



The impact of COVID-19 on Christians

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BILLS

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NO
BILLS

"The virus does not discriminate; but its impacts do."

Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General



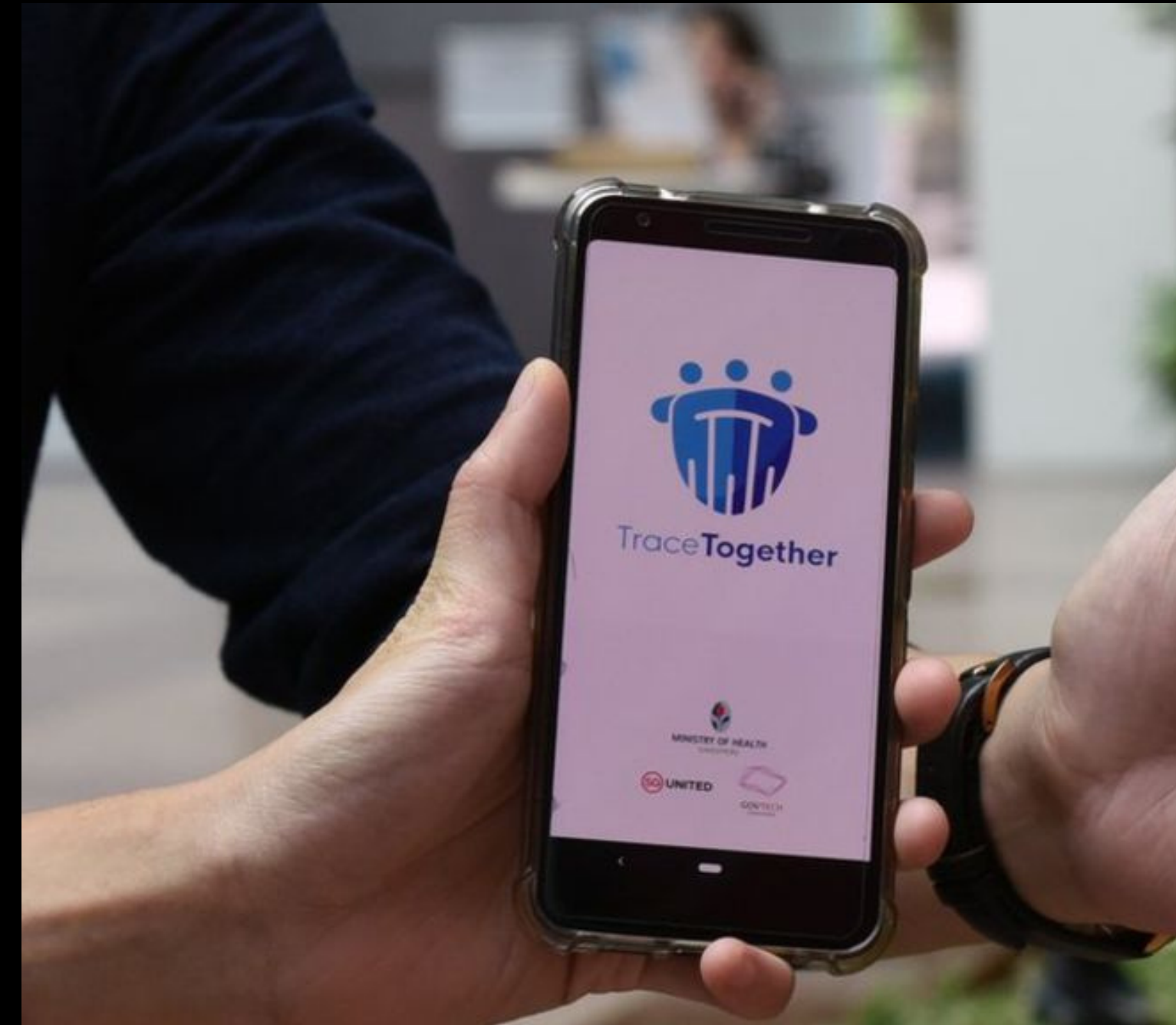
Impact on Christians

- Repression of Christians in restricted countries as a result of growing authoritarianism
- Discrimination
- Rampant hate speech and disinformation
- Scapegoating of religious minorities, especially on social media



Digital surveillance

In the hands of restrictive governments, surveillance technology to gather information to trace movement and track individuals could lead to increased restrictions on minorities and pose serious challenges to human rights.



