

# Venezuelan Opposition Leader Calls for Uprising to Oust Dictator

*UPDATE:* On-the-ground [reports](#) indicate the coup is underway.

*ORIGINAL:*

Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido on Tuesday called for a military uprising to oust President Nicolas Maduro and armed factions exchanged gunfire outside a Caracas air base as the country hit a new crisis point after years of political and economic chaos.

Several dozen armed men in military uniform accompanying Guaido clashed with soldiers supporting Maduro at a protest outside the La Carlota air base, Reuters witnesses said, but the incident fizzled out and did not appear to be part of an immediate attempt by the opposition to take power by force.

Guaido, in a video posted on Twitter earlier on Tuesday, said he had begun the “final phase” of his campaign to topple Maduro, calling on Venezuelans and the military to back him.

Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino called the latest instability a “coup movement” but several hours after Guaido’s announcement there was no sign of any other military activity and there were no immediate reports of casualties. Guaido later left a rally he was holding with military supporters at the air base.

Maduro said he had spoken with military leaders and that they had shown him “their total loyalty.” “Nerves of steel!” Maduro wrote on Twitter. “I call for maximum popular mobilization to assure the victory of peace. We will win!”

The move was Guaido’s boldest effort yet to convince the

military to rise up against Maduro. If it fails, it could be seen as evidence that he lacks the support he says he has. It might also encourage the authorities, which have already stripped him of parliamentary immunity and opened multiple investigations into him, to arrest him.

The United States is among some 50 countries that recognize Guaido as Venezuela's president, and has imposed sanctions to try to dislodge Maduro who they say won re-election last year through fraud.

Oil prices topped \$73, partly driven higher by the uncertainty in Venezuela, an OPEC member whose oil exports have been hit by U.S. sanctions and an economic crisis.

A former U.S. official said that while it was unclear whether Guaido's efforts would touch off a broader military uprising against Maduro, it appeared aimed at building momentum toward May Day Street protests planned for Wednesday and making them a turning point.

Guaido has said Wednesday's protests will be "the largest march in Venezuela's history" and part of what he calls the "definitive phase" of his effort to take office in order to call fresh elections.

#### TRUMP BRIEFED

Venezuela is mired in a deep economic crisis. Shortages of food and medicine have prompted more than three million Venezuelans to emigrate in recent years.

Guaido, the leader of Venezuela's opposition-controlled National Assembly, in January invoked the constitution to assume an interim presidency, arguing that Maduro's re-election in 2018 was illegitimate.

U.S. President Donald Trump "has been briefed and is monitoring the ongoing situation," White House spokeswoman

Sarah Sanders said on Tuesday. The White House declined comment on whether the administration had been consulted or had advance knowledge of what Guaido was planning.

U.S. national security adviser John Bolton appeared to back Guaido's actions on Tuesday. "The FANB must protect the Constitution and the Venezuelan people. It should stand by the National Assembly and the legitimate institutions against the usurpation of democracy," Bolton tweeted, referring to the FANB armed forces.

Conservative Republicans in Washington welcomed the reports from Venezuela. Senator Marco Rubio, a hardliner on Venezuela, urged Venezuelans to take to the streets: "Do not allow this moment to slip away. It may not come again," he wrote on Twitter.

Venezuelan Information Minister Jorge Rodriguez on Tuesday tweeted that the government was confronting a small group of "military traitors" seeking to promote a coup.

Diosdado Cabello, head of the Constituent Assembly, a legislative body that acts in support of the government, said the opposition had not been able to take over the air base. He urged Maduro's backers to rally at the presidential palace in Caracas to support him.

Guaido, in the video on his Twitter account, was accompanied by men in military uniform and opposition politician Leopoldo Lopez, who had been placed under house arrest.

"The national armed forces have taken the correct decision, and they are counting on the support of the Venezuelan people," Guaido said.

#### MADURO SUPPORT

Maduro, for his part, has appeared to retain control of state institutions and the loyalty of senior military officers.

He has called Guaido a U.S-backed puppet who seeks to oust him in a coup. The government has arrested his top aide, stripped Guaido of his parliamentary immunity and opened multiple probes. It has also barred him from leaving the country, a ban Guaido openly violated earlier this year.

Last week, Guaido said his congressional ally – opposition lawmaker Gilber Caro – had been detained, and that 11 members of his team had been summoned to appear before the Sebin intelligence agency.

Lopez, seen with Guaido, appeared to have left his home for the first time since being placed under house arrest in 2017, after three years in jail.

