

"When writing to the Corinthian church, the Apostle Paul shared...that the persecution was so severe, he and his companions 'despaired of life itself.' However, (they were) helped by the prayers of believers."
~ P.F. Chia, referencing 2 Corinthians 1:8-11

Did you know that The Voice of the Martyrs Canada produces one-minute audio features that are broadcast across the country, many of them based on these weekly prayer requests? You can listen to the "Persecution Alerts" by tuning to your local Christian radio station or access them [through our website](#).

BURKINA FASO: Dozens Killed in Recent Attacks

Sources: International Christian Concern, Barnabas Fund

A major humanitarian crisis is taking place in the African nation of Burkina Faso, as Islamic militants slaughter innocent civilians and force many others to flee. Estimates indicate that more than 500,000 people have been displaced in the past year alone. Two recent attacks highlight this ongoing violence which is often targeted against Christians.

On January 25th, an attack happened in the village of Silgadji, the same city where a pastor and five others were assassinated last April after refusing to deny their Christian faith. (A report on this previous incident may be [reviewed here](#).)

Armed militia surrounded people in the village market. Separating the men from the women, they ordered the women to leave the village and then proceeded to kill the men. While the final numbers are yet to be determined, the death toll could be as high as 50. According to one contact, the gunmen drove through the town threatening to kill anyone who would not convert to Islam.

On February 1st, at least 18 people were killed in the town of Lamdamol. The unidentified militants arrived late at night on motorcycles and selectively picked out civilians before killing them. One of the victims was Robert Milogo, a Christian nurse who had travelled to the area despite the danger to provide medical assistance.

In the aftermath of these and other attacks, please pray that the Lord will minister greatly needed comfort and strength to the families and friends who are grieving the loss of dear loved ones. Ask Him to protect the Christians remaining in the area, whether they be residents or humanitarian aid workers, and to provide for those who have been forced to flee. May the authorities be able to quell the flow of militants intent on causing violence from entering the country and, with God's wisdom and guidance, serve as catalysts of His peace and reconciliation throughout Burkina Faso.



SRI LANKA: Pastor Harassed by Mob and Police

Source: National Christian Evangelical Alliance Sri Lanka (NCEASL)



Watch [this video](#) to gain a better understanding of the reasons behind the persecution in Sri Lanka.

As believers gathered for worship in the village of Ihala Yakkura on the morning of February 2nd, a mob of around 150 people, led by Buddhist monks, arrived and disrupted the service by questioning the owner of the premises. The pastor called the police, who were able to maintain peace until the service concluded, even though the mob remained present.

After the service, the pastor went to speak to the monks and the police. During this time, the monks attempted to assault the pastor, but the officers intervened. The attackers insisted that because theirs was a "Buddhist village," no Christian worship would be allowed. Even though the pastor had been invited by villagers, the police sided with the monks and falsely stated that the church needed state permission to conduct worship activities. After making a formal statement at a nearby police station, the pastor was warned by the officer involved to not re-enter the

village due to the threats made against his life.

That evening, the pastor went to the village, taking along his wife, son and eight others. In their attempts to leave the area, they discovered that the road had been blocked. A mob then proceeded to accost the visiting Christians, physically assaulting them and causing damage to their vehicles. After an eventual escape, the victimized believers were able to receive treatment at a hospital. A police report was filed and, the next day, five people were remanded in connection with the incident.

For more information on Sri Lanka, we invite you to watch this [informative video report](#).

Pray for the physical and emotional healing of the Christians injured in the mob attack. Despite the opposition and hostility perpetrated against these followers of Christ, ask God to make a way for His ministry in the village to continue touching hearts and transforming lives. May the opposing villagers recognize the love and joy of Christ reflected in His people and, as a result, come to saving faith in Him. Also intercede for Sri Lanka's governing authorities that they will justly uphold the rights and freedoms of all citizens.

UKRAINE: Harassment Against Unregistered Churches

Sources: Forum 18, Mission Eurasia

Leaders of the unrecognized Luhansk People's Republic in eastern Ukraine have continued a campaign against unregistered church communities. The pro-Russian leaders of this breakaway region insist on registration for all religious organizations. However, of the 195 organizations registered in 2019, 188 were Russian Orthodox. The remaining seven are either Muslim, Old Believer, Jewish or Catholic. No Protestant churches have been allowed to register.

The ban on worship has taken various forms. Congregations meeting in church buildings have had their utilities disconnected, for officials argue that gas, electricity and water cannot be supplied to organizations that do not officially exist. While those meeting in homes have not faced this threat, all unregistered churches are at risk of police intervention.

Security forces raided a community during their worship service on January 19th. Church leaders were taken for interrogation but released several hours later. On December 23rd, another raid resulted in a fine for the church leader. Similar restrictions apply in the neighbouring Donetsk People's Republic, resulting in arrests, property seizures and fines. As in Luhansk, registration is required, but has been denied to any groups not affiliated with the Russian Orthodox church.



Emmanuel Baptist Church, Luhansk
Photo: Wikimapia / Butilkavodi

Please remember these persecuted believers in your prayers as they face oppression for their faith in Christ. May God give them the strength to persevere, the grace to forgive their oppressors, and the empowerment to glorify Him through their Christian witness. In the midst of the volatile political unrest, pray that the leaders of the Luhansk and Donetsk republics will govern with diplomacy, bringing resolution to this conflict with peace and justice.

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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