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Fall 2025

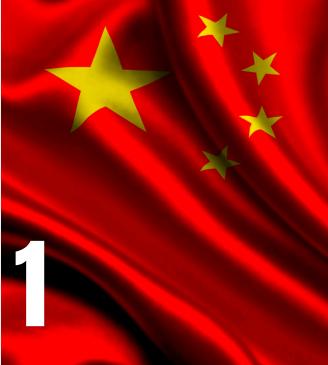
The Persecution Security Brief

*A quarterly briefing for
security leaders and
organizational executives
analyzing five global
persecution incidents and
identifying practical lessons
learned that decrease
vulnerability and reduce
impact in restricted access
ministry.*

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China: 18 Zion Church leaders formally arrested for illegally using information networks (Nov 18 20, 2025)

Incident:

Police in Beihai (Guangxi) formally arrested 18 leaders from Zion Church, an unregistered Protestant house church, on charges tied to alleged illegal online activity.

<https://www.csw.org.uk/2025/11/20/press/6670/article.htm>

Analysis:

This is a familiar administrative-to-criminal progression: authorities use tech/online statutes to make ordinary discipleship and teaching look like network crimes. The threat isn't only detention it's church mapping devices, contact graphs, chat groups, giving records, and travel patterns become evidence and lead to wider roll-ups.

Security ideas & mitigation:

Decrease Vulnerability: Keep devices clean when crossing jurisdictions; limit sensitive data at rest (encrypted, minimal retention).

Reduce Impact: Reduce digital blast radius: compartment communications (separate groups by function), minimize member lists, and assume anything online teaching adjacent can be construed as illegal religious activity. Care for detainees & church continuity: pre-plan lawyer/family liaison roles, medical advocacy for vulnerable detainees, and leadership redundancy (distributed teaching, rotating facilitators, cell resilience so the church can continue without one visible hub).



Sudan: Two historic churches vandalized with Islamic slogans in Port Sudan (reported Nov 28 / Dec 6, 2025)

Incident:

Two of Sudan's oldest churches located in Port Sudan were vandalized with graffiti including Islamic declarations painted in public raising fears during the Advent season and amid the ongoing war context.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/churches-vandalized-in-sudan-with-islamic-shahadah-written-on-walls/ar-AA1RvRuQ>

Analysis:

This appears to be intimidation messaging: "you are exposed, watched, and unwelcome." In conflict settings like Sudan, Christian communities can become soft targets for signaling, scapegoating, or opportunistic harassment especially when rule of law is thin and security forces are stretched.

Security ideas & mitigation:

Decrease vulnerability: adopt low-signature gathering practices (variable times/routes, discreet entry/exit, no posted schedules), reinforce basic physical security (lighting, simple barriers, watch rotations), and avoid predictable holiday patterns that spike exposure.

Reduce impact: document incidents safely (photos after the fact, metadata stripped), coordinate with trusted civil-society advocates, and provide trauma care for congregants. If visible church buildings are repeatedly targeted, shift some functions to distributed home fellowships until the threat posture improves.



Nigeria (Kogi State): Armed attackers abduct pastor, wife, and worshipers during service (Dec 3, 2025)

Incident:

Armed bandits attacked a church service in Ejiba, Kogi, abducting a pastor, his wife, and worshipers.

<https://persecution.org/2025/12/03/terrorists-kidnap-pastor-wife-and-others-during-church-service-in-kogi>

Analysis:

This is an opportunistic-to-strategic kidnapping risk: churches are predictable gatherings with limited protection, and abductors increasingly treat them as high-yield, low-resistance targets. For ministries, the hardest part is that the local church must keep meeting, so the answer can't be to stop meeting. The answer rests in smarter patterns and layered protection.

Security ideas & mitigation:

Decrease vulnerability: implement a simple church security SOP: controlled entry points, volunteer lookouts, parked vehicles oriented for exit, no single predictable service time, and a scatter plan rehearsed discreetly (how people disperse safely if guns appear).

Reduce impact: establish a crisis management protocol before an incident to include family liaison, verification channel to prevent ransom scams, coordination with trusted local intermediaries, and pastoral care for the traumatized congregation. Provide post-incident support that doesn't expose the church to further targeting (quiet assistance, not publicity).



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Nigeria (Kwara State): Attack on Christ Apostolic Church worshipers killed and pastor abducted (Nov 19, 2025)

Incident:

Armed men attacked a Christ Apostolic Church congregation in Eruku, Kwara, killing worshipers and abducting others including the pastor.

<https://businessday.ng/news/article/bandits-attack-kwara-church-kill-three-and-abduct-worshippers-during-livestream/>

Analysis:

This is a reminder that safe states can shift fast; violence follows mobility corridors and ransom economics. The threat isn't only the attacker, it's the aftershock: fear fractures the church, leaders relocate, and the community witness is disrupted long-term.

Security ideas & mitigation:

Decrease vulnerability: treat gatherings as events requiring risk controls: perimeter awareness, vetted volunteers, layered communications (whistle/hand signals + phone tree), and a rapid shelter/evac decision point. Avoid broadcasting pastor travel plans; keep leader movements varied.

Reduce impact: build leadership depth so no single kidnapping collapses ministry (co-teaching, shared authority, etc.). Prepare care pathways for widows/orphans and survivors and coordinate discreetly with other churches for mutual aid and safe hosting of displaced families.



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Iran: Christian prisoner denied medical treatment after spinal fracture (Nov 13, 2025)

Incident:

ICC reported an Iranian Christian prisoner with a spinal fracture being denied adequate medical care; the report links detention to Christian activities (worship practices).

