Voice of the Martyrs CANADA

PERSECUTION & PRAYER ALERT

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account."
~ Matthew 5:11 ESV

NICARAGUA: Retired Bishop Detained After Praying for the Persecuted

Sources: Christian Solidarity Worldwide, International Christian Concern

Bishop Juan Abelardo Mata Guevara, who suffers from various health concerns, has been retired from active ministry since 2020. On the evening of June 28th, the 80-year-old Christian leader accepted an invitation to celebrate mass at the La Cruz del Calvario Church. During the service, he remembered in prayer all those experiencing religious persecution within his country.

A church in Nicaragua.
Photo: Pixabay

It is believed that an individual with ties to the government was present at the service and, consequently, reported the bishop's words to national police. The following day, Bishop Mata Guevara was taken into custody. Although the Christian leader had been released later that evening, he was detained again the next day for several hours. Since then, police have maintained a presence outside his home, raising concerns that he may be subjected to ongoing surveillance and restrictions on his movements.

Another church leader, Silvio José Báez, who formerly served as the auxiliary bishop of Managua, had been forced to leave Nicaragua in 2019 for his own safety and was later stripped of his citizenship in 2023. Commenting on the authorities' ill-treatment of Bishop Mata Guevara, he describes their actions as "cowardly" – further stating that they "demonstrate the weakness and irrationality of a criminal dictatorship."

According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Bishop Mata Guevara's arrest is one of 12 documented cases involving the arbitrary detentions of Catholic and Protestant Christians in Nicaragua during the month of June alone. In addition, numerous churches have reported experiencing harassment, intimidation and threats. Read other reports addressing the various challenges encountered by believers in this oppressive Central American nation.

- ***Please prayerfully uphold Bishop Mata Guevara and the many other Christians who are undergoing detentions, threats, deportation orders, or other forms of harassment and intimidation, due to Nicaragua's dictatorial governance.***
- ***In the midst of these challenges, may God continue to build His church, drawing many more people to faith in Christ while also further encouraging His followers to remain steadfast, joyful and filled with hope.***
- ***Intercede on behalf of the country's political leaders, asking the Lord to soften their hearts and reveal to them His spiritual truths, so they may govern with justice, compassion and respect for the fundamental freedoms of all people.***

PAKISTAN: Multiple Cases Involving False Blasphemy Allegations

Sources: Morning Star News, Lokmat News, British Asian Christian Association, India Today, Radio Veritas Asia

In Pakistan, the punishment for a blasphemy conviction is the death penalty. While no one has yet been executed under these laws, many allegations frequently result in lengthy legal battles, prolonged imprisonment, and significant other hardships for the accused and their families.

One of the believers facing blasphemy charges.
Photo: Christian Daily International / Morning Star News

Regrettably, the country's blasphemy laws have often been misused as a means of either pursuing personal vendettas, settling business disputes, expressing religious intolerance, or punishing innocent individuals and their families in various other ways. Earlier this month, a federal parliamentary committee reported that the majority of the 333 blasphemy cases recorded in four different Pakistani states over the past five years involved fabricated allegations.

As awareness grows regarding the alarming abuse of these laws, some policing authorities and court officials have become more cautious when handling such accusations. Nevertheless, blasphemy allegations continue to affect numerous people throughout the country. The following situations address just a few of the more recently occurring incidents to provide examples of the ongoing challenges facing Pakistan's Christian communities.

Threatened Families Forced to Flee

In the Punjab village of Jhulan, tensions escalated after videos allegedly containing blasphemous statements began circulating online. Although the videos were posted by Pastor Sajeel Robin, who presently resides within the United States, the resulting accusations posed risk for his family members remaining in the village. When local clerics learned of the videos, they used mosque loudspeakers on July 3rd to urge residents to take action against the community's Christians.

Letter of pardon.

Police quickly responded to protect the Christian residents, advising them to temporarily leave the village for their safety. Pastor Sajeel's family members were then taken into protective custody. Following discussions with the village's opposing leaders, the pastor's threatened relatives publicly apologized for the statements he had made in the videos and decided to distance themselves from any further associations with him.

As a result, local clerics signed a declaration stating that the family members received "pardon." Other believers in the village who had also been forced to flee their homes were then allowed to return, and any potential widespread violence – such as the mass riots witnessed in Jaranwala during August 2023 – was averted.

Swift Action Prevents Another Endangering Mob Protest

In the Baldia Colony of Karachi, an angry mob surrounded a Christian neighbourhood after burned pages of the Quran were anonymously delivered in an envelope, along with photos and identification details connecting a Christian man and his mother to the incident.

Thanks to the quick intervention of state police and the Rangers (a federal paramilitary force), what could have become another potential violent attack was thankfully prevented. In addition to securing the area, the emergency responders relocated the Christian family for their protection. As tensions dissipated, Muslim and Christian leaders in the town joined together to condemn what appeared to be another deliberate attempt to incite conflict and violence.

Imprisoned Christian Dies While Awaiting Trial

The Catholic community in Lahore is mourning the loss of a 60-year-old man who died in prison while awaiting trial on a

blasphemy charge. Amir Peter passed away on July 1st after developing severe medical complications during his detention.

Amir was arrested on July 19th, 2025, after a local businessman filed a blasphemy complaint against him. As the detained believer's mental and physical health deteriorated, attempts were made to secure his release on bail so he could receive proper medical care. Sadly, Amir passed away before his case could be resolved.

Acquittal for Accused Christian

Danis Albert spent nearly 27 months behind bars in Lahore after being falsely accused of tearing pages from an Islamic book. Arrested in April 2024, the Christian man remained in prison until his acquittal on July 6th.

When delivering the ruling, the judge cited a lack of evidence and an undue reliance on the testimony of an untrustworthy witness. Even the complainant was unable to identify Danis as the person allegedly responsible for the offence. While the accused believer is finally now free, the ensuing two years he spent in captivity have resulted in mental health struggles and significant emotional and financial hardships for his family.

Reflecting on this case, along with the many others involving wrongful blasphemy accusations, Juliet Chawdhry from the British Asian Christian Association declared: "Justice delayed is not simply justice denied; it is a wound carried by an innocent person and their family every single day they remain behind bars. No court can return the birthdays missed, the tears shed, the mental anguish endured or the years stolen.... We owe every victim of wrongful prosecution more than an acquittal; we owe them accountability, reform and a justice system that values truth above accusation." To review further information, reports and/or video interviews addressing other cases in which blasphemy allegations have been wrongfully used against Pakistan's Christians, go to our country profile.

- ***In light of the many abuses of Pakistan's blasphemy laws, pray that the country's governing and judicial leaders will continually pursue positive legal reforms to ensure that justice is consistently being upheld and that innocent people are rightfully protected from false accusations.***
- ***Please remember the many Christians remaining in prison, praying for their ongoing encouragement, protection and need for advocacy as they patiently await the resolution of their cases.***
- ***Also prayerfully ask the Lord to minister in meaningful ways to these imprisoned believers' loved ones as they endure uncertainty, hardship and grief during this time of separation.***
- ***Praise God for the authorities and community leaders who have courageously taken action to prevent violence and protect vulnerable citizens. May such valiant efforts increase – further promoting justice, peace and greater religious freedom throughout Pakistan.***

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