

Persecution Is Rising Now, And It's Closer Than You Think

Jeff King has been on the front lines of religious persecution for more than two decades. As president of International Christian Concern, he's seen the pain, the loss, and the quiet strength of those who refuse to renounce their faith, no matter the cost.

But according to ICC's 2025 Global Persecution Index, the crisis facing Christians today is getting worse, not better.

"The main killing ground for Christians isn't North Korea – it's Nigeria," King told The Christian Post. King explains that "radical Islamists have driven Christians out of the North, pushing them further into the middle belt, which is the agricultural heartland. Militants raid villages, killing and displacing entire communities. It's a stealth jihad, a massive land grab."

Despite the growing international attention, the Nigerian government continues to fall short. "They claim they can't find the attackers, but it's a deep-state issue," King said. "The security apparatus is controlled by radical elements, and the military often turns a blind eye – or worse, intervenes against Christian self-defense efforts."

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And the crisis isn't contained to Nigeria. King warns that what's happening across Africa's Sahel region is nothing short of a disaster. "It's like ISIS has taken over a whole region," he said. "And because these areas are so remote, there's little that can be done to stop it." Even in the Democratic

Republic of Congo, Christians are facing horrific violence with little international outcry.

ICC, founded in 1995, exists to do three things: "Advocacy, awareness and assistance," as King puts it. "We're on the ground in some of the most dangerous places, providing direct aid, rebuilding churches and supporting believers who have lost everything. But we also work behind the scenes, leveraging international pressure to push governments toward justice."

That behind-the-scenes work can yield powerful results. King shared one story from North Africa where Evangelical pastors were threatened with prison and steep fines.

ICC flew one of the leaders to Washington, D.C., where he met with U.S. lawmakers. The effect? Immediate. "They called the pastors back in and said, 'We know someone is talking in Washington. We're all on the same team here. You don't need to go to Washington; just come to us,'" King recalled. "That's the kind of impact a well-placed conversation can have."

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King also offered a sobering look at what's driving much of this modern-day persecution: radical Islam. "The Saudis positioned themselves as the guardians of Islam, pouring billions into spreading their strict ideology," he said. "They funded radical mosques, educational institutions, and militant groups. We're still fighting the consequences today."

While the brutality is real and the suffering is great, King also sees a powerful paradox playing out: where persecution grows, so does the Church. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church," he said. Nowhere is that more visible than in Iran. "The Ayatollahs came in with a vision to spread Islam across the world, but what's happened instead? The people have rejected it. They've seen the brutality of a religious regime, and now the church is exploding," King said.

“Iran is probably the fastest-growing Christian movement in the world right now.”

This isn't a new pattern. As King put it, “When persecution intensifies, the Church often grows stronger. That doesn't make the suffering any less real, but it does remind us that God is at work.”

Still, for many Christians in the West, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and helpless when hearing about global persecution. King encourages action, not apathy. “First, follow the issue,” he said. “Understand what's happening so you can be an advocate. Call your elected officials. Demand action.” He pointed to organizations like ICC and that give people the tools to engage, donate, and campaign for justice.

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But perhaps his most profound reminder was this: “This isn't just about helping others; it's about learning from them,” King said. “The persecuted church has so much to teach us about faith, resilience and dependence on God. They are getting their doctorate in Christianity. If you want to grow, follow their stories.”

That's the part many of us miss. The persecuted aren't just victims; they are witnesses. Their stories, their strength, their endurance – these things are lessons for us all.

King's final encouragement rings true for believers in every corner of the world: “Their suffering is not wasted. And neither is ours. God uses trials – whether persecution or personal hardship – to draw us closer to Him. We can't stop all persecution, but we can stand with those who suffer. And sometimes, that makes all the difference.”

The truth is, persecution is a certainty in the Christian

life. Scripture is clear: “All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). But while many of our brothers and sisters around the world have counted the cost and stood firm, far too many in the West remain unprepared to do the same.

Our faith must be deeper than comfort. If the day comes when we’re asked to suffer for it, will we be ready?

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