



CSI-International

■ Annual Report 2022



We are persecuted...



■ Introduction

Dear friends of CSI,

2022 was a year of global uncertainty. In more and more countries, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights are coming under pressure. Conflicts and wars are creating geopolitical tensions. Instability is affecting the global economy. Prices are rising. Anti-Christian, anti-human ideologies gain momentum and find expression through violence and other forms of extremism. These tendencies are now beginning to be felt in the prosperous, post-Christian western world. But their most destructive impact is felt outside the western world, destroying the lives and wellbeing of the most economically and politically marginalized.

CSI has a long tradition of standing in solidarity with persecuted Christians and other victims of oppression. Our primary means are vigorous and well-informed religious freedom and human rights campaigns and targeted humanitarian actions. CSI frees, feeds, and heals the captives, and provides humanitarian aid to other victims of oppression. CSI also challenges the powers that drive the politics of religious persecution, especially the persecution of Christians.

In short, CSI saves and transforms lives, and gives hope to those

who feel forsaken, as Jesus did just before dying on the cross when he asked, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46) Today, many parts of the mystical, universal Body of Christ are severely persecuted worldwide. They have been abandoned by the powers of the world, even by religious authorities. Like the man attacked by robbers in the parable Jesus told, they have been left at the side of the road, bypassed by the prosperous and powerful. CSI’s sacred interconfessional mission is to follow the example of the Good Samaritan.

I trust that you will be encouraged by what you read of CSI’s work in our annual report for 2022.

Thank you for helping fulfill CSI’s sacred mission in 2022. I look forward to advancing it together with you in 2023. As always, I would be glad to hear from you.



Dr. John Eibner
International President

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Cover:

This woman is looking for her missing daughter; human trafficking is a major problem in India. csi

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Pakistani Christian Sneha thanks God after being freed from bonded labor. csi

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These Karen children fled Myanmar and now live in a boarding school in Thailand. csi

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The CSI-funded Le Sénévé day center in Homs, Syria, which supports around 120 children with mental disabilities. csi

■ About CSI

Mission statement

CSI is an international Christian human rights organization, campaigning for religious liberty and human dignity, and assisting victims of religious persecution, victimized children and victims of catastrophe.

Principles

- “For we are all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body... If one part suffers, every part suffers with it.” 1 Corinthians 12: 13, 26
- The Parable of the Good Samaritan: Luke 10: 25-37
- The UN Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

International structure

Christian Solidarity International (CSI) has its international headquarters in the canton of Zurich, Switzerland, and national affiliates in the USA, Switzerland, Germany, France, Czech Republic, Hungary and South Korea. CSI's highest governing body is the International Council. CSI is additionally supported by an International Advisory Council.

International Council delegates:

Monika Kahancová; Angélique Gourlay; John Eibner; Zsolt Bánki; Rev Kim Hyung Joo; Peter Märki; Rev Gerald Bell

International Advisory Council members:

Msgr. Obiora Ike, Nigeria; The Hon. Pascale and William Warda, Iraq; Dr. Nabil Antaki, Syria; Msgr. Michael Nazir-Ali, United Kingdom; Prof. Dr. Habib Malik, Lebanon; The Hon. Sarah Ochekepe, Nigeria; Prof. Dr. Mariz Tadros, Egypt/UK; Vishal Arora, India; Godfrey Yogarajah, Sri Lanka; Yamini Ravindran, Sri Lanka; Bishop Macram Max Gassis, Sudan/South Sudan



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■ Nigeria



Nigeria is the world's deadliest country for Christians. Attacks on Christians and moderate Muslims by Boko Haram and Fulani Islamist militias continue. These militants kill and pillage, driving people from their villages and taking over their lands. There is still widespread denial that a systematic expulsion of Christians and an eradication of the Christian faith is taking place. But that is exactly what is happening and the attackers make no attempt to conceal their goal. CSI has warned of a genocide of Christians in northern and central Nigeria but the world has failed to take notice.

Displaced twice

Mary Emanuel grew up in the village of Kuda in the northeastern state of Adamawa. Her family were poor. After her marriage, she and her husband moved to Baga, in neighboring Borno State. But after a few



months, Baga was attacked by Boko Haram fighters. Mary fled with her family to the village of Wunlari and then on to Maiduguri, the capital of

Borno. When a few months later they received word that the situation in Kuda was calm, they decided to make a fresh start there.

For four years, there was relative peace and security in Kuda. But suddenly Boko Haram Islamists ap-