“I have been freed by soldiers on the side of the constitution and President Guaido,” he tweeted. All of us have to mobilize. It’s time to win our freedom.”

A soldier in the group with Guaido, who identified himself just as Rivas, denied government accusations that they had been tricked into backing Guaido.

“We’re all afraid,” he told Reuters, “but we had to do it.”

Spain, instrumental in setting the European Union line, said that, although it considered Guaido the legitimate leader of Venezuela, it did not support a military coup and wanted to see elections.

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*Listen to the podcast to hear how the Body of Christ has deployed in Venezuela.*

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# Heartbroken Christian Parents Plead With Faith Community to Intercede for Abducted Son

Matt and Daisy Mazzoncini, Spirit-filled Christians living in Kenya, are pleading with the faith community to lift their family up in prayer.

The couple are legal guardians to a 3-year-old, Kiano, who was taken from their home on April 5.

“We are Christians; our faith is important to us,” Daisy Mazzoncini tells *Charisma News* in a podcast interview. “We believe in the power of prayer. We’ve just been so grateful for all the people that are praying for us and especially for Kiano, because obviously we’re sitting here, my husband supporting me. But we don’t know where he is, and he doesn’t know what’s going on. We’re just trusting God that he is somehow just shielded and comforted.”

For more details on the abduction, listen to the podcast below.

Kiano has epilepsy, and the Mazzoncinis are asking people to pray for a welfare check to ensure that wherever their son is, people are giving him his medicine.

“Nobody’s telling us where he is,” Daisy Mazzoncini says. “One of the things that’s particularly concerning, obviously, is that Kiano has epilepsy. He takes medicine three times a day. We don’t know if he’s getting that medicine. We don’t know if it’s being administered correctly. He’s been on that medicine since last September 2018, where he ended up having seizures on and off for six hours. He ended up being rushed to the children’s ICU. He had to be induced into a medical coma because the seizures were so bad they shut down his brain.

He's had a lot of medical problems on and off throughout his life since he was an abandoned baby. It's very hard."

The couple knows prayer is the only answer right now.

"We also know that there's a big faith community in Kenya," Matt Mazzoncini says. "So many Kenyans have reached out and supported us and are encouraging us on social media. It's been incredible. There are some really incredible people that work in the children's space as well that have come out in support of us. I think you've probably seen some of those people in the videos that are posted online.

"One thing that I would ask of the faith community is to speak out about this situation to encourage the people in Kenya in the faith community, as well as the leaders in Kenya, to really look into this issue and make sure that Kiano is brought home. We are his court-appointed legal guardians. We are working through a court process to try to get him produced and brought home. But in the meantime, it is really effective and really important that people speak up and speak out and ask and encourage the faith community and friends in Kenya to act and take action for Kiano."

What's the next legal step? How can you make a difference? Listen to the podcast to hear their heartbreaking interview.

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## **Teen Suicide Rates Spiked After '13 Reasons Why,' Study**

# Says

*If you are in crisis, please call 1-800-273-8255 or visit [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org). You are not alone.*

Suicide is at a 19-year-high among kids ages 10 to 17, and some are suggesting it's tied to the release of the Netflix drama *13 Reasons Why*, which showed a girl ending her life.

Researchers admit they cannot prove the connection, but they do say there were 195 more youth suicides than would have been expected in the nine months after the show came out in March 2017.

The lead author of the findings, Jeff Bridge at Nationwide Children's Hospital, [says](#) the creators of the series intentionally portrayed the suicide of the main character with a very graphic depiction of her death. He says seeing that alone can trigger suicidal behavior.

The researchers utilized the data from the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report on deaths in Americans aged 10 to 64 from January 2013 through December 2017. While adolescent suicide rates were higher, the Associated Press reports researchers found no change in suicide rates for those 18 and older after the show was released.

Sociologist Anna Mueller of the University of Chicago stated the results add to evidence that descriptive media depictions of suicide can negatively influence young people.

Lisa Horowitz, a co-author and researcher at the National Institute of Mental Health, noted that suicide is the second leading cause of death for U.S. teens and called it "a major public-health crisis." She went on to state the new results highlight the necessity of parents and other adults connecting to young people.

“Start a conversation, ask how are they coping with the ups and downs of life and don’t be afraid to ask about suicide,” she said. It’s a myth that just asking might be a trigger, Horowitz said.

The first season of the Netflix show included warning messages with some of the episodes and offered a website with crisis hotlines. In the second season, the show’s actors gave advice on where to seek help about suicide. The series’ third season is expected later this year.

