

Nepal: Freedom of Religion or Belief

ANNEX 1: Cases of detention of Christians in Nepal and of court cases against them

1. On 1 June 2016, in Charikot, Dolakha District, eight Christians were charged of attempting to convert children to Christianity through the distribution of a comic book which explains the story of Jesus. They were acquitted of all charges in December 2016.²
2. On 21 July 2016, in Salyan, four Christians sentenced for "violence" and "witchcraft" against a severely mentally ill woman whom they sought to heal.³ On 22 September 2017, the high court annulled the conviction.
3. On 22 March 2018, in Nepalganj, Banke district. Sonia Chanda Thakuri and her sister Elina Wod were accused of attempting religious conversion of another person and of destroying Hindu idols. The courts later acquitted the two women.
4. On 30 April 2018, in Chitwan, Devi Rai and another believer were accused of trying to convert a family to Christianity and encouraging to destroy the Hindu idols. She was released after a few days of the arrest.
5. On 8 May 2018, in Nagarjun-4, Sitapaila, in Kathmandu, three ladies, Sumitra Gauli, Radhika Maharjan and Phuldevi Bhattarai were arrested and accused of trying to convert a woman by inducement.
6. On 9 May 2018, in Tehrathum District, six Christians were arrested for sharing their testimonies publicly. On 9 July 2018, the court acquitted them, freeing them and releasing their car which had been impounded.⁴
7. On 19 May 2018, in Belbari-3, Morang, Bhim Bahadur Pradhan and Nabin Kumar Mandal were arrested as they were giving Christian teaching at a home. They were accused of speaking against Hindu gods. They belong to the group Zion, also known as Ahn Sahng-Hong or Witnesses of Jesus Church of God which is neither evangelical nor catholic. They were subsequently released from detention. The case was not taken to court.
8. On 15 June 2018, in Morang, Ms. Deepu Karmachari was arrested on charges of evangelizing. Karmachari, 50, was preaching at the home of Khushbu Kamat when the police received a complaint related to the home gathering. She was detained in custody for one day.
9. On July 2018, Isak Tamang of the Shreejanga Free Church and Pastor Dip Rai of the Chengbung Free Church, as well as David Limbu and Shristi Limbu and Laxmi They were arrested and charged under Article 158 of the Criminal Code of "preaching" in the market of

1 Report submitted by: The World Evangelical Alliance, the Commission of Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches, Baptist World Alliance, Nepal Christian Society, National Christian Fellowship of Nepal, International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief (IPPFoRB) - Nepal Chapter Transformation Nepal, ITEEN, Safe Family Nepal, Religious Liberty Forum – Nepal, Interfaith Peace Federation of Nepal, Network for Christian NGOS Nepal (NECON), and Pax Romana – Nepal.

2 Uncertainty for Religious Minorities as Nepal Celebrates First Anniversary of its Constitution, 20 September 2016, <https://forbinfull.org/2016/09/20/uncertainty-for-religious-minorities-as-nepal-celebrates-first-anniversary-of-its-constitution/>

3 Nepali church leaders found guilty of 'witchcraft' and 'violence' for helping mentally ill woman, 22 December 2016, <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/12/nepali-church-leaders-found-guilty-of-witchcraft-and-violence-for-helping-mentally-ill-woman/>; 2017 International Religious Freedom Report of the United States Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2017-report-on-international-religious-freedom/>

4 2018 International Religious Freedom Report of the United States Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-report-on-international-religious-freedom/>; Christians in Nepal Suspect Hindu Extremists in Sudden Attacks on Churches, 21 May 2018, <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/05/christians-in-nepal-suspect-hindu-extremists-in-sudden-attacks-on-churches/>

