



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
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*"I have learned that faith means
trusting in advance what will
only make sense in reverse."*

~ Philip Yancey

BURMA (MYANMAR): Pro-China Rebels Target Christians

Sources: AsiaNews, UCANews, AsiaTimes, Morning Star News, Radio Free Asia

The Chinese-backed "United Wa State Army" (UWSA) rebels have been destroying churches and detaining pastors for interrogation in the Wa area of Burma's Shan State in response to new directives. The ethnic rebel group has declared autonomy for the region of Wa, which borders China where the Wa people originated before migrating into Burma.

In early September, the UWSA issued a Chinese-language statement instructing all members of the rebel army to "find out what the missionaries are doing and what are their intentions." The statement also bans any construction of new churches and orders the destruction of any facility built after 1989 without explicit government permission. It further forbids any foreign church workers and prohibits any religious teaching in schools.

The order included the Chinese term *jidujiao*, which is usually used in reference to Protestant and evangelical Christians; not *tianzhujiao*, which is used to denote Roman Catholics. The use of such terminology suggests that the order may intend to target specific Christian groups. Following up on the decree, several church buildings have been destroyed; most of them Baptist churches. It is estimated that 30 percent of the Wa people are Christians.

Hardly coincidental, this announcement follows increased international pressure to release Chinese American pastor John Cao, who has been sentenced to seven years imprisonment in

China for crossing the Burma/China border in his efforts to help the impoverished Wa people (see www.vomcanada.com/cn-2018-08-02.htm).

Pressure from China is also a factor in the neighbouring state of Kachin, where rebels also fighting for independence are blocking aid support to the predominantly Christian area.

Remember the persecuted Christians of the Shan and Kachin states in your prayers. Pray for their protection, strength and encouragement in the face of fierce opposition. Intercede for their church leaders, asking God to give them wisdom when being interrogated by the UWSA officers. Ask the Lord to mightily intervene on behalf of the situation, bringing peace within the entire region. May many come to faith in Christ through the faithful testimony of God's people.

ERITREA: Agents Hunt Christians After Preacher's Visit

Sources: BBC, VOM USA

When a peace agreement was reached between Eritrea and Ethiopia, hopes were high that the new-found peace could also lead to a relaxation of human rights violations and religious oppression in Eritrea. On July 18th, the first flight from Ethiopia to Asmara in more than 20 years arrived with Pentecostal evangelist Surafiel Demssie as one of the passengers.

Upon arriving in the capital city, Pastor Surafiel held an informal evangelistic street meeting. He left shortly after and that was when police moved in. At last report, five people were arrested and others have gone into hiding. One of them, believed to be the host of the meeting, was arrested at the airport.

Family members were initially told that the five Eritreans had been arrested for blocking the street and would be released shortly. Later it was revealed that officials from the National Security Agency were responsible for the arrests. To date, those apprehended have not appeared in court. It is common for prisoners of conscience, including Christians, to never face formal charges, despite lengthy imprisonment under horrific conditions. For more accounts of persecution in Eritrea, go to www.vomcanada.com/eritrea.htm.

As new relations develop between these two East African nations, pray for discernment to be granted to the Eritrean Christians. Specifically remember the five who were recently detained in Eritrea, along with hundreds of other believers currently being held in custody for their faith. May the Lord give great strength and courage to these innocent prisoners as they await deliverance, and a tremendous sense of His peace to each of their concerned family members.

PERSECUTION UPDATE

CHINA: Forceful Shutdown of Zion Church

Sources: ChinaAid, Reuters, Christianity Today, Morning Star News

When Zion Church, one of Beijing's largest underground churches, refused to install surveillance cameras which could allow authorities to monitor them, they didn't know it would end with officials storming the church building to forcefully shut it down.

After the worship service on September 9th, government officials entered the hall where the church members met with orders to close the church and confiscate their "illegal promotional material." In August, authorities had closed seven branches of the Zion Church around the city (see www.vomcanada.com/cn-2018-08-30.htm). With this latest order, all activities of the church have been officially banned. The church's pastor, Jin Mingri, states, "I fear that there is no way for us to resolve this issue with the authorities."

Those attending the service were given pamphlets with a list of officially sanctioned churches they are permitted to attend instead. However, many believers perceive the acceptance of the Communist Party's oversight and authority as a betrayal of their faith. "On this land, the only One we can trust in is God," Pastor Jin adds. The church has resolved to continue meeting outdoors.

Pray that the leaders of the Zion Church will have the wisdom and strength of both heart and mind as they continue to lead their members through the ordeal. Also pray for the continued outreach of the Gospel throughout Beijing.

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.