

"Persecution is a price worth paying for the Lord. We would rather live through it than to hide our faith. We hope more Chinese churches will speak up and stand with us."
~ Li Yingqiang, elder of Early Rain Covenant Church

CHINA: Over A Hundred Arrested

Sources: ChinaAid, Wall Street Journal, South China Morning Post, Fox News

On the evening of December 9th, police in Chengdu, Sichuan, began a coordinated attack on members of the Early Rain Covenant Church. Throughout the night and the next day, homes were raided and church members dragged away. Thus far, around a hundred church leaders and seminary students have been arrested. Some who have since been released claim that they were abused and deprived of food and water while in custody.

At last report, more than 80 believers are being held, including over 50 students. The pastor, Wang Yi, is facing charges of "inciting subversion of state power." If convicted, he could face up to 15 years in prison. He has not yet been able to meet with lawyers or family members.

Pastor Wang's mother remains under 24-hour surveillance, along with her 11-year-old grandson. His assistant, Li Yingqiang, had been posting updates about the crackdown online but has now been detained for allegedly inciting trouble on the Internet. At least ten others, including Wang's wife, also face charges.



Pastor Wang Yi
Photo: Early Rain Covenant Church (Facebook)

While most of China's house churches operate underground, the Early Rain congregation has been more open, posting sermons online and evangelizing in the streets. In addition to overseeing 100 seminary students and a small primary school, the church's meetings around the city attract more than 800 people each week.

According to ChinaAid, persecution of the church throughout China has increased significantly. There have been more than 10,000 cases of detention thus far in 2018; more than triple the year before. For more information on the challenges facing churches in different parts of China, go to our [country report](#).

Lift up Pastor Wang Li, his family and their congregation to the Lord during this time of trial. Remember those in custody, as well as others from the church who are facing the uncertainty of what tomorrow may bring. Pray for the continued outreach in Chengdu and throughout China. Ask God to minister to the hearts of the governmental leaders, including President Xi Jinping, so that the country's Christians can serve their communities peacefully and without constraint.

Share a Prayer



EGYPT: Facebook Post Leads to Three Years' Imprisonment

Sources: International Christian Concern, World Watch Monitor



The Saint Tadros Church in Menbal.
Photo: World Watch Monitor

Abdo Adel Bebawy, 43, has been sentenced to three years in prison for "insulting Islam" following a Facebook post which led to riots in July (see [this report](#)). At the time of his original post, friends explained that Abdo was not very literate and did not fully understand what he had posted.

While the sentence is for three years, many in the community believe the harsh ruling is to prevent more mob violence. A lawyer familiar with the case anticipates that the sentence may be overturned or reduced on appeal. This appeal is expected to be heard in late December.

Remember Abdo in your prayers as he now faces this sentence. Pray that the appeal will be successful. May the courts and leaders of the country seek to provide safety and equality for all citizens, regardless of their religion.

Share a Prayer



PRAISE REPORT

INDIA: New Attacks Signify Growth

Source: VOM Australia

According to Christian leaders in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, a significant increase in attacks on Christians is part of a planned campaign by Hindu nationalist leaders.

According to the leader of a church planting network, an average of four or five churches are attacked every day, and the number of arrests of Christians is unprecedented. In addition, the offices of some Christian organizations have also been attacked.

The attacks, the Christian leader explained, are the result of rapid church growth in the region. House churches have grown dramatically, with several serving thousands of members each week. "The church is bigger than the Hindu nationalist leaders knew," he said. "The church has become too big to ignore."



Photo: VOM Australia

Praise God for this growth! Pray for continued strength and endurance of the church leaders and their congregations in the face of persecution.

If you would like to post a prayer of praise or petition on behalf of our persecuted family around the globe, visit [VOMC's prayer wall](#).



The Persecution & Prayer Alert is a ministry of:
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For information on additional ways to support members of the persecuted church overseas, review this [listing of options](#).