Click here to read the rest of this story from our content partners at [CBN News](#).

*Listen to the podcasts below to hear more about hope for suicidal thoughts.*

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## **150-200 Million Pigs Struck With Plague of Biblical Proportions**

African swine fever is the greatest threat to global food production that we have seen since World War II ended. As you will see below, the disease has now spread “to every province in mainland China,” and it has now infected “an estimated 150-200 million pigs.”

To put that number in perspective, that is more pigs than the

entire U.S. pork industry produces in an entire year. In other words, the equivalent of the entire U.S. pork industry has just been wiped out. On top of that, African swine fever has also spread to Cambodia, Tibet, Romania, South Africa and Vietnam. The losses are staggering, and this crisis continues to get worse with each passing week.

Earlier today I came across a Canadian news article entitled [“Why bacon could get a lot more expensive,”](#) and in that article, a Canadian expert claimed that there are “tens of millions of pigs who have disappeared” in China:

*“The meat of choice in China is pig, and disease has been devastating for them,” Friendship said. “They have lost a lot of pigs, and they will be doing lots of culling.”*

*He noted that although official figures from China suggest the outbreak’s effects have been minimal, experts estimate that “we’re dealing with tens of millions of pigs who have disappeared.”*

*Friendship estimated the decrease in pigs is roughly the equivalent of what Canada and the U.S. produce combined. And this lack has created a vacuum.*

That claim is consistent with the information [that I put into an article about this crisis a few weeks ago](#), but I decided to go hunting for some even newer numbers.

So eventually I ended up over at [PorkBusiness.com](#), and according to them, African swine fever [“is now affecting an estimated 150-200 million pigs”](#) in China:

*Production losses from African swine fever (ASF) have eclipsed initial estimates, Rabobank said on Thursday. In 2019, [Rabobank](#) expects Chinese pork production losses of 25% to 35%, creating new challenges and opportunities for animal protein exporters.*

*“African swine fever has spread to every province in mainland China and is now affecting an estimated 150-200 million pigs,” said Christine McCracken, RaboResearch animal protein analyst. “The expected 30% loss in pork production is unprecedented. These losses cannot easily be replaced by other proteins like chicken, duck and seafood, nor will larger pork imports be able to fully offset the loss.”*

When I use the term “plague”, I am not using it lightly. I have never heard of a single disease wiping out this many farm animals before.

Have you?

We are potentially talking about an absolutely crippling blow to the global food supply.

And pork prices are already starting to skyrocket. The following comes from [the same Canadian article I mentioned earlier](#):

*At the beginning of 2019, Canadian farmers earned \$150 for every pig shipped to market, but now they’re making between \$220 to \$225, he said.*

Since first being detected on a small hog farm in northern China last August, African swine fever has spread like wildfire, but so far, it hasn’t reached the United States.

And U.S. farmers are doing all that they can to keep that from happening, because African Swine Fever can have a mortality rate [“as high as 100% within 2-10 days”](#):

*ASF is a highly contagious viral disease that causes death in domestic and wild pigs of all ages. Symptoms include high fever, decreased appetite and weakness, red, blotchy skin or skin lesions; diarrhea and vomiting; and coughing and difficulty in breathing. Mortality rate is as high as 100%*

*within 2-10 days.*

Even if a pig survives African swine fever, it is often culled anyway to help prevent the spread of the disease.

There is no vaccine, and there is no cure. And even if this outbreak was ended immediately, it would likely take the Chinese pork industry many years to recover. The following comes from [CNN](#):

*“China normally accounts for 49% of global pork consumption, while consuming 28% of the world’s meat supply,” said Arlan Suderman, chief commodities economist at INTL FCStone. “As such, this is a big problem for China, and we expect it to be a five to seven year problem before production can be restored.”*

Of course this outbreak is not likely to end any time soon. In fact, all of the experts expect African swine fever to continue to spread.

So pork prices will continue to skyrocket, and prices for chicken and beef will also rise aggressively as many consumers shift to alternatives to pork.

Unfortunately, most people still don’t seem to understand what we are facing. In this country, most Americans are partying [instead of preparing](#), and that is a huge mistake.

And the mainstream media certainly is not helping. Millions upon millions of pigs really are dying all over the globe, and yet there is barely a peep about this crisis on our major news networks.

We’ll see what happens. Hopefully this outbreak will subside, and things will return to normal.

But so far that hasn’t happened, and African swine fever just

continues to spread.

If it starts spreading in North America too, there is going to be a lot of panic and the mainstream media will be forced to start paying a lot of attention to this story.

