



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
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*"Our motto must continue to be
perseverance. And ultimately
I trust the Almighty will crown
our efforts with success."
~ William Wilberforce*

INDIA: Church Attendance Dwindling in the Face of Threats

Source: International Christian Concern

Prior to May of this year, Pastor Singh's congregation in Jhabua, located in rural Madhya Pradesh state, numbered more than 200. Faced with increasing threats from militant Hindus, several families have stopped attending in recent months -- to the point that attendance is now down to about 50 or 60 people.

Shankar, one of the villagers, said that he had been a Christian all his life. Despite being raised in a Christian home, he is facing accusations of "converting to a foreign faith and deserting the Hindu religion." In the village of Kardubadi, Christians of the community were told during a local meeting in May that they should not attend church or even pray in their homes. When the believers objected, the entire village ostracized them.

Later that same month, the members of Shankar's family had simply been praying in their home when the police were called. Subsequently, the officers took him to the police station where he was subjected to beatings and harassment. He has since been forced to leave the area with his family and find work elsewhere to feed them.

In the face of this violent opposition, many Christians have been mandated to stop attending church services. One stated that the opposing villagers were trying to force them to live like Hindus. Despite the persecution, another villager by the name of Babu affirmed, "We are not going to leave Jesus; no one is going snatch Jesus from our hearts."

Pray for God's protection, peace and strength to be upon these believers in the face of constant scrutiny and harassment. May His Holy Spirit give them wisdom as they endeavour to live out their Christian witness in a way that is honouring to Christ. Pray that the lives of these faithful believers will serve as a beacon of His brightly shining light amid the darkness around them.

SRI LANKA: Pastor Ordered to Stop Activities

Source: NCEASL

Churches in Sri Lanka frequently face opposition from community members who are opposed to a Christian presence in this predominantly Buddhist nation. On the morning of August 19th, the pastor of the Assemblies of God church in Dikwella was meeting with a few church members for a Bible study when a police officer entered the building to seize him. The pastor was then transported to the local police station for interrogation by the officer-in-charge.

When the pastor arrived at the station, two Buddhist monks and three other individuals were awaiting his arrival, none of whom he recognized from the village. The officer-in-charge told the pastor that he had received complaints about the religious worship activities. The pastor was then ordered to cease conducting all Christian activities in the village and to relocate the church.

On the evening of July 7th, a church in the village of Pilliyaradi was in the process of concluding their worship service when stones were thrown at the church from the commercial building next door. Two vehicles belonging to the church members were damaged. In another incident, a church in Vahaneri was completely destroyed during the night of August 17th. Although arson is suspected, and the incident was reported to police, (as of August 23rd) no officers have even come to the scene.

Please remember these targeted pastors and church members as they seek the Lord's guidance in the midst of this opposition. Pray that the governing authorities would respect the rights of all Sri Lankan citizens by taking measures to curb the harassment and violence. May the Gospel of Christ spread throughout this island nation, as churches continue proclaiming the message of His love -- in both word and deed -- to their unsaved neighbours.

REPORT UPDATE

BURMA: Military Blocks Aid to Christians

Source: The Christian Post

For years the northern state of Kachin has faced armed conflicts between the government military and rebel groups fighting for independence. In January, we reported that soldiers of the government troops were also targeting Christians by destroying church buildings, as well as raping and murdering innocent women (see www.vomcanada.com/my-2018-01-18.htm).

In June, we reported that soldiers were occupying churches and interrogating congregations while indiscriminately bombing villages. While the world's attention has been focussed on the ill-treatment of Rohingya Muslims by the Burmese government, similar treatment was being faced by Kachin Christians (see www.vomcanada.com/my-2018-06-14.htm).

A new report by the human rights organization *Fortify Rights* has been released, documenting the atrocities against the predominantly Christian population in Kachin state over the past seven years. Aid has been blocked by soldiers from getting into the state, including essentials such as food. Several churches have been working as aid centres. However, in May, the Burmese government threatened prosecution against the Kachin Baptist Convention, under the guise that they were colluding with the rebels.

According to the report, there are indications that China is involved, urging the Burmese government to block the United Nations and other aid groups from assisting these suffering people; a group that China also opposes. Pray that necessary help will arrive swiftly and safely for these thousands of starving people, and that churches will be allowed to function by providing for those in need.

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:
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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 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.