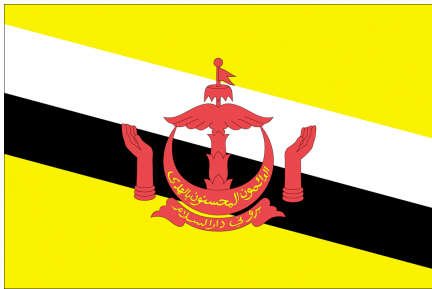


Stop *Fast Track* to Trans-Pacific Partnership Countries' Persecution of Christians



The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a massive international agreement being negotiated by the Obama administration with 11 countries. Countries notorious for persecution of Christians are involved: the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. President Obama wants Congress to delegate to him its constitutional authority over our trade policy under an extreme procedure called "Fast Track." Fast Track would allow Obama to sign the TPP before Congress votes on it. Under Fast Track, Congress cedes control over which countries are included in trade pacts.



The Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam

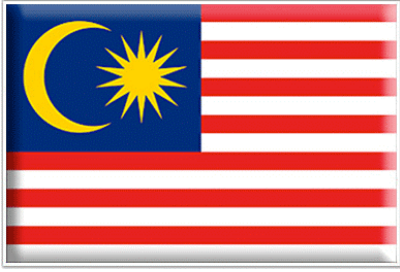
Brunei's constitution states: "The religion of Brunei Darussalam shall be the Muslim religion." Islamic Shari'a law in Brunei supersedes civil law and it regulates all aspects of life.

Local Christians have been arrested and detained for planning outreach to the population. Public celebration of Christmas is forbidden. Brunei ranks 28 on the Open Doors annual World Watch List (WWL) of 50 nations where Christians suffer most for their faith. Christians seeking opportunities for higher education must leave the country to access universities.

Two recognized churches exist. Both are closely watched by police, with spies in nearly every meeting. Christian (expatriate) schools must teach Islam to all students and are forbidden to teach Christianity. It is not possible to buy or bring into Brunei Bibles or Christian books.

U.S. State Dept. International Religious Freedom Report, Brunei country study excerpts:

- The government continued its restrictions on the religious freedom of non-Muslims, as well as Muslims who did not belong to the Shafii school of Sunni Islam. Non-Muslims also faced social and sometimes official pressure to conform to Islamic guidelines regarding behavior and were forbidden to proselytize. The government warned against Christian evangelists.
- There were reports of harassment of clergy, opening of mail, and prohibitions on receiving religious texts for use in schools or houses of worship. There were credible reports that agents of the government's internal security department monitored religious services at Christian churches and that senior church members and leaders were under surveillance.
- The government maintained strict customs controls on importing non-Islamic religious texts such as Bibles, as well as on Islamic religious teaching materials or scriptures intended for sale or distribution. The government routinely censored magazine articles on other faiths, blacking out or removing photographs of crucifixes and other Christian religious symbols.
- The Ministry of Religious Affairs is considering a law on apostasy (conversion from Islam). Reports indicated that some Muslims worried that, if they converted to another religion, they would not be able to live in Brunei for fear of prosecution under the Sharia Penal Code Order of 2012.



Malaysia

Islam is deemed the state religion by the Constitution. All ethnic Malays are considered Muslim by law of the Constitution. Shari'a judges are expected to follow the Shafi'i school of Islam.

Christian converts are taken to isolated camps in order to be forced back to Islam. The Malaysian government calls the facilities "retreat centers". CBN News spoke to one Christian who wanted to remain anonymous, in fear he would be taken back to one of the "faith purification" facilities. "They were clearly angry and they wanted to kill me," he recalled. "They force you to recite Islamic prayers and the Koran, to do all the things you're suppose to do as a Muslim."

Muslims who wish to convert from Islam face severe obstacles. In practice it is very difficult for Muslims to change their religion legally. In 1999 the Malaysian High Court ruled that secular courts have no jurisdiction to hear applications by Muslims to change religions. According to the ruling, the religious conversion of Muslims lies solely within the jurisdiction of Islamic courts.

