



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
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*"Faith is the 'yes' of the heart, a conviction
on which one stakes one's life."
~ Martin Luther*

IRAN: Christian Couple Arrested

Source: Middle East Concern

Amir Taleipour and his wife Mahnaz Harati were at their home in Mashhad with their seven-year-old daughter on December 6th when several intelligence agents entered. At last report, the couple were still being held in detention and not allowed to communicate with family members. They have also been denied legal assistance. In the meantime, their daughter is being cared for by extended family.

Church leaders in Iran say that the pressures against Christians increase every year around the holiday season but this year was particularly severe. A spokesperson for Middle East Concern states, "...it seems there is definitely a coordinated and determined campaign to decimate the Christian community and spread fear and intimidation."

Please remember this couple who are being held in captivity. Also intercede for their young daughter during this time of separation from her parents. Pray that Amir and Mahnaz will be released soon so their family can be reunited. May the efforts of the Iranian authorities to destroy the church be thwarted and instead used to help continue spreading the message of the Gospel of Christ throughout the country.

BELARUS: No New Church Registrations Allowed

Source: Forum 18

Evangelical church leaders in several countries of Central Asia face the question as to whether they should register with the local government, which can lead to pressure to compromise, or

refuse registration and face arrest. In Belarus, however, the option to register may not be available.

Pastor Vyacheslav Novakovsky of *Your Will Be Done Church* has attempted to register four times since 2017. "We want to comply with the law and gather for religious meetings without fear of raids, fines or detentions," he explains. However, each time the submitted registration has been rejected. When the pastor inquired about the reasons for the rejection, one official told him, "There's an order from superiors not to register any new communities." When Forum 18 heard about this and asked for clarification, the official refused to confirm.

Many church communities have given up trying to register, since the process results in inevitable rejection. One church leader admits, "Obtaining registration is a waste of time and unnecessary trouble for our people." Some such groups meet in homes or in the woods to avoid prosecution for meeting without registration.

In October, the United Nations Human Rights Committee expressed concern about the mandatory registration process which creates undue restrictions on freedom of religion for the people of Belarus.

Pray that the government officials in Belarus will come to understand the need to respect the rights and freedoms of their citizens. Pray that Christians will be free to worship and practise their faith without fear of reprisal. Remember the many church leaders who are presently facing fines and detentions. May they experience the abiding presence of God's Spirit, empowering them with His divine strength and grace so they can serve as vibrant witnesses before others in need of salvation.

PRAISE REPORT

NEPAL: Church Grows Despite Anti-Conversion Law

Source: Mission Network News

In August 2018, a new anti-conversion law came into effect in Nepal, including new punishments for those convicted (see www.vomcanada.com/np-2018-08-16.htm). According to John Puidate of *Bibles for the World*, this has resulted in persecution as never before.

At the same time, however, God's Spirit has been moving hearts and bringing many to faith in Christ. John Puidate speaks of tremendous growth among those following the Christian faith, despite the dangers. "We've seen Nepal go from totally unreached levels (two to three percent) all the way up to three million followers of Christ. That's ten percent of the population."

Praise God for this wonderful news! Remember these new brothers and sisters in your prayers, as they face the challenges of following Christ in the midst of oppression.

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.