



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

Thursday, January 23, 2020

*"I have never been discouraged,
because all conditions that one finds
himself is in the hands of God."
~ Pastor Lawan Andimi*

NIGERIA: Kidnapped Pastor Executed

Sources: Release International, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Christianity Today

A leader of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and pastor of a Brethren church, Lawan Andimi, was executed by Boko Haram terrorists on January 20th. Pastor Lawan was kidnapped during a raid in the town of Michika on January 3rd (see www.vomcanada.com/ng-2020-01-09.htm). Shortly after, a video was released in which the pastor speaks of his faith in God's sovereignty despite the situation. He told his family: "God is still alive.... Don't cry, don't worry, thank God for everything." News of his death also came via video, sent to the same journalist, showing the beheadings of Pastor Lawan and an unnamed soldier.

In response to the news, Floyd Brobbel, CEO for The Voice of the Martyrs Canada, echoed the testimony of Pastor Lawan by declaring: "His life was not wasted. What the enemy has meant for evil will be used for the Lord's glory. So while today we mourn, tomorrow we rejoice."

Three days of prayer and fasting were declared by CAN in response to the killing. A spokesperson stated they had done everything possible to secure the pastor's safe release. Without the support of the military, they had no further options. The organization is urging the government to take all necessary steps to safeguard the lives of Nigerian Christians.

Please remember the family and friends of Pastor Lawan in the wake of this devastating news. Join with Christians throughout Nigeria who are mourning the loss of so many innocent lives and praying for peace and safety. Even in the midst of this tragic loss, we can thank God for the powerful testimony of grace that was demonstrated through the life and words of Pastor Lawan. May the Lord use it to touch the hearts of people around the world, including the perpetrators of the crimes.

ALGERIA: Church Ordered to Close

Sources: Middle East Concern, Morning Star News

The Governor of Oran has ordered the closure of a church that had been previously closed and then reopened. In February 2018, the Oratoire Church was closed on allegations that it did not have the appropriate permission to operate. Then on June 18th of the same year, it was reopened (see www.vomcanada.com/dz-2018-06-21.htm). However, the governor issued a new order on November 10th, 2019, demanding that the church close. The most recently issued notice was not received by Pastor Seighir until January 11th of this year.

Although a bookstore also operated by the pastor was closed in 2017, a court decision in December 2018 reversed the governor's order. The court also ruled that the pastor should be reimbursed for the losses sustained during the closure. Once again, the governor has refused to comply with the court order and will not allow the store to reopen.

On a positive note, Pastor Seighir mentioned that many of the people in Algeria were not even aware that the Christian church existed until the closures came to light. "Everyone has heard of the church and is talking about it too," he states. For more details on the challenges facing believers in Algeria, go to www.vomcanada.com/algeria.htm.

Pray for Pastor Seighir and the members of his church during this difficult time. Also intercede for the many other Christians throughout Algeria facing opposition and uncertainties as their church buildings are being sealed. Ask God to reveal His truth to the governmental leaders, helping them to realize the injustice of the situation, so they will cease their opposition. May the newfound awareness of Christianity be an opportunity for the Gospel message to be heard throughout the country.

TURKMENISTAN: Christmastime Raid

Source: Forum 18

A group of women who gathered on December 26th had their worship time disrupted by a police raid. The home was searched and cell-phones were confiscated. The women were forced to give legal statements and have their photos and fingerprints taken. At last report, no fines had been levied.

Though other faith groups have faced harassment throughout the year, this is the only known raid of Protestant Christians in 2019. Even so, the country's leaders maintain tight controls on freedom of belief, allowing only approved activities and religious literature. Any sharing of one's faith is banned and punishable. More information on the persecution of Christians in Turkmenistan is available at www.vomcanada.com/turkmenistan.htm.

While such direct opposition has not been as prevalent as in recent years, pray that the existing restrictions on religious freedom will be eradicated -- enabling Christians to gather together for worship without threat of arrest or criminal charges. In the meantime, please

uphold these harassed believers in your prayers, asking God to intervene on behalf of their case. Despite the country's present constraints, may His followers seize every opportunity to share the Gospel with others in their communities.

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.

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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.