



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
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"Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hatred. It is a power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness."

~ Corrie ten Boom

SRI LANKA: Christians Assaulted and Threatened

Source: NCEASL

In two separate instances during the month of June, pastors and other Christians in Sri Lanka faced threats and intimidation from other villagers. One of those cases resulted in the injury of two women.

On June 9th, the pastor of the Jesus Christ Testimony Church in Commanthurai was travelling with his wife to visit some congregants when they were stopped by a man who warned the pastor to not build a church as planned. The man claimed that he and others had recently burned down another church and would do the same if the prospective building was constructed. The pastor later received a phone call, reiterating the threat.

In another case, a pastor and his wife, joined by two other Christians from the Smyrna Church in Padinnoruwa, were walking to a birthday party on June 15th when they were accosted by five villagers. Despite the threats and obscenities, the Christians attempted to continue walking. The opposing group, however, began hurling stones at them, injuring the pastor's wife and another woman. The incident has been reported to the police.

Pray for the believers in Sri Lanka as they face continuing intimidation and violence. May the knowledge of God's presence be very evident to them, providing needed strength and encouragement. Ask Him to enable the Christians to shine the light of His glory to their oppressors, also revealing the unfathomable love of Jesus through their actions and responses.

RUSSIA: Students Deported for Worship Videos

Sources: Forum 18, Christian Post

Churches in the Nizhny Novgorod Region of Russia have been facing increasing pressure from law enforcement officials in recent months. According to *Forum 18*, this pressure includes the use of "anti-missionary" legislation and immigration law. The result has been punishment for churches and their members for things such as inviting foreign students to parties and posting worship videos on social media.

For the past few months, two African medical students have been facing prosecution because they appeared in worship videos produced by the Jesus Embassy Church. The church, along with others from the Russian Pentecostal Union, have had an agreement with several African embassies to work with students studying in Russia. But when Kudzai Nyamarebvu from Zimbabwe and Nosise Vusiwe Shiba from Swaziland participated in videos appearing online, authorities deemed they were participating in evangelistic work. Evangelism by foreigners has been restricted in Russia since legislation was introduced in 2016.

Both of the young women have been convicted and fined. Kudzai was found guilty of "hidden missionary activity, not expressed in either words or gestures." For Nosise, it was ruled that singing on stage is missionary activity and, therefore, against the terms of her educational visa. The courts eventually ruled that the students were permitted to finish their course work and write their exams, but they must leave the country by June 30th.

As pressure mounts against the church in Russia, pray that the Christians residing in this restrictive nation will find their rest and peace in Christ. May the Lord guide the church leaders and congregation members as they seek ways to reach out with the message of the Gospel. Also remember Kudzai and Nosise who are resuming residence in their home countries.

PRAISE REPORT

INDIA: Anti-Conversion Legislation Being Repealed

Sources: World Watch Monitor, Arunachal Times, The Hindu, UCA News

Anti-conversion legislation has been a part of several Indian states for many years. It was first introduced in Orissa in 1968 and has since been introduced in six other states -- the most recent being Uttarakhand in March 2018. (For more details, visit www.vomcanada.com/in-2018-05-24.htm.)

In a surprise announcement, the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh intends to repeal the 1978 Freedom of Religion Act. In making the proclamation on June 28th, he stated that the act, rather than providing freedom of religion, "could undermine secularism and is probably targeted towards Christians." According to *The Hindu* news service, Christians account for more than half the population of the state.

The announcement is particularly surprising because Arunachal Pradesh is currently governed by the Hindu-nationalist BJP party, which has actively campaigned to expand such legislation throughout India. The party has been increasingly pushing Hindu nationalism ahead of next year's national elections. Since the Chief Minister's announcement, there have been sharp reactions. Indigenous faith groups have strongly condemned the decision, while Christian groups have expressed appreciation and joy.

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.

The Persecution & Prayer Alert is a ministry of:
The Voice of the Martyrs Canada, P.O. Box 608, Streetsville, Ontario, L5M 2C1
Tel. (905) 670-9721 Website: www.vomcanada.com

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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.