Over the coming months, supplies of pork are going to get tighter and tighter, and prices are going to shoot higher and higher.

We have never faced a crisis quite like this, and nobody is quite sure what is going to happen next.

[This article originally appeared on The Economic Collapse Blog. Reprinted with permission.](#)

Listen to the podcasts below for interviews with Michael Snyder.

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## **Prophetic Dream: Witches Are Infiltrating Churches at Alarming Rate**

Witches are infiltrating the church right now at a level Christians have never seen before, says Andy Sanders.

In an interview with *Charisma News*, Sanders—an author and prophetic voice—says this is because the devil has lost some ground in the church and U.S. government.

“I had several dreams and times when God came to me, saying,

'You need to start preparing and warning the body of Christ that witches are on the loose,' he says. "'They're no longer sleeping and just camping out anymore.'"

He recalls an instance when a witch infiltrated a church he was pastoring. One of the members was put on staff against the previous pastor's will. Over the years, that person grew more and more rebellious.

"One day when I was alone with this person talking to them, they actually manifested a demon," Sanders says. "And this person had been on my church staff for a long time. This person manifested a demon right in my office."

Rebellion, Sanders says, is one marker of witchcraft. Listen to the interview to learn other telltale signs that a witch is trying to cause strife in your church. {eoa}

*Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, [CHARISMA PLUS](#).*

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## **Prophetic Word: How to Survive the Enemy's Counterattack**

Ryan LeStrange shared the prophetic word "Survive the counterattack" in this week's installment of his weekly "Monday Word" video series.

LeStrange says, "If you are a prophetic person—if you are one that sees and knows and hears and senses—many times you are going to have a counterattack, but it's critical you recognize what it is."

Watch the video to hear LeStrange explain more, including why prophetic people should not personalize the warfare.

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## **‘Demons From Hell Were Unleashed Like Seething Lava Over Our Land’**

I have heard that in the United States, people remember exactly what they were doing when planes hit the Twin Towers in New York. In Rwanda, too, we remember a plane crash that way. On the evening of April 6, 1994, an airplane carrying President Juvenal Habyarimana and Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira, both Hutus, was shot down as it arrived in Kigali, the Rwandan capital.

There is this difference: On Sept. 11, nearly 3,000 people died. In Rwanda, smaller in size and population than Ohio, the deaths of the two presidents set off a genocidal rampage against the Tutsi people that killed three times as many as died in 9/11—every day for 100 days.

I’m trying to help people grasp what happened, because no one can picture a million human beings killed. Not even we who survived.

April 7, the chosen launch date for the systematic slaughter of the Tutsi population, was Day One of our country’s Hundred Days in Hell.

The killing reached my town, Bugarama, in western Rwanda, on April 16. How gladly I would forget all I saw that day, but—as war veterans can confirm—such images are seared into the brain

as if by a camera's flash.

Why revisit that day's events, then, if they were so horrific? I feel I owe it to the people who died; if I don't tell, who will even know that they lived?

Also, I write for the sake of history. If a nation's shameful deeds are not to be repeated, they must be recognized and remembered—not swept under the rug. As harsh as it is, American youth need to learn how Native American peoples were exterminated; Germans have to know what their country did to the Jews; and Turks must acknowledge the Armenian genocide. Mass evil can break out at any place where one group despises another.

In Bosnia, people who had previously lived peaceably as neighbors carried out the 1995 massacre of Muslims at Srebrenica. And in 2017, ethnic cleansing in Myanmar claimed around ten thousand Rohingya lives.

So, as a witness to the genocide against the Tutsi, I must tell what happened, no matter how painful it is for me to write. I hope my account will help ensure that nothing like this ever happens again, anywhere on earth. But I also write because genocide is not the end of the story—not for me and not for my beloved country.

It is still hard for me to believe that the sun rose as usual on April 16, but in fact, it was a beautiful Saturday morning. I could hear birds singing. The sky had cleared again, with no sign of rain. If it hadn't been for the dread weighing me down, this would have been the perfect day for scrubbing my floors and for washing and hanging out the laundry. I had always been an energetic mother and liked a clean house, especially with a baby on the way.

But with all the recent happenings, I woke feeling overwhelmed, my mind tuned to an inner vibration—or was it a distant drumbeat? In this state, I could face only the most

basic tasks. I tried to fix my mind on feeding 18-month-old Christian, 4-year-old Charles-Vital and the others in my apartment, and then on cleaning up after breakfast. I felt strung tight—listening, watching— and kept glancing out the window.

