

"Not all of us are called to die a martyr's death, but all of us are called to have the same spirit of self-sacrifice and love to the very end as these martyrs had."

~ Richard Wurmbrand

CHINA: Arrests of Inquiring Loved Ones

Source: China Aid

Five relatives were taken into custody after gathering outside a police station to ask about their loved ones on February 15th.

On December 9th, around 100 members of the Early Rain Covenant Church, located in the city of Chengdu, had been taken into custody (see [this report](#)). At last report, several were still imprisoned. Concerned about the condition of their detained loved ones, and wanting more information, family members gathered outside the police station with their small children.

As officers monitored them, one Christian heard the officials debating about whether to arrest them. At around 8 p.m. that evening, four spouses – along with a child from one of the families – were taken into custody and accused of "illegal gathering."

Continue to lift up the many Christians imprisoned in China for their faith. Pray that concerned family members will receive greatly needed news of their detained loved ones. Ask the Lord to strengthen and encourage each of these separated families. Likewise, may those who are imprisoned also be able to rest in the knowledge that their family members at home are in the hands of a loving God.



Children meet at Early Rain Covenant Church.
Photo: China Aid

UZBEKISTAN: Woman Killed for Her Faith

Source: Barnabas Fund



Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Photo: Wikipedia / Atilin (e)

A Christian mother in Uzbekistan was killed by her husband on February 9th because she had recently accepted Christ. The attack happened at the Tashkent airport as she was attempting to flee the country.

Problems for "Umida" (not her real name) began when her husband discovered that she had asked a friend for a Bible. In addition to locking Umida in their home to prevent her from going to church, he also banned her from seeing their two-year-old son. Eventually she was able to go live with her parents, along with their daughter. While living there, Umida attended church but continued to face threats.

In a final move to find safety, the threatened woman attempted to leave the country. While at the airport, she was confronted by her husband who ruthlessly slit her throat. Friends are asking for prayer on behalf of Umida's grieving parents, as well as her distraught children.

Pray for God's comfort and strength to sustain Umida's parents, children and friends. May justice in this case prevail. Also lift up this woman's husband to Christ, that he will come to realize the seriousness of what he has done, along with an understanding of the truth contained in God's Word which speaks volumes of His saving grace.

REPORT UPDATE

NIGERIA: One Year of Captivity for Leah

Source: International Christian Concern

On February 19th, 2018, members of a Boko Haram faction entered the town of Dapchi and ordered 110 schoolgirls into trucks. (An initial report on the abduction is [available here](#).) Just over a year later, one of these girls remains in captivity because of her Christian faith.

The original attack reflected the group's opposition to any formal education, particularly when granted to girls. A month after the attack, 104 of the students were released with strong warnings to stay away from school. Five had unfortunately died during the incident. However, one of the surviving girls, Leah Sharibu, was denied freedom from captivity.

The only Christian in the group, Leah was singled out by the terrorists. They told the young believer that she would be released if she denied her faith in Christ. Even still, Leah refused to compromise. In the months to follow, the terrorists made demands for a ransom payment. Yet, in October, they issued a statement that Leah would be kept as a "slave for life" instead. Since then, there has been little to no communication about her.

On the anniversary of her captivity, a representative of the Leah Sharibu Foundation stated, "We cannot forget about her today. Petition God, in prayer and fasting, for Leah's release and freedom of religion."

Please join along with others around the world in intercession for Leah's safe release, as well as other captives who are being held by Boko Haram. May the Lord use this teen girl's unwavering testimony to encourage believers throughout Nigeria, while also speaking to the hearts of her captors. As Nigeria faces presidential elections this weekend, pray that God's Spirit will move among the country's leadership, encouraging these governmental leaders to stand firmly against the inhumane actions of rebel groups.

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](#).



Militants released this photo of Leah Sharibu in August, 2018.

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The Voice of the Martyrs Canada, P.O. Box 608, Streetsville, Ontario, L5M 2C1
Tel. (905) 670-9721 Website: www.vomcanada.com

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