

***"Continue to remember those in prison  
as if you were together with them...  
and those who are ill-treated as if you  
yourselves were suffering."***

~ Hebrews 13:3 NIVUK

### **CHINA: Churches Ordered to Replace Cross**

Source: ChinaAid

Churches throughout Jiangxi received a warning in early July from authorities demanding that all crosses be removed, and instead they were to be replaced with the national flag or an image of Chinese President Xi Jinping. The warning also demanded that they keep all children away from church.

The response from churches was mixed. Many were too frightened to speak up and others openly refused to obey the orders. In retaliation, government agents demolished the cross of one church building in Xinyu, and another received a notice of intent to do the same. During a service at Kaixuan Church, two officials interrupted the believers' worship, demanding that the cross no longer be displayed. Church leaders were able to speak with them and diffuse the situation.

When confronted about children in the church, Liu, the leader of the Kaixuan Church, wisely responded with this statement: "Your policy is in conflict with the Constitution. When the children are born, they are citizens of the People's Republic of China, and they have freedom of belief. Children's freedom of belief cannot be interfered with. They can follow their parents' beliefs."

***Pray for wisdom and guidance on the part of the church leaders in Jiangxi as they deal with these unreasonable demands. May their responses be expressed with gentleness, serving as a testimony of God's grace to those opposing them and a means of demonstrating the truth of the Living Christ.***



These believers have been asked to replace their cross.  
Photo: ChinaAid

Share a Prayer



### **EGYPT: Facebook Post Leads to Attacks**

Source: World Watch Monitor



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

An attack by a mob of Muslim militants in the village of Menbal left Coptic Christians hiding in their homes while security forces patrolled the streets in an effort to restore peace. At last report, the situation in the village 225 kilometres south of Cairo remained tense.

The violence began after Muslim villagers accused one of the Copts of publishing a Facebook post which insulted Islam. In the July 5th post, Abdo Adel compared Muhammad with Jesus. As a result of the post, charges were filed against him and he was remanded in custody pending further investigation.

On the evening of July 9th, villagers began pelting the Coptic-owned homes with stones and bricks while shouting and chanting. Some of the victims suffered minor injuries. Attackers attempted to break into a church but were stopped when security forces fired into the air. Regional security officers had to be called to help stop the violence.

After security forces were finally able to restore order, a curfew was imposed from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. Police have arrested 90 Muslim villagers. Friends of Abdo explain that he is not very literate, resulting in a post that he did not fully understand: "He is not good at reading and writing, and he is not good at dealing with his Facebook page in the best way, which put him and the village in this crisis."

***Pray that peace will be fully restored in the area, and that any hard feelings between villagers will be replaced with compassion, forgiveness and understanding. Pray that these victimized Christians will be able to use this situation as an opportunity to share the love of Christ with those around them. Pray that justice will be done for those responsible for the violence.***

Share a Prayer



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## PRISONER UPDATE

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### PAKISTAN: Pray for Long-Term Prisoners

Sources: The Voice of the Martyrs Canada, Mission Network News

During the summer of 2009, two Pakistani Christians were falsely accused of blasphemy. Nine years later, both remain in prison, separated from loved ones as they await court rulings.

On July 1st, 2009, Imran Ghafur was accused of blasphemy when burned Quranic papers were found on the floor of his shop. Coincidentally, according to witnesses, a nearby Muslim shop owner had recently become jealous because of Imran's success. In January 2010, Imran was sentenced to life imprisonment. Due to the high-profile nature of this case, the court has not initiated a hearing date for Imran.

While in prison, Imran has turned to the Lord for encouragement. In 2012, it was reported that he would frequently sing and pray long into the night. Sometimes Muslim prisoners would join along in the singing, also asking him to pray for them ([see this report](#)).

A recent report from a VOMC source says that Imran has also found encouragement through his Bible devotional times and by reading Richard Wurmbrand's testimony, *Tortured for Christ (TFC)*. "Whenever I get depressed, I reread TFC and it encourages me to stay faithful," he testifies. His father passed away this past spring and his mother is not well. Please uphold Imran and his family in your prayers during this lengthy ordeal.



Imran Ghafur



Asia Bibi

Another believer, arrested just days before Imran, is Asia Bibi. On June 19th, 2009, Asia was in an intense discussion with coworkers about her faith. During the discussion, she reportedly told them, "Our Christ is the true prophet of God and yours is not true." As a result, she was sentenced to death for blasphemy. For extensive coverage on Asia's situation, [click here](#).

On April 21st of this year, Pakistan's Chief Justice stated that he would personally preside over a hearing for Asia and that the decision would come in July ([read more](#)). As we're now nearing the end of July, we ask that you pray fervently for Asia's release.

*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](#). Another effective way to serve the persecuted is through volunteering. For more information, check the [Volunteer Page](#).*



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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](#).