It was a relief, around 8 o'clock, to see my friend Faina approaching, an empty basket on her head. She was a Hutu woman I had often prayed with. Her family was poorer than ours, yet she had a generous nature, and she came now to ask if I needed anything from the market in Nyakabuye.

Touched by Faina's offer, I gave her enough money to buy cabbage, plums, bananas and lenga lenga, a spinach-like vegetable. My heart lifted a little at her thoughtfulness—and at knowing that my household would have fresh food through the weekend.

At noon, it was time to prepare lunch, but, surprisingly, Faina had not yet returned with the fruit and vegetables. Twice, I glanced up the road to see if she was coming. The third time I stepped out, I saw a figure in the distance, running our direction. It looked like Faina, but I had never known her to run, and this woman was empty-handed.

As she came closer, I saw that it was indeed Faina—but she was almost unrecognizable. I hurried to meet her at the gate.

She was so upset and breathless, I could hardly make out her words: "Denise ... your Aunt Priscilla ... her two children ... her father-in-law ... terrible ... in a ditch ... Priscilla still alive.

...

"Asked for water ... said to warn... killers coming... destroy all Tutsi!" Turning, Faina fled toward her own home.

I froze at her news. But I had to raise the alarm. Dashing through my house and out the back door, I cried, "We are all about to die!"

“I sense that some of us will die today,” I said, to a background of far-off shots and yells. “For those who are killed, *Rendez-vous au ciel* – we will meet in heaven.”

Kneeling in the hallway, we prayed aloud, asking God and each other for forgiveness.

How could ordinary people veer from a normal life – looking for work, studying at college or earning a living – to butchering others?

I can only answer that demons from hell were unleashed like seething lava over our land. Not the comic-scary hobgoblins of my mother’s legends, but cosmic forces before which human beings are dust specks in a volcanic explosion.

That is not to say that individuals don’t count. I believe that each one murdered was welcomed into the next world, just as I believe that each who survived was saved for a reason.

We who lived faced a harsher task; I often felt death would have been preferable. How hard it has been, through grueling years: to overcome the loss, battle to forgive and then bring healing to others – yes, even to killers. They, too, were specks of dust.

In the West, many people scoff at the idea of invisible spiritual powers. I’m sure some of these skeptics would acknowledge the reality of such powers, however, if they had been caught in a firestorm like ours.

United Nations General Romeo Dallaire wrote, “In Rwanda I shook hands with the devil. I have seen him, I have smelled him, and I have touched him. I know the devil exists, and therefore I know there is a God.”

I believe each of us plays a role in this spiritual war, and each soul decides to serve life or death. There is no neutral. Death had a grip on Rwanda in 1994, but it has a grip in other

places, too, and has other weapons besides machetes and grenades.

Also, although a plummeting plane ignited our inferno, the tinder had been accumulating a long time: division, envy, hatred and the labeling of Tutsi as vermin. For the rest of my life, I will protest the least insinuation that any person or group of people is less than human.

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*(Adapted from From Red Earth: A Rwandan Story of Healing and Forgiveness © 2019 by Denise Uwimana, published on April 6 by Plough Publishing. The views expressed in this commentary do not necessarily represent those of Religion News Service. No part of this excerpt may be reproduced or reprinted without permission in writing from the publisher.)*

Listen to the podcasts for on-the-ground coverage in Rwanda with perpetrators and survivors of the genocide.

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## **‘Innumerable’ Believers Experienced ‘Manifold Suffering’ in 2018**

With its particular focus on China’s oppression of religious and human rights, an independent watchdog group has decried in its annual report the state of religious freedom across the globe.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, a bipartisan organization created 20 years ago, concludes in its Monday (April 29) report that “innumerable believers and

nonbelievers across the globe continued in 2018 to experience manifold suffering due to their beliefs.”

The commission cites dozens of countries in its 234-page report but especially notes China’s repression of a range of religious beliefs – including Tibetan Buddhists, Christians, Falun Gong practitioners, Uighur Muslims and human rights defenders.

While the State Department’s annual international religious freedom report covers every nation in the world other than the U.S., USCIRF annually documents fewer than 30 countries that have the most significant religious freedom violations.

USCIRF recommends that the State Department redesignate the following 10 countries as “countries of particular concern,” or CPCs: Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

The State Department designated these countries as CPCs in November.

USCIRF thinks six additional countries should be cited as CPCs: Central African Republic, Nigeria, Russia, Syria, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

The commission adds that it has given 12 other nations its Tier 2 designation for the next most serious level of religious freedom violations: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Laos, Malaysia and Turkey.