- Sakranti Bazar of Aathrai city in Terhthum District, Taplejung. They were detained for 14 days, released with a bail of 5,000 Rupees each (equivalent to USD 500). Later in August, the court cleared them of all charges.⁵
10. On 6 July 2018, in Kathmandu, Devera Richard (Filipino citizen), and his wife Rita Gongga (Indonesian citizen) were deported on the charge of being involved in religious activities while holding business visas, with restriction to enter Nepal for one year, their business visa was also canceled. Both were staff members of Sigma Restaurant Pulchowk, a restaurant run by a Singaporean Christian in Kathmandu. They worshiped in Every Nation Church, Kumaripati.
 11. On 2 September 2018, in Palpa, a police officer was arrested for giving his testimony in a multi-faith religious gathering while he was on leave. Mr. Gurung had become practicing Sachchai believer four years prior. His superiors there have decided to withhold his departmental promotion for five years as punishment.⁶
 12. On 4 November 2018, in Butwal, four Christian women, two of whom were Japanese, were arrested in Nepal on charges of trying to convert Dalits and nomads without land to Christianity by force.⁷
 13. On 22 February 2019, the organization Youth With A Mission and 10 people from seven other countries visiting villages in Baglung and distributing bibles were questioned by the police and asked to appear at the district headquarters the next day. The following morning, the police asked again about the purpose of their visit. The police asked them to leave the place without further distribution.
 14. On 7 April 2019, in Bhairahawa, Rupandehi, two Japanese nationals and a Nepali citizen were arrested with a charge of religious conversion. The report on Annapurna Post said these two Japanese were in Nepal with student visas and involved in conversion. They were Jehovah Witnesses.
 15. On 23 April 2019, at 8 a.m., the Nepalese police arrested four people in Hotel Doko, Ghorahi, Dang District. The four arrested were Mr. Dilliram Poudel, Secretary General of the Nepal Christian Society (an associate member of the World Evangelical Alliance), Indian citizen Mr. Gurab Shribastav, Nepali citizen Ms. Kunsang Tamang, and a United States national, Ms. Leanna Cinquanta. Their Bibles and personal belongings, including cash and laptops, were confiscated by the police. Those arrested, with the exception of the American citizen, were taken to court on charges related to religious conversion and distribution of Christian material, despite the fact that they were conducting meetings and training with pastors on 22 and 23 April, at a local church. On 29 April, after a court hearing that lasted almost all day, all three detainees were released. The American citizen was not deported and was released in the evening of 24 April by the immigration office in Kathmandu. In February 2020, the courts dropped all charges against the four Christians.
 16. On 30 May 2019, in Lalitpur, Pastor Hari Tamang was charged with an attempt to covert children. He had an ongoing case in the Supreme Court and had been freed on bail, but the police in Lalitpur arrested him without a reason and kept him in custody from 30 May to 2 June 2019. He case is pending at the Supreme Court in Nepal.
 17. During June 2019, in Dharan, Sunsari District, a Christian boy named Ashik from Dharan was accused of killing a cow. He and two of his friends were attempting to remove the dead

5 Pressure on Christians Heats Up in Nepal, 11 July 2018, <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/07/pressure-on-christians-heats-up-in-nepal/>; and the 2018 International Religious Freedom Report of the United States Department of State

6 He is reported as a Christian but mainline churches in Nepal do not recognize this group called "Sachchai" as Christian. This group gives emphasis on healing by prayer and discourage sick people to go to medical facilities; Policeman Punished for Talking about Christ at Public Religious Meeting in Nepal, 30 October 2018, <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/10/policeman-punished-for-talking-about-christ-at-public-religious-meeting-in-nepal/>

7 Kathmandu, four Christians arrested for 'forced conversion' of dalit, 6 November 2018, <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Kathmandu,-four-Christians-arrested-for-'forced-conversion'-of-dalit-45396.html>

- animal from the river side. Authorities kept the boy in custody and set his bail for the equivalent of \$743. The court has yet to decide on this case.
18. On 21 June 2019, the police detained an American citizen Bradley Navarro Anagaran in Bansgadhi, Bardiy, found to be in possession of discipleship leaflets. Pastor Hira Singh Sunar went to the police station to get information on the case and was arrested immediately. They were taken to court and their detention was extended for one week for investigation before being released. Both were charged with attempt to convert. The court has yet to decide on this case.
 19. On 23 July 2019, in Pokhara, Kaski district, a Christian from South Korea, Cho Yusang, was arrested on charges of “attempting to convert,” for allegedly distributing leaflets and Bibles.⁸ Aged 73, his health deteriorated after he was incarcerated, and he was hospitalized while in detention. He was released on bail on August 7. In Nepal on a business visa, Cho was also charged with misuse of visa. On 6 February 2020, the courts cleared him from all charges.
 20. In September 2019, police arrested Daya Nepali, 47, from Ananta Jeevan Church, and Maya Maharjan, 42, and her son Dipes Maharjan, 28, from their home Laxminagar-4, Butwal, Rupandehi . They were accused of charges related to witchcraft, following the dissemination of a video of prayer at a church. They were released on bail after several days of detention. On 6 November 2019, a court cleared the three persons of all charges.

8 Foreign Christians Arrested on Charges of ‘Converting’ in Nepal, 8 August 2019, <https://morningstarnews.org/2019/08/foreign-christians-arrested-on-charges-of-converting-in-nepal/>