



## **Persecution & Prayer Alert**

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada  
www.vomcanada.com

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*"The deepest level of worship is praising God in spite of pain, trusting Him during a trial, surrendering while suffering, and loving Him when He seems distant."*

~ R. Warren

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### **UZBEKISTAN: Punishments for Unapproved Worship**

Source: Forum 18

Four Christians in the southern Uzbek city of Karshi have been punished after meeting for worship without official permission. One member of the church, Nabijon Bolikulov, was jailed for five days, and three others faced fines. In his ruling, the judge did not specify what part of the law the believers had broken.

During the trial, the judge told Nabijon, "Do your prayers at home. It is against the law of our state to meet for worship without state registration." The Christians were further warned that if they continue to meet without registering, they could face criminal charges.

These punishments follow a series of raids against Christians in Karshi. Members of the church say that the authorities first enter the meeting to film and record names. Later they return to punish those they had documented.

*Please pray that these Christians in Uzbekistan will be given God's wisdom when dealing with the authorities and direction for ways in which they can continue meeting together without the fear of reprisal, despite the ongoing pressure. May there also be financial provision for those facing fines. Additionally, intercede for the governmental and judicial authorities who are opposing the church, that they would witness the love of Christ through the lives and responses of the believers.*

## **LAOS: New Laws Restricting Religious Freedom**

Sources: VOM USA, U.S. Department of State, FIDH

In the constitution of Laos, all citizens are guaranteed "the right and freedom to believe or not to believe in religion." However, in August of 2017, the Prime Minister signed a new *Decree on Associations*, aimed at restricting participation in non-profit associations, including religious groups.

The new decrees define the government as the final arbiter of all permissible religious activities. Any activity must be approved by various offices, even though such approval is rarely granted. According to religious leaders, the freedom to practise one's faith is particularly restricted outside urban areas. And while the law is supposed to apply to all four recognized religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Bahai), Buddhism has often been exempt from restrictions. Christians in remote villages have particularly faced threats, arrests and expulsion.

*Pray that the pastors and evangelists in Laos will be encouraged to boldly share the Gospel with those of their communities who are spiritually searching and provide needed ministry and discipleship to fellow believers so the church can continue to flourish, despite the attempts to contain it. Commit to the Lord the very people who are opposing religious freedom, that they may also be introduced to the Saviour and experience the wonder of His abiding presence in their lives.*

## **PRAISE REPORT**

### **CHINA: Tortured Pastor Released from Imprisonment!**

Sources: ChinaAid, Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Imprisoned pastor Yang Hua returned to his home in Guizhou province on June 19th after suffering mistreatment during his two-and-a-half-year jail term. Yang was first imprisoned on December 9th, 2015, after police raided Living Stone Church. He was charged with "illegally possessing state secrets," as well as divulging those secrets. For more information on his arrest and conviction, see [www.vomcanada.com/cn-2017-02-16.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/cn-2017-02-16.htm).

According to his lawyers, Yang faced frequent torture in an attempt to obtain a confession. He developed diabetes in prison and experienced severe inflammation in his legs. At one point, he was virtually paralysed. Despite the trying circumstances he endured, upon his release, he broke out loudly singing in worship. His wife, Wang Hongwu, confessed, "Even though my husband experienced misfortune, his belief remains resolute." Praise God for this testimony of God's sustaining grace!

*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 at [www.vomcanada.com/prayerwall.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/prayerwall.htm).*

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If you would like to encourage someone to read or receive this weekly prayer alert, please use our online form at [www.vomcanada.com/pnpforward.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/pnpforward.htm) and help spread the message of the persecuted church around the world.

For information on additional ways to support members of the persecuted church overseas, review the list of options at [www.vomcanada.com/take-action.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/take-action.htm).