**Pakistan** has raised the minimum age of marriage for Christians from 13 (for women) and 16 (for men) to 18 (in force from July 2024). The aim is to help curb early marriages and the abuse of minors, although the previous limits were not always enforced. Also in Pakistan, a 22-year-old Christian, Ahsan Raja Masih, was sentenced to death for blasphemy over a social media post made after anti-Christian riots in Jaranwala city in August 2023.

In May 2024 a **Hong** **Kong** court convicted 14 pro-democracy campaigners of subversion in the largest case so far since China's National Security Law was introduced. They could face life imprisonment when sentenced later in the year and are among 47 activists charged with trying to overthrow the government by organising an unofficial preliminary election in 2020 to pick candidates to run for office.

Islamist radicals killed at least 80 Christians in a spate of attacks in the North Kivu province of **Democratic Republic of Congo** in early June. (DRC). The victims were members of various churches.

Caritas **Salford** and the Diocese of Salford (UK) have launched a pilot scheme to prevent modern slavery in conjunction with the Santa Marta Group. Caritas Bakhita have also released a report on its centre documenting the impact of its work and services on its former guests, the victims of modern slavery.

Bishop Rolando Alvarez of Matagalpa made his first public appearance in Spain (June 2024) since being deported from **Nicaragua** in January. He had featured in several appeals by ACAT members for his release after he had been imprisoned for speaking up for human rights in Nicaragua.

Two Ukrainian Greek Orthodox priests were included in a recent exchange of prisoners between **Ukraine** and **Russia** that had been facilitated by the Vatican following a peace summit in Switzerland in June 2024. The Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church had accused their Russin captors of mistreatment and torture.