Growing authoritarianism

The dangerous expansion of power by autocratic governments may be one of the pandemics most enduring legacies.



"Countries disregarding the rule of law in the name of combatting COVID-19 in the guise of exceptional or emergency measures could spark a human rights disaster."

- Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights,





**COVID-19 and
Christians**

Sri Lanka

- Forced cremations in contravention to WHO guidelines
- Hate speech against religious minorities on social media
- Religious profiling of victims in mainstream media
- 40 persons have been arrested on charges of spreading fake news and criticising public officials
- Increased militarisation



- A pastor who defied large group bans and conducted a service was found to be infected with the virus. The service resulted in a cluster of 67 infected individuals. Following this, Christians in Myanmar have been viewed with hostility by the masses.



Myanmar

United Kingdom

- Far-right groups have used the coronavirus crisis to fuel anti-Muslim sentiment.
- According to monitoring groups, fake news has circulated on social media that Muslims were breaching the lockdown by continuing to attend mosques. Moreover, there were also incidents where Muslims were physically assaulted

Anger as right-wing UK voices suggest Ramadan virus spread

Scapegoating narratives may pose additional dangers to public health, warn experts.

by Aina Khan



14 Apr 2020



Somalia

- Al-Shabaab, a terror group active in the country, has used the crisis to fuel hate towards non-Muslims, describing COVID-19 as a punishment on disbelievers
- 99.6 percent of Somalia's population is Muslim.

Coronavirus: Fighting al-Shabab propaganda in Somalia

🕒 2 April 2020

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Coronavirus pandemic



The jihadist group al-Shabab seeks to overthrow Somalia's central government

Muslim clerics in conflict-hit Somalia are moving to the front-line of the battle against coronavirus in a bid to counter the propaganda of militant Islamists, writes BBC Somalia analyst Mary Harper.

- Reports have suggested that Islamist terrorist groups in the country have stepped up plans to target Christians using the COVID-19 lockdowns as a cover
- 7 members of an Islamist terrorist cell suspected of plotting attacks on Christians during curfew were shot dead by police on 14 April

Cairo shootout exploits COVID-19 crisis



The terrorists were planning to exploit the coronavirus crisis. (AFP)

Egypt

Nigeria

- Fulani herdsmen have used the COVID-19 lockdown as a leeway to attack Christians, killing scores in Kaduna

Fulani militants use lockdown “leeway” to kill eight Nigerian Christians 24-hours after earlier atrocity

Fulani militants killed [at least eight Nigerian Christians](#) and injured scores of others in the Kajura Local Government Area of Kaduna State overnight on 12 May, less than 24 hours after 17 Christians were murdered in a similar attack.

In the latest rampage, large numbers of gunmen stormed the villages of Bakin-Kogi, Idanu and Makyali, home to the majority-Christian Adara tribe. Scores of villagers fled their homes into the bush and to neighbouring communities.

Nepal

- A pastor was arrested on charges of misinformation for stating that prayer could heal COVID-19
- He was released and then rearrested on trumped-up charges of outraging religious feelings and proselytism

International

Christian pastor's arrest turns sensitive issue in Nepal

🕒 May 29, 2020 Matters India



Pastor Keshav Acharya

Bangladesh

- There have been reports that the government has provided relief to only Muslims from the Prime Minister's relief fund



Iran

- 2 Christians who were imprisoned for their faith were released from prison owing to the COVID-19 outbreak. Another's court hearing was also postponed, and the accused received a suspended sentence
- Iranian authorities have decided to furlough some 100,000 prisoners to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus

Coronavirus: Iran frees 85,000 prisoners to combat spread of infection

The number of dead from the illness has reached 853 in the country, where a total of 14,991 people have been confirmed infected.



Tom Gillespie

News reporter @TomGillespie1

Tuesday 17 March 2020 10:06, UK

COVID-19

CORONAVIRUS

IRAN



Prayer points:

- Pray that the rights and well-being of Christians and other religious minorities will not be neglected or undermined in the pursuit of a safer world
- Pray for God's protection over Christian communities who are further vulnerable for persecution during the pandemic
- Pray that the authorities would uphold justice and ensure the rights and protection of Christians in restricted countries