and all constitutional references to the death penalty, and introducing explicitly the affirmation of the principle of equality between men and women. Respect for religious minorities however remains totally unsatisfactory. Christians are effectively denied access to civil and military institutional jobs, it is practically impossible to build churches, and, in spite of the constitution's secularism, the communities have no civil recognition and therefore are not permitted to own anything. Furthermore, Bill 4928, approved in 2004, by replacing the word «mosque» with «place of worship» has established that local administrators must give permission for building them, if they believe there is «a need within the municipality and the region».

On May 13th parliament approved a law for reforming the educational system allowing those graduating in Islamic schools to access all university courses and not only theology. These changes open the way also for those coming from Islamic schools to be able to access competitions for public appointments. On June 21st the Prime Minister Recep Tayyp Erdogan received the country's Catholic Bishops, who presented two requests, reported by «il regno-attualità» no. 14-2004: the church's juridical recognition and the creation of a mixed committee to prepare and implement this future juridical status.

The official seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate suffered an attack in Istanbul on October 6th and was damaged by a grenade. The synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany (Ekd), held between November 7th and 12th at Magdeburg, judged as «problematic» the human rights situation on Turkey, and also – as reported by «il regno-attualità» no. 20-2004 – that the state's secularism is fragile. In particular, in view of Ankara joining the European Union, the Ekd noted that «the situation suffered by Christians and other religions in Turkey has not yet significantly improved. Non-Muslim religious communities as always encounter explicit and unacceptable problems to have their juridical status acknowledged, their rights to ownership and to train people for worship as well as obtaining residence permits». *Report 2005 on Religious Freedom in the World – Aid to the Church in Need*

- July 2006 – Father Pierre Brunissen, a 75 year old French Catholic priest, was knifed the on July 2 by 47 year old Atilla Nuran, with a history of feeding Turkish media false rumours of proselytizing though the lead prosecutor insisted there was no religious motive. *Compass Direct, 06/05/2006.*
- March 2006 – On March 11 a Turkish Muslim shouting insults against Christianity pulled a long butcher knife on two clergy and a group of teenagers at a Latin Catholic church in Mersin, threatening them and their families. *Compass Direct, 16/03/2006.*
- February 2006 – An Italian missionary, Father Andrea Santoro, 60, was murdered in the Turkish city of Trabzon by a teen-ager influenced by the recently published caricatures of Mohammed. *Zenit.org 06/02/2006*
- January 2006 – On January 8 five young men attacked and threatened to kill Protestant church leader and convert Kamil Kiroglu, 29, in Adana after Sunday worship services. The victim was beaten unconscious after he refused to deny Jesus and become once again a Muslim. *Compass Direct, 20/01/2006*
- August 2005 – On August 3 more than 100 residents of the Turkish village of Karsu vandalized a Christian Orthodox quarter of Altinozu after receiving reports that Christians had attacked two Muslims. The Muslim mob descended on Altinosu's Greek Orthodox neighborhood of Sarilar chanting "there is no room for infidels here." The vandals damaged 10 houses and injured five people, including the wife of parish leader Spir Bayrakcioglu. Cousins Mitri and Engin Keseroglu, Greek Orthodox Christians from the Sarilar neighborhood, have been charged with using razors to slash two Karsu youths in a fight earlier that evening that triggered the outbreak of violence. One of the two Muslim youths from Karsu also brandished a knife, but he was not arrested. *Compass Direct, 30/09/2005.*
- June 2004 – Christians' request for the Diyarbakir Evangelical Church to be legally recognised as a place of worship denied, days after being acquitted of building an illegal church. *Compass Direct, 14/6/2004*
- November 2003 – Christian convert Yakup Cindilli beaten into a 9-month coma by ultra nationalists. *Compass Direct, 14/11/2003*
- January 2003 - Italian preacher's visa revoked after baptizing a 26-year-old man. *Katholiek Nieuwsblad, 17/1/2003*
- July 2002 - Pastor Yusuf Yasmin, 71, told by Turkish security police to close his church after 7 years, as it had "no legal basis". *Compass Direct, 18/7/2002*

- April 2002 - Sunday service of Agape Protestant Church disrupted by 100 nationalist supporters rallied in the Kocamustafapasa district chanting: "Every missionary is a spy". *Compass Direct, 13/5/2002*
- February 2002 – Turkish Interior Ministry launched judicial proceedings questioning legality of Protestant designated places of worship. Head of Turkey's Religious Affairs Directorate admitted 81% of mosques under construction had obtained no license, and 55% had not drawn up an architectural plan. *Compass Direct, 15/2/2002*
- April 2001 - Christian convert, Kemal Timur, 32, facing trial accused of slander against Mohammed, while distributing Christian literature in Diyarbakir. *CSW, 21/12/2001*
- November 2000 – 40 Christians murdered in southeast Turkey by Kurdish Islamic extremists since 1998. *Barnabas Fund, 28/11/2000*
- March 2000 - Christians Ercan Sengul, 38, and Necati Aydin, 28, arrested while selling and distributing Christian literature near the southern port city of Izmir for allegedly insulting Islam and forcing people to accept Bibles. *Compass Direct, 17/3/2000*