In addition, the commission is calling on the State Department to list five nonstate actors, or organizations outside a government’s control, as “entities of particular concern”: the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS; the Taliban in Afghanistan; al-Shabab in Somalia; Houthis in Yemen; and Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS, in Syria.

China, along with Russia and Sudan, has been a focus of the watchdog since 1999 as it prepared to cite religious freedom violators in its first annual report the following year.

Two decades later it notes that Uighur Muslims, in particular, remain severely repressed by Chinese officials.

“Nearly 20 years later, Muslims are constantly surveilled, their phones confiscated and scanned, their skin pricked for blood samples to collect their DNA, their children prohibited from attending mosque,” reads the report’s introduction. “Even worse, the Chinese government has ripped entire families apart, detaining between 800,000 and two million adults in concentration camps and relegating some of their children to orphanages.”

The commission calls for the U.S. government and others across the globe to sanction Chinese agencies and officials for their role in serious religious freedom violations and to urge them to set Uighur and other Muslims free. It also calls for the release of prisoners of conscience, including Muslims, Buddhists and Christians.

At a Capitol Hill news conference announcing the report, USCIRF Commissioner Gary Bauer said China has been listed by the commission as one of the most egregious “Tier 1” countries for religious freedom in each of its 20 reports.

“If we were to rate the Tier 1 countries, China would be in a category all by itself,” said Bauer, president of American Values, a public policy think tank. “The level of persecution – they are an equal opportunity persecutor. They go after anybody, any sect that might compete with the communist, atheistic government of China.”

Other countries beyond China are also highlighted, including Vietnam, Sudan and Tajikistan, which the report says are suppressing religious freedom and permitting persecution. The commission cites Eritrea and Russia along with China as

examples of countries that brand religious minorities as “extremists.”

“In 2018, both state and nonstate actors increasingly used religion as a tool of exclusion to isolate, marginalize, and punish the ‘other’ through discrimination and violence,” the report states, citing blasphemy laws in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan as examples.

The report notes religious freedom successes – including the release of Pastor Andrew Brunson, an American evangelical, from a Turkish prison – and continuing challenges for the Trump administration.

“Longstanding flaws in the U.S. government’s processing of asylum-seekers at ports of entry and the border remained unaddressed,” it says.

USCIRF Vice Chair Gayle Manchin said at the news conference that despite many negative trends in international religious freedom there have been positive developments even among countries the commission considers top offenders. She cited the case of Mohammad Ali Taheri, a cognitive researcher and founder of a spiritual group in Iran.

“He had been imprisoned for his beliefs since 2011 under various charges and sentences, including twice having been sentenced to death,” said Manchin, former first lady of West Virginia. “We obviously were thrilled to learn just last week that he has been released.”

USCIRF Commissioner Johnnie Moore added that commissioners were able to meet for the first time in 2018 with the religious police (officially called the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice) of Saudi Arabia, another country ranked in the top tier of religious freedom offenders.

“It’s a kingdom where there are lots of different things

happening, some things that are the worst in the world, and at the same token there is a glimmer of light," said Moore, who has served as an unofficial spokesman for the group of evangelicals who have prayed for and met with Trump. "And we're trying to do what we can to shimmy open that door."

The commission recommends that the administration appoint a special adviser on international religious freedom to the staff of the National Security Council. It also seeks an increase in the use of sanctions to target government officials, military units and agencies that are severe religious freedom violators. And USCIRF requests that the U.S. Agency for International Development and the State Department assist countries in providing textbooks and other training materials that describe religious groups accurately.

The report, issued after recent attacks on mosques in New Zealand and churches in Sri Lanka, also calls for the administration to set aside money for the department of State and Defense "to train and equip local officials and communities to protect places of worship and other holy sites, especially in countries where such sites face a high risk of attack."

USCIRF Commissioner Tony Perkins said in an interview that his visits to Egypt and Nigeria after other incidents involving houses of worship were catalysts for the commission's determination to see countries work with their law enforcement officials on prevention. But the most recent attacks demonstrate how action is needed more than ever, he said.

"That recommendation pre-existed these most recent attacks," said Perkins, who is also president of the Family Research Council and a former police officer who was an anti-terrorism consultant with the State Department in the 1980s and '90s, "because we see this as a growing trend."

