

Persecution Watch

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS ACCUSED OF PROSELYTZING CHILDREN

Three Indonesian women have been accused of trying to convert Muslim children, Compass Direct reported. Rebekka Zakaria, Eti Pangesti and Ratna Bangun were questioned about activities and materials used in their Christian education program for elementary-school children. Bangun said the children prayed, read the Bible, sang and sometimes colored pictures. Judge Hasby J. Tholib responded by telling the women they never should have allowed Muslim children to participate in the program. Bangun and Zakaria said they had no hidden agenda, adding that the children's parents gave full consent to the program ó though none would say so during the trial. Before the hearing ended, the prosecuting attorney announced that the case would be transferred to the High Court, which observers say could lengthen the trial considerably.

STREET PREACHING BANNED IN KENYAN TOWN

Street preaching has been banned in Malindi town, located on Kenya's north coast, unless it is sanctioned by police, said the Daily Nation, Kenya's largest-circulation newspaper. Imposed at a meeting of Muslim and Christian religious leaders, the ban was intended to end religious confrontations, said District Commissioner Jan Ireri. "The globalization of religious concepts and faiths and the freedom of worship enshrined in the constitution should not be allowed to cause a breach of peace," Ireri said. He told religious leaders that he was concerned that night prayers were infringing on the rights of citizens by disturbing their sleep. He also said there had been complaints that ministers who used the public address systems were a nuisance. An interfaith committee was formed to find a permanent solution to the religious conflicts and promote peace, the Daily Nation said.

STAINES KILLER INSPIRES DOUBLE MURDER

Kokala Govardhan, 25, has confessed to killing pastor K. Daniel and pastor Isaac Raju in Hyderabad, southern India, Compass Direct reported.

Both murders occurred in May; in late June police arrested Kokala Govardhan, who told reporters he was inspired by Dara Singh, the man who orchestrated the murder of Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two sons. Though Dara Singh's death sentence had been commuted to life in prison, Christian groups are now calling for the death penalty to be reinstated as a warning to extremists. Staines' widow, however, has maintained her stand of total forgiveness. "If we don't forgive men of the wrong that they do, then how can we be forgiven?" Gladys Staines told the BBC.