

"The persecuted church, ultimately, is not a church of victims! If faithful to Scripture, they go forth in the power of God, believing that suffering is not the worst thing that can happen to them."
 ~ Glenn Penner, former CEO for VOM Canada

INDONESIA: Local Officials Join Protest Against Church Building

Sources: International Christian Concern, Radio Veritas Asia, Morning Star News

For the past several months, local Islamic groups have opposed the construction of a proposed church building in the city of Cilegon, Banten province. On April 25th, a major demonstration was planned until the concerned parties convened. At the time, the protest was cancelled. The construction of the church was also delayed until all the permit requirements were fulfilled. Groups opposed to the building were asked to respect the permit process once all the requirements have been met.

Several months later, however, church members are continuing to encounter resistance. The process for obtaining a church building permit has proven onerous, involving multiple levels of government. Organizations opposing the construction have made it clear that they will dispute the establishment of any church building in the city. One opponent points to an agreement from 1975 stating that no worship facilities will be constructed in Cilegon except mosques. As of 2019, there were 382 mosques in the city, which consists of about 450,000 residents, but no place of worship for any other religion.



Grand Mosque in Cilegon.
 Photo: Wikipedia / Fajrul m (cc)

On September 7th, a mob calling themselves "The Committee of Cilegon Local Culture Rescue" expressed their continued objection to the building plans by holding a demonstration, which included the signing of a petition. It was noted that the city's mayor, Heldy Agustian, and his deputy, Sanuji Pentamarta, were among the signatories. Their involvement has raised complaints about government interference in religious freedom, as guaranteed in the Indonesian Constitution. For more information addressing the challenges facing Christians in Indonesia, go to our [country report](#).

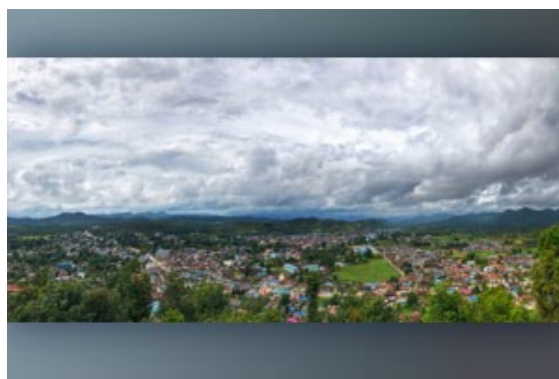
Pray that God will mightily intervene in the permit process for this place of worship, breaking down barriers as they are erected. Further, pray that Christians in the community will be examples of Christ to those opposing them by demonstrating His peace and love throughout this ordeal. May leaders at every level of governance work together for the benefit of all Indonesians, setting aside their personal agendas to honour the country's constitution by respecting the religious rights of others.

MYANMAR (BURMA): Theological College Shelled by Military

Sources: UCA News, International Christian Concern, The Chindwin, Myanmar Now

Four young men were wounded when Myanmar's military shelled the Kachin Theological Seminary on November 3rd. The attack happened in Kutkai, Shan State – a state where there has been recurring fighting between the military and various ethnic rebel groups. However, there were no ongoing conflicts reported taking place in or near the town of Kutkai, leading many to believe that the attack against the school was intentional.

Christians have frequently been targeted by the country's military, which consists chiefly of Buddhist soldiers. At least 92 religious sites have been damaged or destroyed in the predominantly Christian regions of Myanmar. In this most recent incident, which occurred in the evening, the shelling struck a tree rather than hitting one of the buildings. Four students who had been in a dormitory at the time were injured after being hit with shrapnel from the ordnance. "I can't even imagine what could have happened if it had hit them directly," commented a volunteer who helped take the injured students to the hospital. Thankfully, their injuries were relatively minor.



Kutkai township, Shan State.
 Photo: Wikipedia / Saisanmyint (cc)

The Kachin Theological Seminary is well-known in the area, serving the needs of the Kachin Baptist Convention since 1932. This attack happened only four days after a Baptist church building was partially destroyed by a shelling attack in a village of the Momauk township, Kachin State. To review additional reports outlining the difficulties encountered by our Christian brothers and sisters in Myanmar, go to our [country report](#).

Pray for the full recovery of the four young men who were injured in this most recent attack. May the Lord provide protection and comfort for these students and the many other innocent inhabitants of this region who are at risk of danger due to the vicious violence perpetrated by ruthless members of the military. Please also pray for the continued ministry of Christians in the area who are faithfully reaching out to those around them with the love of God, despite the constant threat of persecution.

REPORT UPDATE

CHINA: Additional Arrests Involving Members of Linfen Church

Source: ChinaAid

On August 19th, a family camp run by the Linfen Covenant House Church was raided by police, leading to the arrest of two preachers. ([Read more.](#)) Since their arrest, members of the church have faced severe pressure from governing authorities to corroborate the charges of "fraud" against the two men. The congregants were also pressured to pledge that they will never attend the church again. Most refused but, after intense coercion from members of their workplace and family, some were forced to sign statements claiming that they were "victims" of the alleged fraud.

On October 28th, it was reported that Wu Tingting, a worker in the church, had been detained, apparently due to accusation of fraud. Her family has not received any phone calls nor an official notice of her arrest from authorities.

On the morning of November 1st, Wang Qiang, another staff member of the church, disappeared without notice. After searching for him to no avail, Wang's family contacted the Public Security Bureau but did not receive a clear answer regarding his whereabouts. Finally, his wife Wen Huijuan, who is currently seven months pregnant and caring for their other child at home, received notice the following afternoon that he has been placed under "residential surveillance at a designated location" on suspicion of fraud.



Inside the Linfen Covenant House Church.
Photo: ChinaAid

Please prayerfully uphold the four mentioned church workers who are currently being detained, as well as their concerned families and fellow congregant members. Pray that the Lord will minister to each one of these harassed Christians, filling them with His peace and the strength they need to endure this time of trial and uncertainty. Additionally, remember those who are being forced to comply with the accusations against their fellow church members, asking the Lord to grant them wisdom and encouragement as they endeavour to persevere in their faith and honour Him by doing what is right in the midst of governmental pressure.

The "Persecution & Prayer Alert" is a ministry of:
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