<https://wncri.org/2025/11/05/ayda-najaflou-deliberate-denial/>

Analysis:

In restricted-access countries, persecution often presents itself through bureaucratic cruelty: medical neglect, delayed hearings, and pressure that breaks bodies and communities quietly. The security lesson is that arrest is not the end-state the detention environment itself becomes the weapon, and families/church networks are then targeted through surveillance and intimidation.

Security ideas & mitigation:

Decrease vulnerability: reduce discoverable organized church signals smaller, rotating groups; careful vetting; strict need-to-know membership awareness; and rigorous device hygiene for those connecting believers (especially converts).

Reduce impact: pre-plan detainee support that does not endanger others: legal advocacy via trusted channels, medical documentation, and family support routed through discreet intermediaries. For organizations, keep contingency funds and a care cell model so support continues even if one node is compromised.



Lessons and Considerations in Restricted Access Environments:

- Audit digital footprint of local partners and leaders (what could be used as evidence or leverage).
- Review church gathering SOPs especially entry control and response to armed intrusion.
- Confirm detention response plans (legal, medical, family care, communications authority).
- Brief teams on visibility discipline as an act of love toward local believers, not fear.
- Lowering visibility, sharing leadership, and planning for suffering is not retreat; this is how the Church endures and remains present without sacrificing its people.

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Concilium Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit ministry promoting a biblical understanding of best practices in personal and corporate security, threat analysis, and security-risk and crisis management, empowering the broader ministry of Christians around the world.

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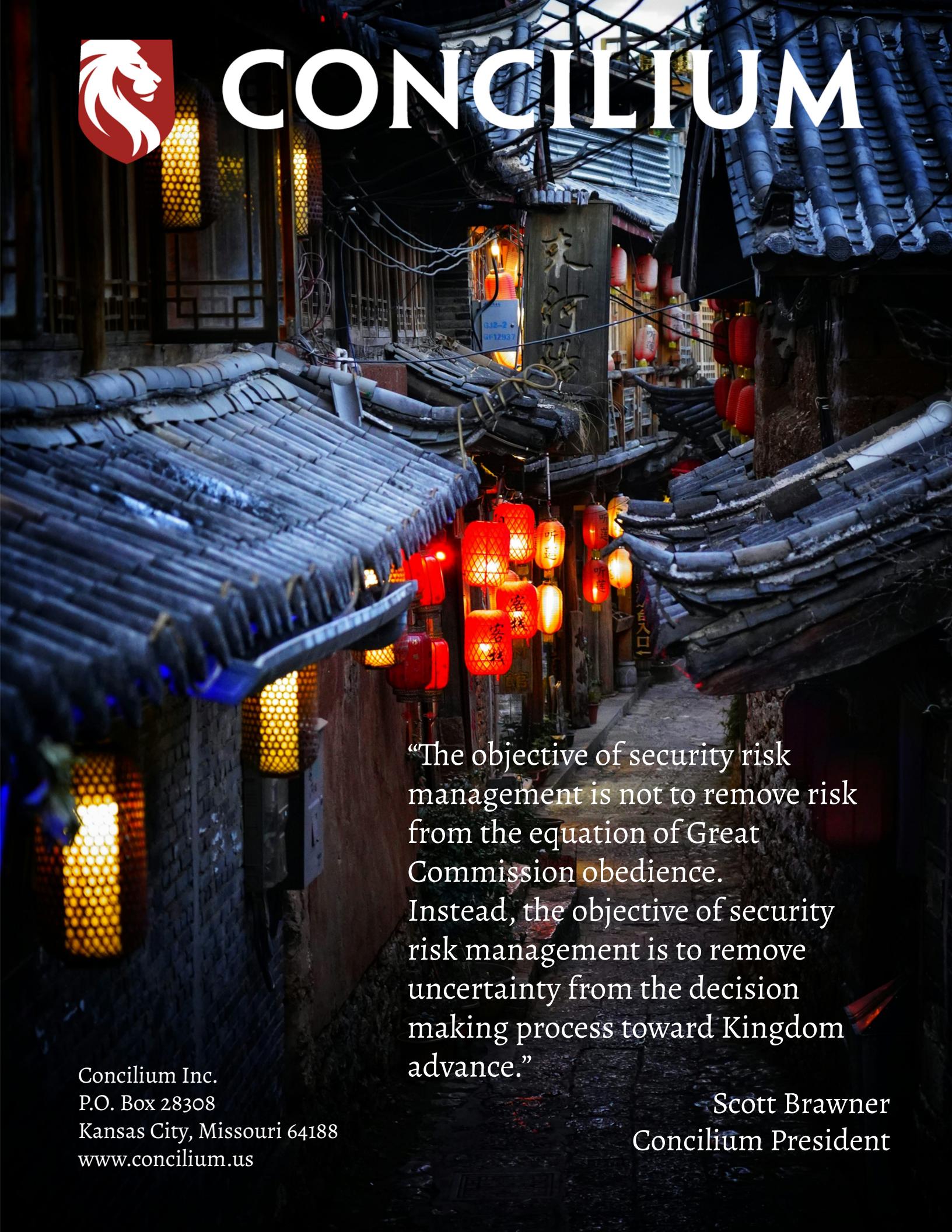
Contact Concilium directly at info@concilium.us



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“The objective of security risk management is not to remove risk from the equation of Great Commission obedience. Instead, the objective of security risk management is to remove uncertainty from the decision making process toward Kingdom advance.”

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