Turkmenistan

There have been significant improvements in the respect of freedom of worship. The president for life – declared such by a law passed by parliament in 1999 – Saparmurad Niyazov after promulgating the rigid law on religious freedom in November 2003, in the spring of 2004 passed decrees addressed at improving some of the more restrictive clauses in this law. This also took place after a great deal of international pressure, requesting the country to conform to levels of freedom protected by the international agreements it had signed. Many however remained sceptical regards to the real extent of these improvements, considered only a façade for proving to the international community the country's commitment to a greater respect of its citizens' freedom of conscience, but that effectively they are not destined to really change daily conditions for free religious worship for the minority religious groups. These in fact continue to be the victims of persecutions by local authorities. *Report 2005 on Religious Freedom in the World – Aid to the Church in Need*

- June 2006 – A Baptist who is a Russian citizen, Aleksandr Frolov, was deported from Turkmenistan on 10 June because of his religious activity. *Forum 18 News Service 06/14/2006*
- May 2006 – On May 3 more than 15 police officials busted the unregistered gathering of 13 members of the Soygi (Love) Church

in Ashgabat, confiscating personal belongings and subjecting the group to extensive interrogation. *Compass Direct 05/06/2006*

- August 2005 – On 14 August Anti-terrorist police raided a Sunday worship service of a registered Baptist church. After the service police questioned church members, confiscating all Turkmen-language Bibles and Hymnbooks. *Forum 18 News Service 06/18/2005*

- July 2005 – On July 31 plain-clothes police, from the "department for the struggle with terrorism and organised crime," broke up in Sunday morning's worship of the registered Baptist church in the eastern town of Mary. All those present were subjected to filmed separate interrogations, starting with the women and children. *Forum 18 News Service 02/02/2005*

- July 2005 – Police raiding a private home in Turkmenabad, where Baptists gather regularly for Bible study and prayer, beat the host, Asiya Zasedatelevaya, with her own Bible and even threatened to hang her, local Baptists told *Forum 18 News Service 07/29/2005*

- January 2005 - President-for-life Niyazov has built his own cult of personality, making citizens read his own so-called 'holy book' and overseeing one of the most repressive regimes in the former Soviet Union. *Release International, January 2005*

- January 2004 – The position of religious minorities becomes more uncertain since the president signed the law on religions.

- May 2003 - 2 Baptist churches raided. Congregation taken to the police station and assaulted. *The Voice of the Martyrs, 28/5/2003*

- March 2003 - Baptist Community of Balkanabad worship service interrupted by 8 officers of The National Security Committee claiming the church to be unregistered. *Forum 18 News Service, 11/4/2003*

- May 2002 - 5 Christians in Deinau forced by police to renounce their faith. 3 banished from their village for refusing. *The Voice of the Martyrs, 22/5/2002*

- April 2002 - Baptist Minister released after 4 years, and after refusing the early release condition to leave the country. *Christian Solidarity, 26/4/2002*

- February 2002 - 6 Christians arrested and each fined \$150 by police for holding an 'illegal meeting'. *The Voice of the Martyrs, 20/2/2002*

- June 2001 – Baptist Shageldy Atakov, 38, imprisoned and severely beaten, his Bible confiscated and burnt. *CSW, 4/4/2001*

- November 2000 - 4 Christians severely tortured during interrogation after officers of the National Security Committee near

Ashgabad discovered Christian videos dubbed in Turkmen. *Compass Direct, 15/12/2000*

- January 2000 - Baptist Pastor Vladimir Chernov and wife Olga, legal residents and Aleksandr Yefremov and wife, deported without explanation. *Compass Direct, 21/1/2000*

Ukraine

Stanislav Nikolaienko, the Minister for Education and Research, declared in the course of a press conference held in Kyiv on February 10th 2005, that he was against introducing Christian instruction in schools: «such an initiative – said Nikolaienko – could place students in a position of inequality since not all profess the Christian faith». In 2004 the procedures involving the restitution of property confiscated during the period of Soviet domination continued. On the basis of current law, the religious communities enjoy a privileged status since they are the only organisations allowed to ask for the return of property confiscated by the communist regime. In spite of many requests, the government had not yet returned to the Catholic Church ownership of the Cathedral of Saint Nicholas and the former bishopric in Kiev. *Report 2005 on Religious Freedom in the World – Aid to the Church in Need*

- December 2003 - Stanislav Kasprov, director of a Christian book publishing house brutally beaten outside his office in Cherkassy. *Compass Direct; 9/12/2004*

- February 2000 –Baptist church in Sumy suffered several arson attacks from 27th of December. *Compass Direct; 18/2/2000*

United Kingdom

Even though religious freedom is well rooted in the United Kingdom several episodes of discrimination of Christians take place there.