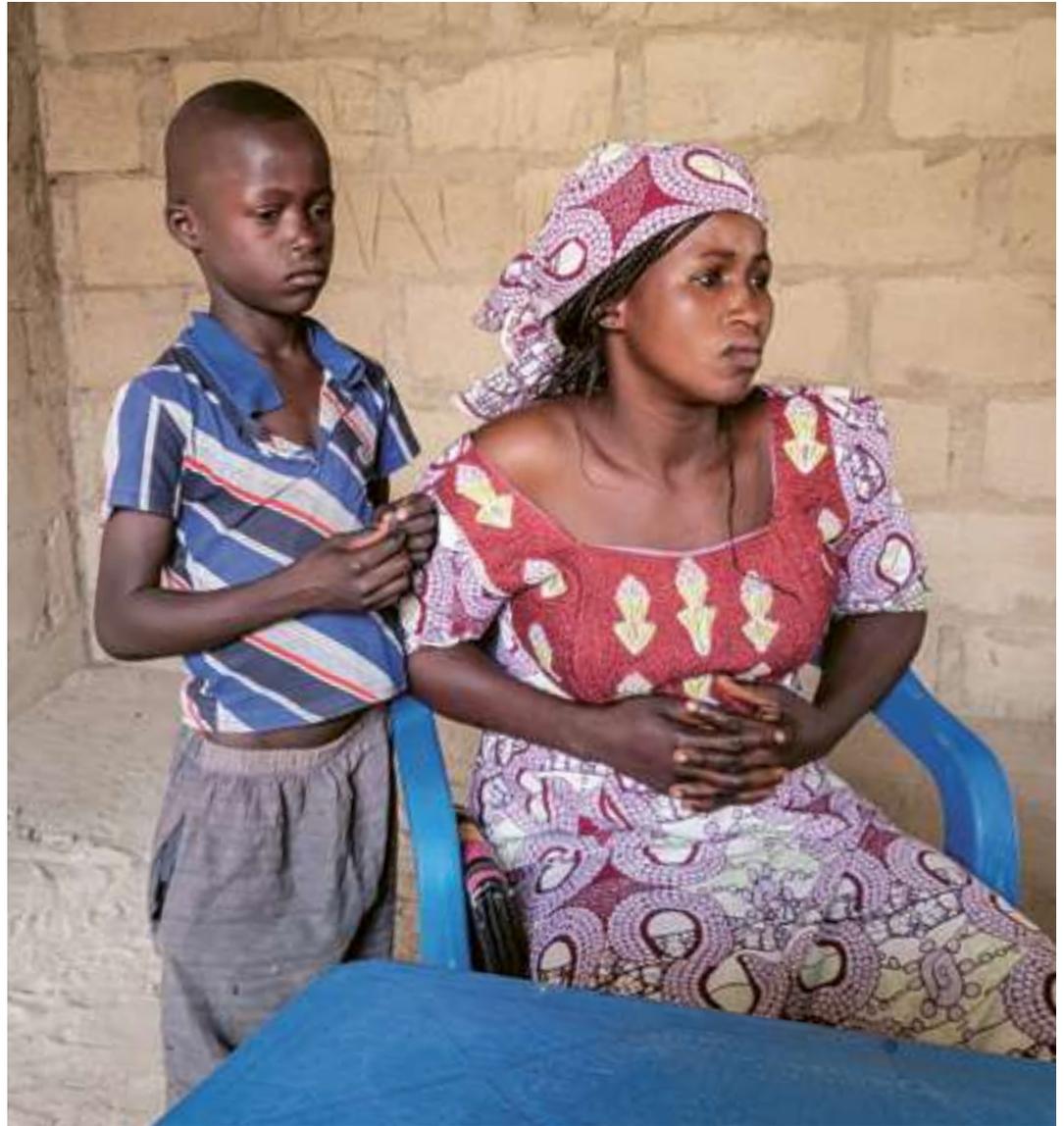
A bloodbath at Pentecost. Terrorists killed dozens of worshippers at a church service in the town of Owo. csi

Boko Haram terrorists attacked the Christian village of Kuda, killing 20 residents.

peared and carried out an attack on the Christian village, killing 20 residents. Mary and her family had to flee again.

Now 30, Mary lives with her children in a Christian IDP camp in Maiduguri. Her husband traveled to Lagos to look for work and she has not heard from him since. Mary is grateful to have received food supplies and other assistance from CSI. Last year, she cultivated a small vegetable plot. CSI is supporting her in her efforts to earn a living for herself.

Since the Boko Haram insurgency started in 2009, 35,000 people have been killed and 1.8 million driven from their homes in northeastern Nigeria. In the same time period, Fulani jihadists have killed an estimated 20,000 Christians in Nigeria's Middle Belt, driving millions from their homes. ■



CSI priorities:

- **Food distribution and medical care for IDPs**
- **Financial start-up assistance for displaced people**
- **Scholarships and material support for the children of victims of violence**
- **Support for Christians unjustly imprisoned in Nigeria**

Mary, pictured here with one of her sons, has been displaced twice. csi

■ South Sudan



In 2005, Sudan's second and extremely brutal civil war ended. In 2011, South Sudan became independent, but the effects of the war are still painfully felt today. Over 35,000 people still live as slaves in Sudan, the result of massive slave raids that took place during the civil war, and children continue to be born into slavery. CSI began slave liberation operations in the 1990s and has since freed more than 100,000 slaves and returned them home to South Sudan.

Help to escape

Aluel Wal Anei, now 25, was born in a displaced persons' camp in the Sudanese city of Adilah. Her parents had found refuge in the camp after being chased out of what was then southern Sudan. To make ends meet, her mother did domestic work

for Sudanese families. Her father worked on nearby farms.

Aluel was still a small child when one day Muslim slave raiders entered the camp. Many children were

Aluel Wal Anei rejoices in her new freedom and the gift of a goat from CSI. csi

snatched away from their parents, including Aluel, who became a slave.

Her owner had three wives and 12 children. Aluel had to work from morning to night cleaning, washing



"They did whatever they wanted with me."
Aluel, former slave

Freed slaves receive start-up support, including a sack of sorghum. csi

dishes and fetching water. She was abused and raped by her owner. “They did whatever they wanted with me,” Aluel says.

Then one day help came from an unexpected source: one of the slave owner’s wives secretly told Aluel that there was someone in the area who was taking slaves back home. It was one of CSI’s slave retrievers. Her master’s wife helped Aluel escape to meet the slave retriever. A few days later, Aluel was back in her home village in South Sudan, where she has started a new life with CSI’s support. ■



CSI priorities:

- **Slave liberation and repatriation**
- **Support for liberated South Sudanese to start a new life (survival pack, goat)**
- **Medical care for slavery survivors**
- **Food aid programs for the local population**

■ Egypt



In Egypt, CSI supports partners working in three areas: emergency aid and support for the poor, education for children and young people, and raising awareness of social issues. One of these issues concerns female genital mutilation, or FGM. The percentage of women undergoing FGM in Egypt is among the highest in the world. It is particularly common in rural areas of Upper Egypt. A nationwide ban on the practice in 2008 has had little impact. CSI supports local partners who raise awareness of this issue in the communities most affected.

Women's discussion groups are at the heart of the project. Here, the topic is discussed openly and women are informed that FGM is not a religious commandment, as many claim. One participant says: "I had marital problems for years because of circumcision. That's why I tried to convince my mother not to circumcise my three younger sisters." But her mother could not be persuaded – until she attended a discussion

group. "I'm glad that thanks to this discussion group, my sisters don't have to go through the same experience I did," she says.

There is strong social pressure to circumcise girls in rural Egypt. Misinformation is rife, and the tradition

is ingrained in village life. A CSI project partner explains how she tries to deal with the issue sensitively: "It is counterproductive to condemn the decisions that women or their families have made. That's why we put a lot of emphasis on sharing experi-

CSI's partners engage with the men in the community to help bring about change. csi



ences. When women tell others that they have decided against FGM, they realize that there is an alternative.”

