

*"Take away from me scorn and contempt,
for I have kept Your testimonies.
Even though princes sit plotting against me,
Your servant will meditate on Your statutes."
~ Psalm 119:22-23 ESV*

SOUTH ASIA: Persecuted Christians Translate New Testament

Sources: Mission Network News, Wycliffe Associates

"Seeds of the Gospel often grow in secret in this part of the world.... Oppression and persecution are lurking around every corner...and everyone is watching. Always. To lead a Bible translation team in this part of the world – coming up against spiritual strongholds that have been in place for centuries – men and women risk everything." This is the way that the Wycliffe Associates ministry describes the Bible translation work that is being done by dedicated servants in Asia. Despite the dangers, these believers are responding to the need for the Gospel message to be spread.

Persecuted Christians in a particular South Asian country (unnamed for security reasons) were recently able to celebrate the work of local translators, together with the team at Wycliffe Associates, over the completion of the first New Testament in the "heart language" of a minority people group. The translation team is excited to now receive an opportunity to translate the Old Testament as well. Wycliffe has also identified five other languages used within the nation that are still in need of Bible translations.

Tony Tophoney, Director of Field Operations for Wycliffe Associates, entreats Christians around the world: "Join us in prayer for these brave souls who are really serving Christ, in some cases being martyred, for the cause of Bible translation in their area."

Praise God that His Word is now being made available to this rural people group, thanks to the dedication of faithful servants who are willing to risk their lives in order to translate the Scriptures for their people. May He continue to bless their efforts by providing the resources needed to complete the translation of the Old Testament and protection from opposition throughout the process. As a result of their unwavering commitment to ensure community members have access to the Scriptures in their own language, may many new names be written in the Lamb's "Book of Life" (Revelation 21:22-27).



REPORT UPDATES

CHINA: Uyghur Pastor Released After 15 Years

Sources: ChinaAid, Release International, Church in Chains

After serving 15 years in prison, Alimujiang Yimiti has finally been released. While other details relating to his release are unconfirmed, the house church pastor, also known as Alim, is now home with his family. Ethnically, this faithful Christian leader happens to be of the Uyghur (Turkic) minority group, which is also experiencing severe human rights abuses in China.

Alim's sentence took place as a result of a phone call he had with an American colleague in 2007. During their conversation, Alim reminded the businessman that the call could be monitored. He was correct. Yet, because Alim merely pointed out that possibility, he was charged with "unlawfully providing state secrets to overseas organizations." During his trial, no reference was made to indicate that any sensitive information had even been shared during the call.

Despite this lack of evidence, Alim was sentenced in 2009. His two



Alimujiang Yimiti and his family several years ago.
Photos: ChinaAid

consequent appeals, which took place during the years of 2010 and 2011, were both rejected – though the additional charge of "inciting separatism" was eventually dropped. Throughout the trials, members of Alim's family were prohibited from attending. For more information on the persecution of Christians in China, including reports detailing Alim's previous trials, go to our [country report](#).

Praise God that Alim has finally been released from prison and reunited with his loved ones! After so many years of separation, may their time of adjustment be filled with grace and joy. Pray that government officials will not opt to renew the prosecution of this long-suffering church leader, but instead may they allow him to resume his ministry of reaching out to others – including the oppressed Uyghur people – with the message of the Gospel.

MYANMAR: Terrorism Charges Filed Against Detained Church Leader

Sources: Human Rights Watch, Christianity Today, Reuters

On December 5th, a prominent Christian leader of the Kachin Baptist Convention, Dr. Hkalam Samson, was arbitrarily arrested at the airport as he was boarding a flight to Bangkok for medical treatment. (For details on Dr. Samson's arrest, go to [this page](#).) In the weeks that followed, his concerned family members were forbidden visitation. They were also not allowed to provide the 65-year-old Christian man any food or medication, raising more concerns about his ongoing health needs.

Since Dr. Samson had been charged under the regime's counterterrorism law, the hearings relating to his case were held in secret at a special court located within the Myitkyina prison. The charges against him arose from instances when the church leader met with former leaders of the country, including a prayer meeting that took place in January 2022 with members of the National Unity Government (NUG) – a group of elected lawmakers and members of parliament who were ousted when the military overthrew the government in 2021. The ruling junta has since declared the NUG to be a terrorist organization.

Human Rights Watch refers to Dr. Samson's arrest, among others, as "a heavy-handed attempt to chill all dissent among ethnic minority leaders." For more reports addressing the persecution of Christians in Myanmar, go to our [country report](#).

Please prayerfully uphold Dr. Samson during this time of incarceration, asking the Lord to strengthen him both physically and emotionally. Pray that the charges against him will soon be dropped so he can be freed and reunited with his family. While awaiting due vindication, may they experience a renewed sense of God's "ever-present help in times of trouble" (Psalm 46:1). Also pray that the Lord's work will powerfully continue through the ministry of the Holy Spirit among the Kachin people of Myanmar.



Rev. Dr. Samson
Photo: VOMC Contacts

PAKISTAN: Acquitted Christian Remains in "Virtual Prison"

Source: Steadfast Global

In 2013, Sawan Masih was arrested after his neighbour accused him of committing blasphemy. When the accused Christian man was convicted in 2014, he received the death sentence. After serving six years in prison, he was acquitted of all charges on October 5th, 2020, by the Lahore High Court. For more details on his case, go to [this page](#).

Over five months ago, a *Persecution & Prayer Alert* report was posted describing the dire situation facing Sawan and his family ([read more](#)). Sadly, even though he has been acquitted, the persecution still being experienced by him and his family is cause for great concern. Steadfast Global, VOMC's partnering ministry in Scotland, reports that the family is unable to leave the refuge of a safehouse because of ongoing death threats. As a result of the circumstances, they remain virtually in prison.

Steadfast Global has been able to arrange living accommodations for them in Scotland, provided the UK government gives Sawan and his family permission to enter the country. Petitions to governmental leaders continue to be made on behalf of this persecuted family, in hopes they will be allowed to travel soon.



Sawan Masih and his family.
Photo: Steadfast Global

Praise God for the diligent advocacy work of the Steadfast Global team in their efforts to provide Sawan and his family safety and freedom in the UK. May these endeavours be used to raise greater awareness of their plight and further encourage governmental leaders to proactively respond, so this endangered family can be rescued from their virtual prison.

In general, please pray for persecuted believers throughout Pakistan, asking God to give them wisdom and guidance as they interact with those opposed to the Gospel, so that similar situations would not arise. Ultimately, may God's Spirit work throughout the nation of Pakistan, enlightening many who are living in darkness with the light of His truth and bringing conviction to the hearts of sinners in need of the Saviour's mighty rescue.

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