- February 2005 – In Bradford, Nissar Hussein and family, converts to Christianity from Islam, were assaulted, his car torched, bricks thrown through a window and dogs set on his children. An estimated 3,000 converts to Christianity in the UK are routinely abused, harassed and persecuted by Muslims in their own communities and have to flee. *The Times, 5/2/2005,*

- February 2004 - Stephen Copsey sacked by WBB Devon Clays after refusing to work on Sundays on religious grounds. *Daily Telegraph, 10/2/2004*

- 1996 - Stephen Clark, a scientist from Manchester sacked after refusal to monitor emissions from hospital incinerators burning foetuses. *Alton, D., 2002, Life After Death*

- 1995 - Journalist Simon Caldwell forced to resign after his analysis of official abortion statistics used the words "kill" and "perish". *Alton, D., 2002, Life After Death*
- 1995 - Barbara Hanaway, medical secretary, sacked from Salford Health Authority for refusing to deal with an abortion. *Alton, D., 2002, Life After Death*
- 1995 - Patrick McCrystal sacked as a pharmacist in Belfast after being told to dispense the abortifacient morning-after pill. Although able to dispense 98% of daily prescriptions, he could not get another job. *Alton, D., 2002, Life After Death*
- 1991 - Andy Croal, Director of a Nottingham local Social Services Department publicly stated, "Abortion is the greatest form of child abuse". He was suspended and threatened with dismissal. *Alton, D., 2002, Life After Death*

Uzbekistan

The United States Helsinki Commission, in the hearing entitled «Uzbekistan: a suffocated democracy, declining human rights», held on June 24th, analysed the state of the democratization process and the respect of human rights in this central-Asian country, in view of the State Department's imminent decision on whether or not to continue to provide economic aid. *Report 2005 on Religious Freedom in the World – Aid to the Church in Need*

- April 2006 – On April 24 Police officers from Uzbekistan's criminal investigation department burst into the home of a Protestant pastor Lunkin Sergey of the Union of Independent Churches in Urgench (northwest Uzbekistan) disrupting 12 people as they were having lunch together. The pastor and another believer were charged with "breaking the laws on teaching religion." *Compass Direct 05/02/2006*
- April 2006 - On April 21 three Christians in Tashkent were arrested while visiting and helping feed patients at a tuberculosis hospital for children. One of them was charged with violating administrative laws against teaching religion. *Compass Direct 05/02/2006*
- October 2005 - In Janbashkala village, near Turtkul in northwestern Uzbekistan, Christians are being beaten, publicly humiliated and hounded out of their homes and jobs for converting to Christianity, imposing punishing measures against every villager known to have "abandoned the Muslim faith of their parents." The water supply to Christian homes in the village was cut off. *Compass Direct 10/20/2005*

- June 2005 - A “documentary” televised regionally in Uzbekistan has left entire communities convinced that a Protestant congregation is an “extremist” group worse than fundamentalist Islam. Entitled “Zalolat” (Disaster), the 22-minute “exposé” sensationalized a police raid last June against the Full Gospel Church in Urgench (northwest Uzbekistan). Interspersing scenes from the raid with interviews with local police, judicial and Muslim officials, the program represented Pastor Ruzmet Voisov and his congregation as “Christian extremists” guilty of breaking the laws of Uzbekistan and trying to destroy national stability. *Compass Direct* 01/16/2006
- July 2004 - 2 Baptist Christians interrogated and beaten by Uzbek secret police in Urgench, Khorezm. *Barnabas Fund*, 14/7/2004
- March 2003 – Kuralbai Asanbayev and Rashid Keulimjayev of the Pentecostal church in Muinak had their homes raided. In December of the previous year both had been arrested and tortured by the police. *The Voice of the Martyrs*, 19/3/2003
- December 2002 – The court of Gulistan ordered the burning of Christian books and videos. *Open Doors*, 18/2/2003
- August 2002- 13 Christians arrested and the house destroyed for meeting as a ‘non-registered religious group’ in Khodzahali. *The Voice of the Martyrs*, 28/8/2002
- June 2002 - Harsh restrictions have been placed on Christian communities and in some areas Uzbek Christians have been told to stop preaching. *Religion Today editing I C Press*, 26/6/2002
- March 2000 – Pastor Stanislav Kim of the Chirchik Christian Church, jailed since February 1999 on contrived fraud charges, is reportedly being severely beaten for witnessing to his cellmates. *Compass Direct*, 17/3/2000
