

**"God is too good to be unkind
and He is too wise to be mistaken.
And when we cannot trace His
hand, we must trust His heart."
~ Charles Spurgeon**

BRUNEI: Compulsory Islamic Teaching in Schools

Sources: VOM USA, Borneo Bulletin, The Star

On November 1st, Islamic religious teaching was officially integrated into the educational system of schools in Brunei. This requirement was issued due to a decree from the country's sultan. The newly mandated curriculum applies to all students from the second to fifth grades – whether they attend public or private school. It involves an hour of instruction each day, including the practise of Islamic prayers and study of the Quran.

Christians in the country have requested prayer that their children will be effectively disciplined at home and in the church, so their faith will continually strengthen and sustain them. For more on the challenges facing followers of Jesus in Brunei, go to our [country report](#).

Pray for guidance on behalf of Christian parents in this Southeast Asian country as they deal with the newly implemented educational system. May these believers continue raising their children in the ways of the Lord, teaching them to love and serve Him despite any opposition they may encounter. While navigating the growing governmental restrictions, may our Bruneian family in Christ receive divine wisdom, strength and boldness as they seek to faithfully share the Gospel message with those around them.



A school in Brunei.
Photo: Wikipedia / Pangalau (cc)

PAKISTAN: Blasphemy Charges Dropped

Sources: Pak Christian News, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Morning Star News

In April 2023, two school workers in Pakistan were given the tasks of cleaning a storeroom and burning any garbage they found. However, as both of these workers are illiterate, they did not realize that some of the papers they had burned contained verses from the Quran. When this was discovered, they were reported to the police and charged with blasphemy for allegedly desecrating the Quran.

The two accused workers have been identified as Musarrat Bibi, a Christian widow, and Muhammad Sarmad, a young Muslim man. Although the workers were released on bail as of May 12th, they finally had their day in court on December 8th. After hearing the evidence, Judge Tariz Mahmood dismissed all the charges against them.

Following the announcement of the verdict, Musarrat expressed her relief, saying, "I feel like I have got my life back again." Unfortunately, despite being released, the Christian widow has experienced further challenges. After being granted bail in May, the school administration refused to restore her job. Also, due to receiving subsequent death threats, she was forced to flee the village with her daughter. They have since had to move frequently to avoid being found by Islamic militants who want to cause them harm. Musarrat hopes to eventually find a similar position in another area where she is unknown.



Musarrat Bibi (right) with attorney Lazar Allah Rakha (centre) and Muhammad Sarmad.
Photo: Morning Star News

Such dilemmas are frequently experienced by Christians in Pakistan who have been falsely accused of blasphemy. Even when these believers are acquitted by the courts, they often find themselves convicted by public opinion. To review more reports on the persecution

of Christians in Pakistan, go to our [country report](#).

Please pray that Musarrat and her daughter will find a home in a safe location where they will be protected from mob violence and other forms of persecution. May this Christian woman also be granted a new job that will provide for their practical needs. Additionally, pray that Muhammad will not suffer any further consequences because of these false accusations. In fact, as a result of this ordeal, may his heart be stirred towards Christ and receptive to His loving kindness – to the point of acknowledging Him as Saviour and Lord. Finally, may God work by His Holy Spirit in and through the legal and political systems of Pakistan so that the frequently abused blasphemy laws would no longer be used to persecute the country's Christians and so many other innocent victims.

EGYPT: Temporary Church Building Burned

Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Local Christians in the village of Misha'at Zaafaranah, located within Egypt's Minya Province, are working to get approval to build a place of worship. The required documents have been submitted to the authorities and, for the meantime, the group of believers were meeting in a temporary structure on the land belonging to the church.

Although local officials have no objection to these gatherings, in the early morning of January 6th, an opposing mob converged at the location to protest the construction of the church building. During the protest, the temporary structure being used by the church members was set on fire. Thankfully, no one was injured in the incident.

This destructive act of persecution follows a similar attack that happened on December 18th against a church building being built in Al-Azeeb. Details on that situation are available in a previously [posted report](#). Weeks prior to that incident, another had taken place in Minya Province during the month of November, when a mob attacked a Christian man and burned down his house which had been under construction.



The temporary church building before and after the arson attack.
Photo: Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Prayerfully uphold our suffering Egyptian brothers and sisters in Christ who have been terribly affected by these recent acts of violence. In each case, may the Lord minister healing from the trauma they have experienced and provide them the financial resources they need to replace all that has been destroyed. Pray that He will also work by His Spirit to soften the hearts of those in opposition to the Gospel, including the perpetrators who were directly responsible for the attacks, leading them to realize the error of their ways and come to a point of sincere repentance and salvation.

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