*Listen to the podcasts to hear about persecution around the globe.*

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# **Is a Mega-Tsunami About to Crash Into the East Coast of the United States?**

Someday, a giant meteor will slam into the Atlantic Ocean, and the colossal tsunami that is produced will wipe out most of the people that are living along the east coast. In 1998, a big Hollywood movie entitled *Deep Impact* imagined what such an event would look like, and scientists assure us that it is just a matter of time before it takes place. And since [39%](#) of all Americans live in a county that directly borders a shoreline, we are in an extremely vulnerable position.

Earlier today I was scrolling through my Facebook feed, and I came across a video entitled [“What If A Mega-Tsunami Hit The United States?”](#)

If you know me well, then you probably know that this is a hot-button issue for me, and so it definitely got my attention.

And it must be a hot-button issue for a lot of other people as well, because it has already been viewed more than 3.5 million times.

I did some digging around, and I found an accompanying article for the video. According [to that article](#), someday a wall of water 3000 feet high could come racing toward us at 620 miles per hour...

*In six hours, you, your government, and 124 million other people across 14 states will be tested by the greatest disaster to ever hit the U.S. East Coast. A great wave, 1000 meters tall (3280 ft.), moving towards you at 1000 km/h (620 mph), and that's only the beginning.*

*Boston, New York, Philly, D.C., Miami. All underwater. And you?*

Of course, the size of the tsunami would all depend upon the size of the event that caused it.

According to scientists [at the University of California at Santa Cruz](#), if a giant meteor suddenly slammed into the Atlantic Ocean it could potentially create a tsunami with a wall of water as high as 400 feet:

*If an asteroid crashes into the Earth, it is likely to splash down somewhere in the oceans that cover 70 percent of the planet's surface. Huge tsunami waves, spreading out from the impact site like the ripples from a rock tossed into a pond, would inundate heavily populated coastal areas. A computer simulation of an asteroid impact tsunami developed by scientists at the University of California, Santa Cruz, shows waves as high as 400 feet sweeping onto the Atlantic Coast of the United States.*

Either way, we are talking about death and destruction on a scale that is hard to imagine.

Once a meteor hit, there would be a race against time to get away from the massive wall of water rapidly approaching the east coast. The creators of the Facebook video that I just mentioned envision that everyone would have ["Six hours of advance notice"](#):

*The death toll would be staggering; the economic impact, easily costing billions, if not trillions of dollars. It will*

*take decades to rebuild, and yet, is it wrong to suggest that we might've gotten off easy?*

*How much worse would it have been without the six hours of advance notice? That's right, you owe a big thank you to these supersmart buoys monitoring the coast, keeping you safe and dry, so that you can rest easy, and keep watching 'What If.'*

Sadly, the truth is that we would probably get very little warning. For example, if a giant meteor were to splash down near Puerto Rico, the amount of time before impact would be extremely limited. You could try to get in your car and outrace the wall of water coming at you at 620 miles per hour, but of course the highways would be jammed with other people trying to get out as well.

In a worst-case scenario, tens of millions of people would die, and all of our East Coast cities would essentially be destroyed.

You may not spend much time thinking about such a thing, but I find it very interesting that NASA [is currently simulating a similar scenario](#):

*NASA is going to be using a simulation of an "asteroid apocalypse" in order to help the space agency prepare for the cataclysmic event. And they are taking it seriously, as disaster planners from FEMA will join NASA for a dress rehearsal of doomsday.*

*International partners, including the European Space Agency (ESA), will also be a part of the simulation. The drill is said to be a "tabletop exercise" that will simulate just how a planetary asteroid emergency would play out in real time.*

And NASA has good reason to be concerned, because our planet is apparently ["in the midst of an epic asteroid surge"](#):

NASA's been [running these simulations for years](#), and with good reason: Earth, as it happens, is in the [midst of an epic asteroid surge](#) compared to the relative peace and quiet the planet experienced many millions of years ago.

When unexpected space rocks do appear on our scopes, sometimes we only get [hours' notice](#) of their existence [before they streak past](#). While the chances of a catastrophic impact are exceedingly slim, we're nonetheless [unprepared for surprise asteroid strikes](#), which is why NASA is continually working on plans to help improve our [NEO detection and mitigation capabilities](#).

We truly do live [in very strange times](#), and they are going to get a whole lot stranger.

A single moment in time can change everything. Most people assume that NASA knows about all of the big rocks that could potentially slam into our planet, but that is not true at all. According to one estimate, [approximately 17,000 large near-Earth objects remain undetected](#). But since they are "undetected", the truth is that nobody knows the real number.

Meteors go whizzing by us all the time, and NASA doesn't discover a lot of them until they are already past us.