Getting men involved

An exchange about marriage and family issues can also be beneficial for men. But especially in rural areas, such workshops are difficult to organize. Nevertheless, our partners were able to make some progress in 2022 through various discussion groups. For example, one father said, “I used to beat my children when I came home from work stressed. Sometimes my wife too, as if that was normal. Now, however, I see it very differently.” The discussion group helped him to understand both what triggered his actions and their consequences. As a result, his behavior towards his family changed completely. ■

“I’m glad that thanks to this discussion group, my sisters don’t have to go through the same experience.” Workshop participant



Through open discussion and exchanges, CSI’s partners are helping to fight against FGM. csi

CSI priorities:

- **Material and psychosocial support for underprivileged Egyptians**
- **Workshops on important social issues (FGM, early marriage, first aid, etc.)**
- **Educational programs for children and youth**

■ Iraq



Religious minorities in Iraq have been through a fiery ordeal. In 2014-2017, the Islamic State (IS) killed and enslaved thousands of Yazidis, and drove hundreds of thousands of Christians out of their homes. Even before the IS genocide, terror attacks against Christians had led many to flee, reducing their population from 1.2 million in 2003 to less than half a million today. Today, IS is largely defeated, but many Christians and Yazidis are still struggling to survive. CSI stands alongside them.

“With your help, I was able to turn this tiny space into a restaurant, Thank you so much!” Khalil, restaurant owner

Help with a new start

An important project in 2022 was CSI support for Yazidis in the northern region of Sinjar to start small businesses. The following are impressions from a site visit.

Our car stops at the entrance to a village created on a drawing board. It is one of the dozens of constructed villages to which the Yazidis were forcibly relocated under President Saddam Hussein in the 1970s and 1980s. Ahlam, a woman in her late 20s, greets us warmly. Her presence reminds us

Khalil is proud of his little restaurant. csi



why we are here: not to visit the dead, but to give hope to the living.

Ahlam leads us into her store. She excitedly shows us the changes since the last visit by CSI’s partner, the Hammurabi Human Rights Organization (HHRO). Despite her gratitude, she cannot hide her inner sadness, reflecting the ordeals she went through as a prisoner of IS fighters. But her sadness is matched by her determination to fight for a better future for herself and her younger brother.

Next, we visit the household goods store of Hawiza, a mother of two. Her husband was killed in an accident two years ago. Like Ghazal’s nearby hair salon, this store was rebuilt with the help of CSI and HHRO. Hawiza and Ghazal are full of ideas to expand their small businesses. Their energy is contagious, and soon everyone is chatting away about where to place a shelf or a mirror.

Khalil’s dream realized

We drive on and meet Khalil. The father of 12 has had a difficult



time. Several family members were killed by IS fighters and he struggles with health problems. When Khalil heard about CSI and HHRO's small business project, he contacted the local Yazidi sheikh to tell him about his dream of opening a restaurant. Beaming from ear to ear, Khalil shows off his new premises. "With your help, I was able to turn this tiny space into a restaurant. Thank you

so much!" The aroma of chicken wafts through the room. Then Khalil shows us the restaurant's Facebook

page: all the reviews are positive and encouraging. ■

With start-up help from CSI Ahlam opened a small store. ^{csi}

CSI priorities:

- **Support for Christian schools**
- **Legal assistance for persecuted religious minorities**
- **Medical care for impoverished Iraqis**
- **Support to set up small businesses**
- **Empowering religious minorities to have a voice in society**

■ Syria



Syria's economy is in a dismal state after 12 years of war. The pandemic and the crisis in neighboring Lebanon further exacerbated the situation in a country already suffering greatly as a result of international economic sanctions. Most Syrians see no future for themselves in their homeland, and even some of those who lived through the worst years of the war are now considering leaving the country.

Start-ups give hope

Opening up prospects for people is the goal of the JOB small business program run by the Blue Marists, a CSI partner organization. This local volunteer organization, founded by Nabil Antaki, his wife Leyla and Brother Georges in Aleppo at the beginning of the war, organizes training sessions on how to set up a small business. At the end of the program, the most promising pro-



Simon was able to fulfill his dream of opening his own car repair shop. csi

jects receive start-up funding and a mentor for the first three years.

Thanks to this program, Simon was able to fulfill his dream of opening his own car repair shop. The young Armenian Christian, full

of verve and hope for the future, seized this unique opportunity. Within a year, he had built up a considerable customer base. This meant he could hire an additional worker. With the income he makes, Simon also provides for his two siblings and parents. "It takes a lot of effort to survive in these difficult times," Si-

"This project encourages me to stay focussed and not to despair." Simon, car repair shop owner



mon says. Simon is very grateful and hopeful for the future. “This project encourages me to stay focused and not to despair,” he says.

In 2022, CSI was also involved in educational and recreational programs for children, helped struggling families pay for essential medication, supplied ventilators for Covid patients, and assisted unemployed people in starting small businesses. On the international level, CSI drew attention to the negative impact of

economic sanctions on the population and campaigned for them to be lifted. ■

CSI priorities:

- **Educational and recreational programs for children**
- **Aid programs for elderly people**
- **Workshops and mentoring for women and children**
- **Support to start up small businesses**
- **Medical help for families in need**
- **Awareness-raising on the international level about the negative impact of economic sanctions on the population**

CSI partner Sister Marie Rose (middle, back row) and her youth volunteers work to bring hope to children and vulnerable people affected by the war. csi

■ Nagorno Karabakh/Armenia



Nagorno Karabakh, or Artsakh, is part of the ancient kingdom of Armenia, the first state to adopt Christianity as its official religion. As the USSR began to collapse in 1988, Azerbaijan tried to destroy Karabakh's Armenian Christian population, leading to a brutal war with Armenia. At the end of the war in 1994, Nagorno Karabakh became de facto independent. After Azerbaijan attacked again in September 2020, CSI established relief programs through local partners. CSI is also raising the alarm about the existential threat Karabakh's Armenians face from Azerbaijan's aggression. In December 2022, Azerbaijan blocked the only access road to Nagorno Karabakh. The blockade prevents the free movement of people and the supply of essential goods and medicines. At the time of writing, the blockade was still in place.

