

Persecution Watch

Jailed Christian Students Released in Egypt

Four Christian college students arrested in January for possessing faith-based materials have been released amid international pressure for their freedom. According to the Barnabas Fund, Peter Kamel, Ishak Yessa, John Fokha and Andrew Saeed were freed on April 3. Police in the Naweeba district jailed them after raiding their rooms at a resort hotel in the Sinai Desert. Their Bibles and various Christian tapes were confiscated. "None of these materials were illegal, and there was nothing found in their possession which would have justified their arrest," Barnabus Fund said. The students were initially charged with "disturbing the national unity and threatening the social peace."

Pakistani Christian Dies After Torture by Muslims

A Christian who refused to convert to Islam died in early May after being tortured by Islamic militants. Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) reported that Javed Anjum, a 23-year-old resident of Toba Tek Singh District, was tortured for five days and nights by extremists from an Islamic school in the area. He was hospitalized for 11 days and died in a Faisalabad hospital on May 2. In a statement to police before he died, Anjum said he was searching for water near the school, but was accused by Muslim leaders of trying to steal a water pump. CSW urged Pakistani authorities to bring the militants to justice. "This is ... an example of the threat that Christians continue to face in Pakistan," said Stuart Windsor, national director of the United Kingdom-based CSW. "We urge our supporters to pray for Javed's family."

Jailed Chinese Church Leader Beaten in Prison

South China Church (SCC) pastor Gong Shengliang, who is currently serving a life sentence in the Hong Shan Prison, located in Hubei Province, has begged to be transferred. According to China Aid Association (CAA), the SCC leader recently told his sisters who visited him in prison: "If you are able in any way, please transfer me to another prison—otherwise just come and pick up my corpse." CAA sources said Shengliang was unable to walk into the visiting hall and had to be carried in by four other inmates.