

# Success Stories

## Recent cases where HRWF campaigned and helped achieve positive results

### **18 September 2017: Mahvash Sabet, one of the Baha'i Seven is released**

Baha'i leader, Mahvash Sabet, was released from prison in Iran after serving 10 years behind bars because of her faith. She is the first of seven imprisoned Baha'i leaders to be released. The remaining six are still behind bars. HRWF has been closely following the case and campaigning for their release. You can help by joining our campaign [here](#).

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### **13 September 2017: Gregorian Bivolaru released from prison in Romania**

Mr. Bivolaru, a yoga teacher imprisoned in Romania and a political refugee in Sweden, was released today before the end of his term. He had been arrested in France last year and imprisoned on fabricated charges. HRWF had carried out a fact-finding mission about his yoga movement (MISA) in Romania, published a report and campaigned for his release.

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### **27 February 2017: Petr Jašek released from sudanese prison**

Czech Christian aid worker, Petr Jašek, has been released from prison in Sudan after being pardoned and freed by President Omar Bashir. The release apparently comes after the Czech Foreign Minister, Lubomir Zaoralek, visited Sudan this past weekend.

Petr Jašek, 52, was originally detained in December 2015 and in January 2017, was sentenced to 23  $\frac{1}{2}$  years in prison for various charges including waging war against the state, violating restrictions in military areas, spreading rumors to defame the state, and inciting strife between communities.

We had largely publicized his case and conducted a campaign for his release: [See our campaign's page for his release](#)

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## **6 December 2016: Eight Christians acquitted and released**

Eight Christians in Charikot, Nepal, who were accused of attempting to convert children to Christianity through the distribution of a comic book, were acquitted on 6 December.

Mr Prakash Pradhan, Mr Bimal Shahi, Ms Banita Dangol, Mr Balkrishna Rai, Mr Philip Tamang, Mr Kiran Dahal, Mr Bhimsen Tiwari and Mr Shakti Pakhrin had been arrested in June this year.

We had largely publicized their case and mentioned them on our list of religious prisoners on our website: [See prisoner's list for Nepal](#)

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## **1 July 2016: Kidnapping and deprogramming of converts to new religious movements coming to an end in Japan**

Since the beginning of 2015 up to now, no more convert to the Unification Church and Jehovah's Witnesses has been kidnapped and confined by family members for the purpose of forceful de-conversion.

Since the 1980s until the publication of HRWF Int'l report "Japan: Abduction and Deprivation of Freedom for the Purpose

of Religious De-Conversion” (2011), thousands of converts had been abducted with the help of Evangelical/ Pentecostal pastors and confined for weeks, months or years in some cases to force them to recant their new faith. HRWF Int’l had also filed a complaint with the UN Human Rights Committee in Geneva.

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## **29 June 2016: Exploitation of North Korean Overseas workers in Poland raised at the European Parliament**

The publication and presentation of a report by HRWF Int’l on the exploitation of North Korean overseas workers at the European Parliament in 2014 have since then led to

- an exceptional TV report on the issue : <http://www.vice.com/nl/video/cash-for-kim-de-noord-korea-anse-dwargarbeiders-die-zich-doodwerken-in-polen-293>
  - and a parliamentary question at the European Parliament: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=P-2016-004172&language=EN>
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## **8 March 2016: Decision of the Supreme Court of Nepal finally implemented by the authorities (Nepal)**

On 2nd March 2016, on request of HRWF Nepal, HRWF Int’l widely distributed a newsletter entitled [“Government of Nepal reluctant in implementing a decision of the Supreme Court”](#). The issue was the long-standing failure of the Office of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers, Ministry of Home Affairs and Police Headquarters to promote four Deputy Inspector Generals (DIGs) in the post of Additional Inspector General of Police (AIGP) as per the Directives of the Supreme Court.

Six days after the newsletter, these DIGs were promoted to the post of AIGP by the meeting of the Council of Ministers of Nepal.

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### **25 March 2016: Released from house arrest (Moldova)**

Four days after the publication of our report “Religious Freedom: Moldova in the Dock” and its wide distribution worldwide including in Moldova, Mihai Calestru and Oleg Savencov were released from house arrest.

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### **3 February 2016: Release from prison into house arrest (Moldova)**

A Moldovan court today denied a Prosecution appeal and upheld the 28 January decision to release into house arrest Mihai Calestru and Oleg Savencov, two members of the Unification Church who have been charged with trafficking in human beings. Both men were jailed on 30 October 2015, charged with trafficking in human beings.

Human Rights Without Frontiers and the Forum for Religious Freedom-Europe, investigated the charges against the two men in January 2016 in Moldova and found them to be baseless.

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### **16 January 2016: Release of Pastor Saeed Abedini (Iran)**

Abedini, a U.S. citizen sentenced to 8 years in prison in 2013, was released on 16 January along with three other detained Americans: former Marine Amir Hekmati, and Nosratollah Khosavi-Roodsari, The Washington Post reported.

The four Americans were released by Iran in exchange for at

least six people imprisoned by the United States and also ahead of the nearing implementation of the July 2015 historic nuclear deal between Tehran and six world powers. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani had previously said that Abedini would not be released until 19 Iranian prisoners held in the U.S. are granted their freedom.

Pastor Abedini had been sentenced to eight years in prison for endangering national security by aiding underground Evangelical churches. On 25th August 2014, his appeal for a reduction of his sentence was rejected.

*HRWF Int'l, together with other NGOs, had campaigned for the release of this prisoner by:*

- regularly informing the US State institutions members of the European Parliament and Parliaments of EU member states about his case
- keeping him on his Prisoners' List:  
<http://hrwf.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/FoRB-and-Blasphemy-Prisoners-list-2014.pdf> (p 56)