Everything lost – twice over

The Amiryany family (name changed for security reasons) has

Armenuhi is grateful for her sewing machine. csi





suffered a series of heavy blows. The Amiryans were living in the Armenian town of Gyumri when they lost everything in the massive earthquake of 1988. They moved to the small town of Artik, and eventually to Nagorno Karabakh in 1998. The two men in the family worked in the construction industry during the day and spent their free time working the family farm with its large orchard. But it was Armenuhi, the wife and mother, who held everything together and made sure the farm flourished. They were successful. But in the fall of 2020, the war started again. For the second time, the Amiryans left everything behind and fled to their

run-down old apartment in Artik.

How do people find the strength to start over twice in life? It takes the determination of a woman like Armenuhi and the support of others. In this case, it was CSI partners who lent assistance to the family. “Without that help, we wouldn’t have had the strength,” Armenuhi says. The first thing the family did in the cold apartment was to replace the windows. This dramatically improved her quality of life, Armenuhi says, with a smile. In addition, she was able to buy a sewing machine, an iron and fabric. Now she sews and sells scarves as well as bed covers and pillow cases. From time to time, she

Patients and carers at the CSI-supported rehabilitation center in Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno Karabakh. csi

trades her products for food. “Just yesterday I traded pillowcases for cheese,” Armenuhi laughs. ■

“Just yesterday I traded pillowcases for cheese.” Armenuhi Amiryanyan

CSI priorities:

- **Housing assistance for refugees**
- **Income-generating measures for refugees**
- **Medical assistance**
- **Psychological support**
- **Advocacy**

■ Interview: The Politics of Persecution

Blasphemy laws, jihadist movements, the rise of nationalism – all contribute to the suffering of Christians in many parts of the world. Joel Veldkamp is the Head of International Communications at CSI and leads its advocacy campaigns. In this interview he addresses the state of human rights globally.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), formulated after the horrors of World War II, inspired the development of international human rights law. What is the human rights situation today?

While the Declaration is not legally binding, most countries in the world have signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These encapsulate most of the UDHR and are legally binding, but few states consistently adhere to them. While nationalist and autocratic governments continually violate the human rights of their own citizens, the West and the United States commit human rights violations around the world as they battle for dominance with Russia, Iran, China, and others.

CSI campaigns primarily for religious liberty. Why is this particular right so important?

I will answer you by quoting Charles Malik, a Greek Orthodox phi-

losopher from Lebanon and the main author of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As an aside: He was the father of Habib Malik, a member of the International Advisory Council of CSI. Charles Malik's nightmare was a world in which the individual is weak and isolated in the face of an all-powerful government. Malik viewed religious groups as "intermediate institutions" that "bridge the gap between the individual and the state," and where people find solidarity and a common voice. Religious liberty is also a prerequisite for religious plurality. In countries where different religious groups live together in peace and freedom, there is more room for independent thought and dialogue, and more protection for minorities.

What is the current situation regarding Christian persecution worldwide?

It is very serious. In Syria and Armenia/Nagorno Karabakh, some of the oldest Christian communities in

the world are threatened with extinction. In Africa, jihadist groups are on the rise and targeting Christians. In South Asia, governments are increasingly restricting religious freedom and Christians are exposed to rising violence. We are seeing an increase in nationalist movements based on religious identity leading to violence and discrimination against Christians and other minorities.

Is this decline in religious liberty a consequence of the changed geopolitical situation?

In recent years, the three superpowers – Russia, China and the USA – have intensified their competition for geopolitical advantage. This leads to more wars and political instability around the world, which also cre-

"In countries where different religious groups live together in peace and freedom, there is... more protection for minorities."



“Russia, China and the USA have intensified their competition for geopolitical advantage. This creates the conditions for persecution.”

ates the conditions for persecution. We have seen this clearly in Syria, where the attempt by the U.S. and its allies to overthrow the Syrian government, which is allied with Russia, opened the door to jihadist groups, and where Western sanctions are now creating a real humanitarian crisis and causing Christians to leave the country. Today, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is not only killing tens of thousands of innocent people, but also destroying the possibility of superpower cooperation and causing

global food shortages and inflation. We expect the situation for persecuted Christians will only get worse.

What motivates you in your everyday work at CSI?

The encounters with the courageous people in these countries who do not give up despite the unbelievable evil and suffering. The Sudanese trader who continues to free people from slavery, even after government agents murdered his mother on account of his work. The young Syrian

Joel Veldkamp heads up CSI’s advocacy campaigns. During a visit to Washington D.C., he spoke about the situation in Nagorno Karabakh. [csi](#)

woman who gave up a fully funded Master’s degree in Europe to continue volunteering in her hometown. The Armenian physiotherapist who refused to evacuate his town even after 44 days of bombing because he wanted to care for his patients. The Nigerian journalist who has been repeatedly jailed for reporting on attacks on Christian villages, and still won’t stop. Knowing people like that is a huge inspiration. How can we not do our best to give them all the support we can? ■

■ Bangladesh



Raising your voice for religious freedom in Muslim-dominated Bangladesh, the most densely populated state in the world, takes courage. Christians in Bangladesh are a very small and overlooked minority. They are said to have embraced the religion of the West and are not considered loyal citizens.

Discrimination is a fact of everyday life. This is where CSI's local partner organization comes in. "It is important that we as Christians of different denominations speak with one voice in our country," William Samadder says. "Only by working together can we move forward in courage and faith. We must not hide away; we have much to give the world."

Ecumenical Easter celebration

And so, for the first time since the Covid lockdowns, the churches organized an ecumenical Easter celebration in Dhaka in 2022. A good turnout had been expected.

But when more than 6,000 people turned up, even the organizers were taken aback. "Of course, we were concerned about security, because such a large gathering is an easy target for terrorists. But the desire to pray together and testify to God's love was stronger than fear," says Samadder.

