

Persecution Watch

Anti-Conversion Bill to Be Considered in Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankan government may adopt legislation in April that would make it illegal for someone to convert to Christianity. The National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka reported that if the bill which was introduced last year by Rathnasiri Wickramanayake, the Minister of Buddhist Affairs were to become law, relief groups may face increased scrutiny, as some might think the humanitarian work was merely a ploy to entice conversion. Violating the proposed law, which is wider in scope than another anti-conversion bill declared unconstitutional last year, could lead to as many as seven years in prison.

Christian Students Arrested in Eritrea

In a continuing crackdown of Christians, a group of Sunday school teachers and students were recently arrested in the capital of Asmara. On Feb. 19, 131 children between the ages of 2 and 18 were attending classes at Medhane Alem Orthodox Church when they were apprehended by police, according to Christian Solidarity Worldwide. At press time, most of the students remained jailed with their teachers, Compass Direct reported. The Medhane Alem congregation has normally been exempted from the government's harsh crackdown against Protestant churches. But recently the entire ministry was ordered closed down by government officials without explanation. At press time, 214 Eritrean Christians had been arrested in two months, Compass reported.

Turkish Pastor .Reconverts to Islam

A former Turkish pastor announced on several national TV stations that he converted back to Islam after being a Christian since 1987, Assist News Service reported. He also told viewers they should guard against Christian workers in the nation. The man claimed the missionaries wanted only to help the United States undermine the Turkish government. The report of the man's claim was distributed by Turkish World Outreach (TWO), which noted that a call was to be issued March 11 for all Muslims to unite and stand firm in Islam, Assist reported. TWO expressed concern that the call would trigger violence against Christian workers in the area.