State Dept. International Religious Freedom Report, Malaysia country study excerpts:

- Portions of the constitution, as well as other laws and policies, place some restrictions on religious freedom and in practice the government generally enforced those restrictions. The constitution gives federal and state governments the power to "control or restrict the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among persons professing the religion of Islam."
- Observers continued to express concern that the secular civil and criminal court system had ceded jurisdictional control to Sharia courts, particularly in areas of family law involving disputes between Muslims and non-Muslims.
- Government policies promote Sunni Islam above other religions. There were reports of societal abuse and discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, including reports of child marriages as an approved practice of Islam.
- The constitution defines ethnic Malays as Muslim from birth. Muslims may not legally convert to other religions except in extremely rare circumstances. With the consent of a Sharia court, the government arrested and detained members of "deviant" groups for "rehabilitation" to the "true path of Islam."
- There were reports of abuses of religious freedom, including reports of detentions. Members of minority religious groups sometimes faced limits on religious expression and demolition of nonregistered non-Muslim shrines. Government representatives or individuals acting on behalf of the government made anti-Semitic statements. The government "Department of Islamic Development Malaysia" (JAKIM) posted weekly sermons on its website as a guideline for government-employed Muslim clerics during Friday prayers at mosques: "Muslims must understand Jews are the main enemy to Muslims." In November a sermon published by JAKIM discussed the "despicable nature" of the Jewish race and stated that "Israel is a nation of ruthless criminals."



The Socialist Republic of Vietnam

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, along with China, Cuba, and Laos, is one of the world's four remaining single-party socialist states officially espousing communism. Its constitution asserts the central role of the Communist Party of Vietnam in all organs of government, politics and society. The General Secretary of the Communist Party performs numerous key administrative and executive functions, controlling the party's national organization and state appointments, as well as setting policy

Ethnic minority Christians in Vietnam increasingly face charges of national security crimes, severe abuse, property confiscation and forced renunciations of faith, according to Human Rights Watch and U.S. members of Congress. In November 2006 the US removed Vietnam from its blacklist of "Countries of Particular Concern", determining that the country was no longer a "serious violator" of religious freedoms as defined by the US 1998 International Religious Freedom Act. However, a Vietnam Human Rights Sanctions Act submitted to the U.S. Congress noted that "despite reported progress in church openings and legal registrations of religious venues, the government of Vietnam has halted most religious reforms since the Department of State lifted the 'country of particular concern' for religious freedom violations designation".

The situation is particularly grim for unregistered ethnic minority Protestant congregations, involving forced renunciations of faith; pressure to join government-recognized religious groups; arrest and harassment; the withholding of social programs provided for the general population; destruction of churches and pagodas; confiscation and destruction of property, and severe beatings.

The Communist government requires churches and denominations to register and seek permission to operate. All "religious meetings" – even a prayer service – require permission from the government. Protestant and Catholic believers have been subject to systematic persecution, torture, and even beheading. The Communist government attacks House churches and Christians. In January 2013, the Communist government bulldozed Hanoi's historic Carmelite Monastery.

State Dept. International Religious Freedom Report, Vietnam country study excerpts:

- The constitution and other laws and policies provide for religious freedom, but in practice, the government regulated and, in some cases, restricted religious freedom. There were continued reports of abuses of religious freedom, including cases involving arrests, detentions, and convictions. Some Christian groups also reported harassment or administrative obstacles when they tried to hold Christmas services.
- There were reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. There were reports of abuses of religious freedom, including religious prisoners and detainees and reports of individuals and congregants being monitored and harassed.
- Individuals and churches affiliated with Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh, including the Vietnam People's Christian Evangelical Fellowship Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and Vietnam, were prevented at times from holding services due to Chinh's strong denunciations of the government and communism. The government continued to claim that Chinh had used his position to

conduct political activities. Chinh was arrested on April 28, 2011 for “sabotaging the great national unity policy,” i.e., for sharing his thoughts with foreign media outlets on political and religious issues and criticizing the government and communism. In July 2012, an appeals court upheld Chinh’s 11 year sentence, announced in March, for sabotaging the nation’s unity policy and for divisive activities. He remained imprisoned in Pleiku City at year’s end.

- In March international media reported that Vietnam revoked visas for a Vatican delegation intent on advancing the beatification of the late Cardinal Francois-Xavier Van Thuan. The Vatican experts planned to speak to people who had known the cardinal. Eglises d’Asie (Churches of Asia), the Paris Foreign Missions Society information agency, cited sources who said the beatification plans had angered Hanoi, whose ties with the Vatican have long been strained. Thuan was the nephew of Ngo Dinh Diem, South Vietnam’s first president. Thuan was forced into exile in Rome after he was freed from a Vietnamese detention camp in 1989. Pope John Paul II later made Thuan a cardinal. There were also reports of restrictions on religious celebrations or expression.

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