Emergency aid

Situated in the Ganges river delta, Bangladesh is regularly hit by storms and floods. Such was the case in mid-June, when incessant rain cut off supplies to millions of people in the Sylhet region. Stranded on small islands they waited for help, often for days on end. CSI's local partners

An ecumenical Easter meeting was attended by over 6,000 people. csi





Persistent rain resulted in widespread flooding; CSI distributed emergency relief packages. csi

CSI project partner William Samadder talking about the right to religious liberty. csi

were among those agencies providing relief: 800 families were supplied with urgently needed food, drinking water and fuel. “In emergency relief efforts like this, we don’t ask about religious affiliation,” says Samadder.

“As Christians we are convinced we must stand up for those in need, no matter what their faith.” ■



CSI priorities:

- **Funding for a Christian village school for over 100 children**
- **Funding for an orphanage/boarding school for six girls**
- **Interdenominational workshops for training pastors and lay people in human rights**
- **Support for victims of religious discrimination and initiatives to counter extremism**
- **Emergency disaster relief**

India



At least 598 instances of violence against Christians were reported in India in 2022 making it the most violent year ever experienced by the minority. There was also an increase in cases of human trafficking in a country where 220 million people survive on below 32 Indian rupees a day (less than half a dollar).

Arrests and attacks

One of CSI's partners in India defends religious freedom across the country. It secured the release of 359 Christians who were arrested on false charges of "forcible" religious conversion.

In India, when a church is attacked, the police often arrest the Christian victims instead of the attackers. In one such incident, in January 2022, religious extremists struck Sanjay, a Christian from Madhya Pradesh state, on the head with an ax as he was on the way to a prayer meeting. The police filed a flimsy case against the assailants, but also against Sanjay. Our partner

Christians protest in Delhi against the increasing violence against them. csi

promptly obtained anticipatory bail for the victim before police could arrest him.

The CSI partner also helped file over 160 police complaints on behalf of victims, intervened in over 530 attacks on Christians, and succeeded in reopening more than 100 churches that had been shut down by the authorities.

Human trafficking

Another partner in India works to prevent human trafficking, and rescues and rehabilitates victims in two of the most vulnerable states, Jharkhand and West Bengal. In 2022, 65 trafficked victims were rescued, most of them children.

One of the victims was Pinki, a 13-year-old girl from a poor family in





Pinki. In January 2022, she was reunited with her parents.

Awareness raising

Through prevention campaigns in the communities our project partners reached at least 1,800 people, including children, teaching them how to identify traffickers. They also taught skills to dozens of vulnerable families enabling them to support themselves.

CSI also supports two rehabilitation centers, where 22 rescued girls live, study and acquire skills.

CSI's partners in India urge continued prayers as 2023 may prove even more challenging than 2022, with more elections scheduled and economic inequality on the rise. ■

Jharkhand. Pinki shared her dream of studying at a private school with a neighbor, Soni, who turned out to be a trafficker. After gaining her trust, Soni trafficked Pinki to Bihar state, where she was sold and forced to work as a domestic servant and sex

slave. Pinki was locked inside a small room and not given enough to eat. When CSI's partner learned about her situation, it sought the help of the police, which was denied. Its team members then risked their lives to locate the trafficker and rescued

Prevention campaigns raise awareness of the dangers of human trafficking. csi

CSI priorities:

Aid for persecuted religious minorities

- ***Legal and material support for victims of religious violence and discrimination***
- ***Support for a large network of human rights lawyers for low-income clients***
- ***Educating members of religious minorities regarding fundamental rights and laws***

Aid for victims of human trafficking

- ***Prevention work in schools with pupils, teachers and parents***
- ***Rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims***
- ***Promoting a national network against human trafficking***
- ***Microcredits and support to small business ventures to help families escape poverty***

Indonesia



Following the Covid lockdown, in October 2022 CSI staff made their first trip to the West Papua region of Indonesia to visit the project begun in 2020. Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim country but

the indigenous people of the West Papua region have been Christians for generations. West Papua - in the western part of the island of New Guinea - is a region blessed with mineral resources. The world's larg-

Once the majority, after decades of colonization, Christians are now a minority in West Papua. csi

est gold mine is located in West Papua. But these mineral resources are a curse for the indigenous population. Short-term profit considerations are destroying the native people's livelihood. When gold is found in a new



area, the companies ramp up their operations there without bothering to ask whose land it is. The military escorts them and drives the locals away by force.

Helping the oppressed

On their visit, the CSI project workers met people who have been fighting for the rights and dignity of the indigenous population for decades. These are individuals who have experienced humiliation, violence and displacement first-hand. CSI is helping oppressed West Papuans, including human rights activist Yones Douw, to exercise their rights. Douw documents the terrible events that take place to ensure that they are not forgotten. It is dangerous work. "I've been in jail many times for standing up for my oppressed countrymen and women," he says. Time and again, Douw receives threats from the police and the authorities since the Indonesian government does not tolerate reports about the suffering of the people of West Papua. "Sometimes I fear for my life," he says.

A safe place to learn and share

But Yones Douw is not giving up. He has found a safe place to publish, store, and share his reporting - an under-the-radar theological center in his home region. The center, financed by CSI, has a small library and two laptops with internet access. Young theology students meet



"I've been in jail many times for standing up for my oppressed countrymen and women."

Yones Douw, human rights activist

here to study, share and learn more about the context to the injustices they have suffered. ■

Keeping a record: important documents are stored at the study center. csi

CSI priorities:

- **Support for the church movement in West Papua that is working towards a non-violent solution to the conflict**
- **Human rights workshops for pastors and indigenous people**

■ Myanmar



Fleeing bombardment and oppression by the military junta in Myanmar, persecuted families take great risks in helping their children cross over to neighboring Thailand. But for these children life as an unregistered asylum seeker is dangerous.

CSI's partner organization in the region is providing help to 40 refugee children and young people in Thailand. This aid will enable them

to complete secondary school and qualify for vocational training, and later obtain Thai citizenship. Only in this way will they have the chance to realize their dreams. Most of the girls want to become nurses to help victims of violence or other asylum seekers. The boys want to become car and motorbike mechanics, hoping to earn enough money to support themselves, their families and other refugees.

