

19 Christian Children Rescued From Radical Islamist Trafficker

International Christian Concern (ICC) has learned that 19 children, who were to be sold to fundamentalist Islamic boarding schools (madrassas), have been rescued.

Traffickers lied to the children's parents, saying they would take the children to Christian boarding schools in Dhaka, Bangladesh, when in fact they were intending to sell the children to various madrassas. Students from Dhaka University discovered the children and rescued them. This is not the first instance of Christian children being trafficked to madrassas, as upwards of 150 children have been rescued from similar situations since July.

According to ICC sources, on Sunday, 19 children, ages 5-12, were rescued from a trafficker named Binoy Tripura. Binoy confessed that he "collected the kids from their parents with lies and convinced them that [he] will admit all the kids to a Missionary [Christian] school in Dhaka." He then collected 15,000 Taka (roughly \$183) from each of their parents and intended to receive payment from the madrasa upon delivery of the children.

The children, Christians from the Tripura tribe, realized something was not right during their long bus journey from the remote "Cimbuk Hill" in the Bandarban district to Bangladesh's capital city, Dhaka. Twelve of the children ran away at a rest stop and called their parents to explain what was happening. Not knowing what else to do, the parents called Tripura tribal students attending Dhaka University, desperately asking for help. The university students met the bus in Dhaka, rescued the remaining six children, and captured Binoy, who is now in

police custody.

This is not the first instance of traffickers targeting low-income, Christian families due to their faith and vulnerability. This year alone, 55 children have been rescued from madrassas in Dhaka. On Jan. 2, police rescued 21 children from five madrassas and “other Islamic organizations.”

ICC sources say that these children were forcibly converted to Islam and had their Christian names legally changed to Muslim ones. They believe the children, once fully brainwashed at the madrassa, were “destined for suicide squads” for use in jihad.

ICC began receiving reports in July that Christian children were being trafficked to madrassas. The first 10 were rescued that same month and reported to ICC that they were forced to study Quran verses and Muslim prayers, pray five times a day, and learn Arabic. If they refused, they were beaten with live electric wires or rods, underfed, locked in small closets, and verbally abused.

“I was beaten many, many times because I didn’t want to pray,” a rescued boy said. Sources indicate that as many as 200 more children may also be in need of rescue.

“It is a great relief that these children have been located and rescued,” said Corey Bailey, ICC regional manager for Asia. “Targeting Christian children and selling them to madrassas against their will is human trafficking and should be stopped at all costs. It is highly likely these children will be brainwashed and used in jihad.

“This poses grave danger, not only to the country of Bangladesh, but to the world at large,” Bailey continued. “The perpetrators of this crime, both the trafficker and the madrassa leaders who buy the children, must be held accountable for their actions to the full extent of Bangladeshi law.”

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