

ICC Issues 2011 Hall of Shame Report

Open Doors recently issued its World Watch List of the most dangerous countries for Christians. Now, International Christian Concern, or ICC, is following up with the release of its annual Hall of Shame report, a list of the globe's worst persecutors of Christians in 2010.

"In compiling the report, it was striking to see the rate at which Christian persecution has accelerated around the globe, especially in the Islamic world," says ICC President Jeff King. "Anti-Christian hatred arising from Islam has flowed into 2011, as seen in the horrific attacks in Egypt, Pakistan and Iraq already this year."

Indeed, Islamic fundamentalism has replaced Communism as today's number one persecutor of Christians. ICC added Iraq and Egypt have been added to the list this year due to a substantial increase in anti-Christian violence.

ICC reports that one of 2010's worst attacks occurred in a Baghdad church on October 31 and left more than 50 worshippers dead. The next day, Al-Qaeda declared Christians throughout the Middle East as legitimate targets for the Mujahedin, or Holy Warriors. Since the declaration, Christians have been murdered almost weekly and thousands of Iraqi Christians have fled their homes, adding to the largest exodus of Christians in modern history.

Egypt, more than any country outside of Iraq, has suffered the most from the Al-Qaeda threat. Religious tensions were inflamed early this year when six Coptic Christians in Naga Hammadi were shot dead in January. Anti-Christian demonstrations—inflamed by Muslim propaganda—followed. On November 24th, Egyptian security opened fire with live

ammunition on Christian protestors in Giza, killing two people. The attacks on Copts have continued into the new year. On January 1, a suicide bomber murdered 21 Christians outside a church in Alexandria.

The other countries ranked in this year's report remain on the top persecutor list from last year, having made little to no progress in religious freedom. They include North Korea, Eritrea, Pakistan, Iran, Somalia, India, Vietnam, Nigeria and China.

"Constant vigilance is needed in the struggle to defend the fundamental human right of religious freedom," King says. "Those of us fortunate to live in countries that grant religious freedom must not forget nor neglect the plight of Christians who are condemned by extremist ideology or government tyranny to suffer—or die—for their faith."