Bible reading by flashlight in the IDP camp. (For their protection the children's faces are blurred.) csi

Life away from home

For these children - all of them from Christian homes - CSI partner Kakreh Moo is like a mother. She takes care of their needs and makes sure they are properly fed and clothed. Her husband Garry drives the children to town when needed and takes care of the necessary official paperwork.

The children attend three different schools in the Chiang Mai area. In 2022, many of them contracted Covid and developed a fever. CSI partners ensured all those who were sick received medical attention, and they all made a full recovery. But illness is not their biggest concern: what they fear more is attacks by the army.

Escalating conflict

The conflict in Myanmar between the military and ethnic minority militias has escalated since the military coup in February 2021. Since then, the junta has killed more than 3,000 civilians and arrested nearly 20,000. Some 1.3 million



people have fled their homes since February 2021. In these dire circumstances, CSI's partners take great risks to help people fleeing the war. For instance, partner Kakreh Moo delivered bags of rice, dried fruit and medical supplies to a refugee camp. This necessitated a three-hour boat ride on the Salween River, the border between Thailand and Myanmar. The Myanmar military maintains a high

CSI's partners delivered bags of rice, dried fruit and medical supplies to a refugee camp.

level of surveillance on any movement along the river, pointing their guns at all those who travel by boat. Despite the great danger, CSI's partners also provided transportation for seriously ill refugees who needed to be taken to a city hospital. Without this help, they would have died.

The conflict between ethnic militias and the military junta has been going on for decades. Hundreds of

thousands of members of minority populations, including many Christians, have been displaced, wounded, tortured or even killed in recent decades. CSI launched its aid project in 2020. No one knew at the time that the pandemic and coup would turn this relief effort into a lifeline for many. Looking back, CSI partner Kakreh Moo calls this "God's providence." ■

In the absence of their parents, these Karen children are cared for by CSI partners in Thailand. csi

CSI priorities:

- **Covering boarding school costs in Thailand for children from a refugee camp in Myanmar**
- **Emergency aid for internally displaced persons (food, medicine, tarpaulins, blankets, drinking water)**

■ Nepal



Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world. The landlocked state is sandwiched between India and China and is a pawn of these regional powers. Nepal is drawn to China's large investment projects and its vision of building a connecting tunnel between the two countries. On the other hand, India and Nepal share a deep and enduring relationship, cemented by their shared history, religion and culture. India considers Nepal to be within its sphere of influence and stops exports to Nepal when its small neighbor is recalcitrant. All imports come by way of India. It is therefore not surprising that in 2017, Nepal followed India in enacting an anti-conversion law.

Life in the hilly foothills of the Himalayas is difficult, the Nepalese road network is poorly developed and the infrastructure is unreliable. With few prospects, thousands of Nepalese seek their fortune in the Middle East every year, where they toil under slave-like conditions for a pittance.



CSI invests in people's futures

For Christians, who make up about three percent of the population of Nepal, life is doubly difficult. In addition to severe poverty, they often face discrimination and

even exclusion from their community. To help people escape poverty and avoid emigration, CSI has been supporting income-generating projects for two years. This has given many Christians new hope for the future.

Things are looking up thanks to CSI start-up aid: Pokaso Oli proudly shows off his workshop. csi

One example is 28-year-old Porkaso Oli, who lives in a very remote village. He trained as a carpenter, but the work was arduous, and he did not make much money. Porkaso toyed with the idea of leaving his family behind and looking for a job in Kuwait.

In early 2022, thanks to CSI's support, he was able to purchase machinery that made his work easier and more efficient. Porkaso was soon able to hire two more men from his village, for which he is very grateful: "Thanks to CSI's help, we can make a living and no longer have to leave our families," he says. ■

Kim Soni is an enthusiastic pig farmer; the animals are an extra source of income. csi



***"Thanks to CSI's help,
we can make a living."
Porkaso Oli, carpenter***

*Good prospects:
Dhan Kumari
with her buffalo
COW. csi*



CSI priorities:

- **Training members of religious minorities in basic rights and laws in everyday life**
- **Legal support for those persecuted for their faith**
- **Practical help for victims of persecution: shelter, medicines, first aid**
- **Establishing a network of parliamentarians working for human rights**
- **Small business creation for the financial empowerment of minorities**

■ Pakistan



In Pakistan countless non-Muslim girls have been abducted, forced to convert to Islam, and married against their will. More than 1,000 Christian girls are affected each year. The suffering involved is unimaginable. Girls forcibly married and coerced into accepting Islam endure weeks, months or even years of subjugation and abuse. Some never return. In some cases they internalize their captors' views and turn away from their own faith.

Little support from the authorities

The parents also suffer trauma and loss. In an effort to free their daughter, they often travel miles to a police station or to attend court hearings. Little support can be expected from the justice system. The police often turn a blind eye to reports of kidnapping, forced conversion or marriage, and grant the perpetrators impunity. As a result, abducted girls remain in their abductor's home during the trial, where



Sania Rangoo is learning to sew in the CSI safe house. csi

they are frequently raped and made to testify under threat of death that they consented to change their religion or marry.

In 2020, CSI began a project to rescue and rehabilitate as many of these girls as possible. Working with competent lawyers, CSI has man-

aged to free 11 girls from the clutches of their abductors since the start of the project. In other cases, court hearings are ongoing. When the first girls supported by CSI were freed, many were found to be traumatized. Parents were not always ready to welcome home their stigmatized daughters. In addition, there was the danger of the abductor returning for the girl.

Safe house for girls

To counter this danger, CSI has been operating a shelter in Pakistan since the beginning of 2022. The girls stay here for between six and 12 months. In a safe environment, and with the support of a psychologist, they work through their negative experience. To strengthen their self-confidence for life after leaving the shelter, the girls complete a six-month course in hairdressing or dressmaking, depending on their interests and talents. Those who were abducted very young catch up on school. Spiritual re-education, daily prayer and Bible reading are also important since during their captivity the girls often hear the Christian faith denigrated. ■

Mahek (right) is trapped in a forced marriage. Her brother and mother (left) hope for her return. csi



In the safe house the girls learn how to apply make-up. csi



CSI was able to free a number of brick kiln workers and their families from debt slavery. csi

CSI priorities:

- Support for a Christian school with over 300 pupils
- Legal and medical aid for victims of Islamist violence and those charged with blasphemy
- Legal aid for victims of forced marriage and conversion
- Liberation from debt slavery for brick kiln workers.