In reality, we are sitting ducks, and someday our luck will finally run out.

*This article originally appeared on the ["End of the American Dream" blog](#). Reprinted with permission.*

*Listen to the podcasts to hear interviews with Michael Snyder.*

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# The Jewish People Are Like Everyone Else, Only More So

In the event you don't have time to read this whole article, here's a two-sentence summary: The Jewish people are like everyone else, with strengths and weaknesses, good qualities and bad qualities. At the same time, the Jewish people often have a disproportionate influence on society, for good or for bad.

If you listen to the critics (and, most recently, to a murderer), "the Jews" are responsible for all the evil in the world. To [quote](#) the synagogue shooter, "I would die a thousand times over to prevent the doomed fate that the Jews have planned for my race."

Yes, "Every Jew is responsible for the meticulously planned genocide of the European race. They act as a unit, and every Jew plays his part to enslave the other races around him—whether consciously or subconsciously. Their crimes are endless."

And this, after listing a litany of supposed Jewish crimes (some of which involved inter-Jewish conflicts): "Every Jew young and old has contributed to these. For these crimes they deserve nothing but hell."

Put another way, the Jews—as a whole, as an entity—are wicked and guilty.

In the words of Catholic scholar E. Michael Jones,

*The Church is faced with a choice. She can follow the plan of attempting to fight abortion, gay marriage, and all of the other ills she opposes piecemeal, and continue to fail as she has failed for the past half century. Or she can work for the conversion of the group that is responsible for virtually*

*every social ill in our day—from wars in the Middle East to pornography and gay marriage at home—namely the Jews, around whose evil machinations the axis of history turns. If the Church wants to have its history back, then it will have to contend with the Jews once again as the Apostles and the Church Fathers did 2000 years ago.” (From his book The Jews and Moral Subversion.)*

For proof, these critics would point to men like Karl Marx, the architect of communism, or George Soros, the financier of the radical left, or porn kings like Al Goldstein or social dissidents like Abbie Hoffman. They would point to the high percentage of Jewish Supreme Court justices, all of them liberal (Ginsburg, Breyer and Kagan), or the high percentage of Jewish leadership in the [ACLU](#), or the high percentage of [Jewish atheists](#).

“The Jews are just plain evil, always on the wrong side of social and moral issues!”

What these Jew-haters forget is that the Jewish people have made a disproportionate impact for good, compared to their total population.

There is the world-changing influence of Israelite-Jewish leaders, from Moses to Isaiah and from Jesus to Paul. (That influence alone would more than make up for all the negative names just listed, 100 times over.)

There are influential, social commentators like Dennis Prager and David Horowitz and Ben Shapiro. (I’m obviously writing from a conservative point of view; otherwise, I would have been praising George Soros, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and the ACLU.)

There is a steady stream of inventions and scientific breakthroughs benefiting the world, many of them coming directly [from Israel](#). These include turning algae into heart tissue, developing drip irrigation technology and inventing a

“pipeline technology that promises a rapid and noninvasive diagnostic tool for cancer and other diseases.”

Note also [that](#) “Nobel Prizes have been awarded to over 900 individuals, of whom at least 20% were Jews, although the Jewish population comprises less than 0.2% of the world’s population.”

Israel is also a world leader in humanitarian service. As [noted](#) on a government website, “With aid teams poised to respond in the wake of natural or man-made disasters anywhere in the world, Israel’s [200-strong relief team was the first on the scene in January 2010 after the earthquake hit Haiti](#). Israel helped save thousands of lives. In [March 2011 following the devastating earthquakes in Japan](#), Israel was one of the first countries to send aid according to the needs and request of the Japanese government, and one of the first states to send a medical team and set up a field clinic.”

Best-selling author and economist George Gilder has even written a book about Israel’s positive effect on the world economy, titled, [The Israel Test: Why the World’s Most Besieged State is a Beacon of Freedom and Hope for the World Economy](#).

And on and on the list goes. (I haven’t even mentioned leading Jewish contemporary religious figures).

I personally believe that God has chosen the Jewish people for a special, world-changing mission. You could say that, by calling, we are world-changers. When we get things right, it is wonderful. When we get things wrong, it is terrible.

But, as a people, we are neither inherently good nor bad, not better or worse than others by nature. We simply seem to make a bigger impact, for good or for bad.

That’s why some people esteem us more highly than they should, and others esteem us more negatively than they should.

The truth is somewhere in the middle.

*Listen to the podcasts for Dr. Brown's latest commentary.*