

Christian Girls Lured Into Trafficking Under Guise of Marrying Wealthy Christian Men

According to a disturbing new report from the Associated Press, Christian girls like 16-year-old Muqadas are being married off to Chinese men who come to Pakistan looking for brides.

Muqadas was lucky enough to return home after five months, but pregnant and seeking a divorce from a husband she says was abusive. "Poor Pakistani Christian girls are being lured into marriages with Chinese men, whom they are told are Christian and wealthy only to end up trapped in China, married to men who are neither Christian nor well-to-do, and some are unable to return home," Fox News reports.

Save the Persecuted Christians (STPC), which advocates on behalf of hundreds of millions of Christians facing heavy persecution worldwide, says this trend in Pakistan is growing, and the girls are left very vulnerable.

"There are few, if any, protections for Pakistani Christian girls targeted by traffickers from China," said Dede Laugesen, executive director of Save the Persecuted Christians. "Christians in Pakistan make up only 2% of the population. They are impoverished and marginalized. Struggling to survive, Christian families are easy targets for brokers of black-market brides. Pakistan and China must do more to protect these vulnerable girls from being carted away and sold into marriage against their will. Those who have been smuggled to China should be helped to return home."

Fox further reports: "Brokers are aggressively seeking out

girls for Chinese men, sometimes even cruising outside churches to ask for potential brides. They are being helped by Christian clerics paid to target impoverished parents in their congregation with promises of wealth in exchange for their daughters."

Taking advantage of poor and struggling Christian families is common in countries where Christian persecution is carried out.

The Daily Caller added that traffickers have sold up to 1,000 Pakistani girls into sexual slavery thinly veiled as marriage since October 2018.

Christian persecution worldwide is illustrated through Save the Persecuted Christians' traveling exhibit called "The People of the Cross," which displays heartbreaking photos and facts about several countries where Christian persecution is commonplace. Each of the 24 banners feature images, facts and quotes from recent news stories about the persecution of Christians in multiple countries, such as China, where citizens are tracked, human rights lawyers and pastors are imprisoned and churches are demolished; North Korea, where Christians are tortured or worse; Syria, where Christian girls and women have been sold into sex slavery; and Nigeria, where two of the world's most violent terrorist groups surround and slaughter entire villages of Christians. A majority of the countries highlighted in the banners are high on the World Watch List, including Pakistan at No. 5 and China at No. 27.

The exhibit premiered in July 2018 at the U.S. Capitol as a side event to the first-ever U.S. Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom. Since then, it has toured the United States, reaching tens of thousands. "The People of the Cross" exhibit is available for churches, public venues and special events. To learn more about hosting "The People of the Cross," contact Save the Persecuted Christians or visit the website, where panels are available to view online.

The mission of Save the Persecuted Christians is to save lives and save souls by holding the persecutors accountable and creating costs for their crimes against humanity. To that end, it will disseminate actionable information about the magnitude of such crimes and bring to bear a movement of concerned Americans determined to hold persecutors accountable for such crimes and create real costs for perpetrating them against those who follow Jesus.

According to Aid to the Church in Need, which released its biannual report on Religious Freedom in the World in November, over 300 million Christians experience persecution. According to Open Doors USA World Watch List, 245 million Christians are victims of high to extreme levels of persecution (i.e., torture, rape, sex-slavery, expulsion, murder and genocide), an increase of 14% over 2018. Open Doors also estimates 1 in 9 of the world's Christians experience persecution and that every month: 345 Christians are killed, often in public and without regard to gender or age; 219 Christians are abducted and imprisoned indefinitely without trial and 106 churches are demolished.

Because most of these crimes are not covered in the media, Save the Persecuted Christians developed a dedicated news aggregator—to capture current instances of persecution and to provide readers an easy way to share these heartbreaking stories with others.

With so much of the world's Christian population being attacked, imprisoned and/or exiled for their beliefs, the need has never been greater for the sort of grassroots campaign STPC's SaveUs Movement is working to foster. Its efforts are modeled after a miraculously successful one that helped free another population suffering from heavy persecution—Soviet Jews—by penalizing those in the Kremlin responsible for such repression. Through this movement, Save the Persecuted Christians endeavors to provide American policymakers with the popular support they need to effect real change worldwide and

alleviate systemically the suffering being experienced by so many of those following Christ.

Listen to the podcast to hear more about trafficking.