■ Sri Lanka



Sri Lanka has been in a state of severe economic crisis since the beginning of 2022. Depleted foreign currency reserves have led to shortages of fuel, gas, medicines and food in the heavily import-dependent country. More than a third of the population lacks reliable access to food.

Advocacy workshops for church leaders provide a useful knowledge of religious freedom laws. csi

In July 2022, the Sri Lankan president was ousted in nationwide civil protests and replaced by a new president, Ranil Wickremesinghe. A brutal crackdown on dissenters and demonstrators followed, along with a closer monitoring of human rights activists. The chaos and as-

sociated lawlessness affected religious minorities particularly badly. Consequently, pastors' networks and training for church leaders have become all the more important, allowing them to continue to support their parishioners despite the precarious situation.

Strengthening Christian networks

CSI's partners organized advocacy workshops for church leaders in four districts. In these seminars, pastors learned about religious freedom in the South Asian region in general and in Sri Lanka in particular, including the rights and freedoms that churches and church leaders have under the law. In addition, the semi-



"The situation is catastrophic. But we thank you for your prayers and support."
Jerome, CSI project partner

nars included exchanges on general legal issues facing Christian communities, such as church registration and building permits. In another meeting, the church's social responsibility was discussed alongside practical actions and projects. Due to the fuel crisis and political unrest, some of the workshops were held online.

Life-saving assistance

At the height of the crisis, CSI was providing support to 723 families and 200 children who were persecuted or at risk. This support gave Christians in rural areas the assurance that they are not forgotten, and that God sees them. Vijay and her son Vikram are among those who received help: "I am a single parent and work as a day laborer. My son and I live on the breadline. Due to the current economic situation, not many people are hiring me anymore. My son is having a hard time because I can no longer pay for his education. I couldn't believe it at first when I heard that someone had come all this way to help us. God be praised!"

CSI project partner Jerome calls 2022 "one of the most difficult times for Sri Lanka and especially for the church." He says the economic crisis has led to unrest and much suffering. "The situation is catastrophic. But we thank you for your prayers and support for the Lord's work. We are grateful to God that we can support persecuted and marginalized Christians in this difficult time." ■

Vijay and her son Vikram: the emergency aid parcels helped them survive the economic crisis. ^{csi}



CSI priorities:

- **Legal support for victims of persecution and religious minorities**
- **Documenting human rights violations**
- **Human rights and training for church and community leaders**
- **Material support for victims of terrorism and persecution**

■ Nicaragua



The situation in Nicaragua remains tense. Since the crackdown on protests against social security reform in April 2018, President Daniel Ortega and his wife Rosario Murillo have ruled with an iron hand. The government silences dissenters with threats, expulsion or imprisonment.

In recent years, hundreds of thousands of people have left Nicaragua, fleeing to neighboring Costa Rica or to the USA. To make matters worse, the government withdrew the licenses of around 100 aid organizations in 2022.

The Catholic Church, to which about 56 percent of the population belongs, is also experiencing repression. Clergy critical of the government are monitored and arrested. A priest we met in Nicaragua in 2022 is interrogated every day by the secret police. Our partners have to be careful what they say and to whom.

The repression has also had an impact on the economy. Nicaragua is now the second poorest country in Latin America. In the slums of the



Diana with her grandmother and her daughter Samantha, who at 16 is already a mother. csi

capital Managua and the suburb Tipitapa, people live in squalor. Large families live in cramped unsafe conditions in basic corrugated iron huts.

Families in need struggle to get by. Diana, a mother of three, lives in the slums of Managua. Her husband left her several years ago and her 16-year-old daughter Samantha has a baby of her own. The little money Diana earns from washing and ironing is barely enough to survive on.

Diana and her children are among around 200 families from Managua and Tipitapa who receive foodstuffs from our partners every month. A further 200 children in Managua and Tipitapa enjoy a hot meal five times a week at the lunch table run by our partners.

In the coastal towns of Puerto Cabezas and Bluefields, 26 girls live in two educational institutions run by our partners. The girls come from difficult family backgrounds. At home, they attended elementary school only. At the boarding schools supported by CSI, they complete secondary-level education and prepare for university or vocational training. The girls live, study, and do household chores together in a safe and loving environment.

One of the girls is 18-year-old Guadalupe from southeastern Nic-

“I am extremely grateful to my aunt for making me aware of the boarding school.” *Guadalupe, student from Punta Gorda*



Guadalupe is confident about her career prospects. csi

aragua. “I am extremely grateful to my aunt for making me aware of the boarding school,” she says. Guadalupe jumped at the opportunity and moved in in January 2022. She is interested in art and also writes stories. At the end of her schooling, she hopes to complete a commercial apprenticeship. ■

CSI priorities:

- **Provision of a daily lunch and care for children in the slums of Managua and Tipitapa**
- **Distribution of food and medicines to those in need**
- **Provision of school materials and school uniforms**
- **Free consultations with a doctor and a dentist in Tipitapa**
- **Working to end domestic violence**
- **Boarding schools for girls providing psychological care in Bluefields and Puerto Cabezas**

■ Advocacy Actions

CSI is committed, not only to bringing aid to the persecuted, but to speaking out on their behalf. In its international advocacy work, CSI concentrates its resources on situations where Christian communities are threatened in their very existence, and where international attention is gravely lacking. Through its advocacy work, CSI seeks to shine a light on these hidden crises, give a voice to Christians undergoing persecution, and shift international opinion, and eventually, state policy, in their favor.

CSI pursues its advocacy agenda through press releases and open letters to government officials, fact-finding visits and reports, participation in international conferences and panels, social media campaigns and media interviews.

