



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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"After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To Him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

~ 1 Peter 5:10-11 ESV

EGYPT: Sudanese Woman Facing Threats

Source: Morning Star News

A Christian mother was struck with fear last November when her Muslim brother arrived at the church she attended with a photo of her husband, asking members if they knew where he could be found. Less than two years before, Ebtehaj Mostafa had been tied to a chair in a darkened room. The abductors gave her an ultimatum: return to Islam or they would kill her husband and daughter.

Ebtehaj had fled from Sudan in 2005 after being jailed five times for her faith in Christ. In Cairo, she met a Sudanese pastor, also a convert from Islam, and the two married. But her life remained in danger, as Ebtehaj discovered in February 2017 when she was kidnapped. At the time, the Christian woman's abductors shouted that she was a disgrace to her family. During the attack, they mandated she divorce her husband and return to her Sudanese family, then living in Saudi Arabia.

After stating that she would rather die than return to Islam, the two men raped Ebtehaj and beat her repeatedly. Joined by two other perpetrators, they eventually grabbed the assaulted woman's hand and forced her signature on a paper claiming that she had returned to Islam. She was then knocked out and left unconscious, only to later awaken on the streets of Cairo.

With the recent arrival of her brother in the city, there are renewed concerns for Ebtehaj's safety. However, she is trusting God and wants to tell her story so the international community would know what kind of pressures face Sudanese converts to Christ.

Pray for the safety of Ebtehaj and her family. May those opposing her faith experience a profound revelation of Jesus Christ as God's promised Saviour to the world, recognizing their own need to trust in Him for their salvation. Also remember other converts to Christ from Sudan who are being pressured to return to Islam or die, asking Him to reassure them of His strength and provision for their every need.

IRAN: Ongoing Arrests of Christians

Sources: Middle East Concern, Article 18

Iranian Christians are requesting prayer for a series of recent arrests. Shortly before Christmas, five Iranian women were taken into custody, including 65-year-old Ruhsari Kamberi. Following her arrest, Ruhsari faced ten days of intensive interrogation. Authorities had also searched the senior woman's home, where they confiscated her phone, Bibles and Christian materials. After eventually being released on bail, Ruhsari was brought before the prosecutor in mid-January to answer charges of "acting against national security." During the court hearing, she was ordered to meet with an Islamic religious leader to be "instructed" and offered the opportunity to return to Islam.

On January 23rd, a young Christian man was arrested following a violent raid on his home in Isfahan. Witnesses report that Sina Moloudian was dragged out of his parents' home with bruises on his face. A few hours later, prison officials permitted Sina to phone his parents and let them know he was being held at the Dastgerd Prison. From there, he would be taken to court where the charges against him were to be announced.

Two days later, Ismaeil Maghrebinejad, 64, was also taken into custody. Ismaeil, a Christian for nearly 40 years, has been regularly harassed by security forces the entire time. After the recent arrest at his home in Shiraz, concerned members of his family attempted to contact the authorities to find out where he had been taken but were denied any knowledge of him. Although Ismaeil has since been allowed to contact his family, he did not know the location of his imprisonment nor the charges he is facing.

A concerted effort of governmental authorities to arrest and harass Christians continues throughout Iran. Article 18 reported at least 114 arrests in ten different cities during the first week of December alone. While most of these arrested believers were released after a few hours, they had been forced to write down details of their faith-related activities and ordered to have no contact with other Christians.

Please prayerfully uphold our persecuted Christian brothers and sisters in Iran who are experiencing heightened incidences of persecution. May each one of them find their strength and help in Christ during these days of trial and tribulation. For all who are serving time in prison for their faith, specifically pray that God's protection and encouragement will enable them to patiently endure -- all the while sensing His presence and ongoing ministry as He works sovereignly on their behalf.

CHINA: New Hotline for Reporting Religious Activities

Source: China Aid

A government office in Henan province announced on January 28th that a hotline has been established to report "illegal religious activities." The announcement from the Wenfeng Street Community Office promised confidentiality and offered cash rewards.

The announcement also threatened fines of up to \$39,000 CAD for homeowners who allowed a religious gathering on their property, as well as other severe penalties. The public was encouraged to "aggressively monitor" their community members for such violations.

Pray that China's Christians will continue faithfully serving within their community as vibrant testimonies of God's love and the many blessings found in Him. Rather than this new hotline being used as a means of suppressing or thwarting the work of the Gospel, may there be increased opportunities for the country's believers to share the Christian faith among their spiritually receptive neighbours. Also intercede for those opposing the Gospel, that they themselves will experience the new-found hope and joy of God's transformative power through Jesus in their lives as well!

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.