Nigeria

CSI first issued a genocide warning for Christians in Nigeria in January 2020. In June 2022, in the light of escalating violence, CSI joined 14

NGOs in preparing a detailed petition to the U.N. Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide raising urgent concerns. This followed the lynching in May of a young Christian student, Deborah Samuel, who was accused of blaspheming against Islam, and the slaughter of more than 40 Nigerian Christians at a Pentecost mass. CSI International President Dr. John Eibner followed up with a letter to UN Secretary-General António Guterres urging the UN to fulfill its mandate to prevent genocide in Nigeria. In September, CSI participated in an open letter to United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken asking him to reinstate Nigeria on the U.S. list of countries of particular concern for religious freedom violations.

CSI also advocated on behalf of individual persecuted Christians in Nigeria. In January, Eibner and U.K. parliamentarian Baroness Caroline Cox sent an open letter of support to journalist Luka Binniyat, at that time still imprisoned for his fearless

reporting on attacks on Christians in the Middle Belt region. When Binniyat was released the following month, CSI's Joel Veldkamp interviewed him during a fact-finding visit to Nigeria.

In December, CSI mobilized a large coalition of human rights organizations to send a joint letter to the U.S. Secretary of State asking him to intervene with the Nigerian authorities to secure the release of Rhoda Jatau, a mother of five imprisoned on blasphemy charges.

In other advocacy actions, in February/March, CSI joined with its strategic partner HART, a U.K.-based organization founded by Baroness Cox, on a fact-finding visit to Nigeria. The visit resulted in a joint report on terror and mass displacement in the Middle Belt. This was followed by an online panel presentation by Veldkamp on the ongoing ethnic cleansing of the indigenous Christians of Nigeria's Middle Belt ahead of the July 5-6 International Ministerial Conference for Freedom of



Religion and Belief in London. This presentation triggered an acknowledgment by U.K. Minister for Africa Vicky Ford that “targeted violence against Christians is increasing.”

CSI’s Nigeria Report website remained the primary tool for informing about the worsening situation in Nigeria and disseminating calls for action.

Nagorno Karabakh

2022 saw an intensification of Azerbaijan and Turkey’s attempts to conquer and ethnically cleanse Nagorno Karabakh of its ancient Armenian Christian population.

In March, after Azerbaijani forces attacked and ethnically cleansed the Armenian village of Parukh in Nagorno Karabakh, CSI joined Bar-

oness Cox and other dignitaries in sending an open letter to then-U.K. Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, asking the U.K. government to intervene with Azerbaijan at the highest levels to stop the aggression.

As the Republic of Armenia itself came under attack from Azerbaijan in September, CSI called on the U.S., its NATO partners and Russia to take restraining measures against the country. CSI also wrote to U.K. Foreign Secretary James Cleverly urging him to act to prevent genocide in Armenia.

2022 marked the 30th anniversary of the slaughter of Armenian Christian civilians in the village of Maragha in Nagorno Karabakh by Azerbaijani forces during the first Karabakh War. CSI was the first or-

ganization to arrive in Maragha after the massacre, and documented its aftermath. In October, the World Evangelical Alliance introduced a statement at the UN Human Rights Council in remembrance of the massacre and cited CSI’s work.

In December, Azerbaijani forces blocked the only road connecting the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh to Armenia, and thus to the rest of the world, effectively placing the region under siege. CSI led the way in alerting the Christian world to the threat - on the second day of the blockade, CSI gave an interview to CBN News in the United States about the crisis, which was viewed more than 200,000 times.

A week into the blockade, CSI assembled a coalition of human

Dr. John Eibner, International President (right) and Simon Brechbühl, Managing Director CSI-Switzerland (second from right) at the handing over of a petition against a Swiss retailer’s business cooperation with Azerbaijan. csi

rights organizations to issue a collective Genocide Warning for the besieged Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh.

In Switzerland, CSI joined a coalition of organizations and political parties petitioning the leading Swiss retailer Migros to end its business cooperation with the Azerbaijani oil company SOCAR, in view of Azerbaijan's aggression against Nagorno Karabakh.

Syria

In 2022, CSI continued to press for the lifting of economic sanctions imposed on Syria by the United States and its allies. In light of the humanitarian catastrophe that the sanctions have inflicted on the population, CSI echoed a call by the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Unilateral Coercive Measures (sanctions) for "the immediate lifting of all unilateral sanctions" on Syria.

Imprisoned Christians and prisoners of conscience

In April, CSI wrote a letter to Palestinian officials on behalf of Pastor Johnny Shahwan, a Christian leader imprisoned by the Palestinian Authority. He was released shortly thereafter, although the false charges against him remain in place.

In November, CSI called on Pakistan's new justice minister to drop charges against ten Pakistani citizens charged with blasphemy. Those charged included Christian cousins

Sunny Waqas and Noman Masih, young men who are facing possible death sentences and whose families are receiving support from CSI. ■

Dr. Gideon Para-Mallam, a Nigerian pastor, Baroness Caroline Cox, Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State and Dr. John Eibner (left to right) outside the U.K. Houses of Parliament. [csi](#)



■ Emergency aid

Thanks to its strong network of local partners, CSI is able to deliver relief aid quickly when disaster strikes. In 2022, we provided exceptional emergency assistance to victims of the war in Ukraine, the floods in Pakistan, and the famine in South Sudan.

A playground for vulnerable children

In Ukraine, children in particular suffer as a result of the war. In Konotop, a town in the northeast that was under Russian control for several weeks at the beginning of the war,

local CSI partners have set up a playground for children.

CSI's partners in Konotop care for vulnerable children in their town. The new playground in the parish garden is an oasis of peace where the children can unwind. Group activities, such as building a tree hut, help the children process emotional trauma. The project's director, Father Romuald Zagurski, says, "We wanted to make the world a little better for the children. Thank you for your help." Currently, two refugee families are living in Father Zagurski's home. ■



Ukraine: The new playground in the parish garden is an oasis of peace csi



Food aid in South Sudan: mothers wait for a portion of millet. csi



Flooding victims in Pakistan receive emergency aid. csi

**"We wanted to make the world a little better for the children."
Romuald Zagurski, Ukrainian priest**

CSI priorities:

- Providing food, emergency shelter and clothing
- Medical aid
- Psychological support for traumatized people

Thank you!



... but not abandoned. 2 Corinthians 4:9