



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
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*"It is our privilege to suffer for the Lord,
and we will continue to work for the Lord.*

I am sure that God will reward us."

~ Elizabeth, wife of Pastor Isaac Paulose

INDIA: Church Leader Beaten and Run Over

Sources: Morning Star News, The Indian Express

A church leader in Sehore, Madhya Pradesh, was beaten and then run over by motorcycles, leaving him seriously injured. Pastor Isaac Paulose had just dropped off his young son at school on March 4th when a motorcycle stopped in front of his car and he was ordered out of it. Ten assailants on five motorcycles then beat him with chains and rods before running over him. After the hit and run incident, he was taken to hospital with multiple fractures and head injuries.

The attackers accused Pastor Isaac of converting people to Christianity. During the assault, they taunted the church leader and threatened to kill him if he continued in ministry. A police report has been filed, but he was unable to give any assistance by identifying his attackers. The pastor's wife said that she was initially shaken by the attack, but the Lord has given her peace and strength. She expresses thanks to those who are praying about the situation.

Pastor Isaac and his father have been involved in ministry for many years and this is the first time they have faced violent opposition. While forcible conversion is illegal in Madhya Pradesh, leading others to faith in Christ is not. The pastor insists that he has never been involved in any type of inappropriate conversions.

Pray that Pastor Isaac and his family will continue to experience God's peace which surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7). May those responsible for the assault be identified and brought to justice. Of even greater importance, ask the Lord -- who knows the identity of the perpetrators -- to reach out to them in grace so they will have an opportunity to turn in faith to Him. Pray that the ministry outreach of Pastor Isaac and other Christian leaders will continue to grow in Madhya Pradesh, and that believers will be further strengthened in their faith.

KENYA: Christians Ordered to Leave Area

Sources: International Christian Concern, Christian Post, World Watch Monitor

On February 23rd, an audio recording was released by al-Shabaab demanding that all non-local Christians leave three provinces in northeastern Kenya. In the 25-minute clip, a spokesman for the Somalia-based Islamic terrorists urged any ethnic Somalis in the area to evict non-Muslims. The message claimed that many Muslims in the area were unemployed, so they should be given the jobs held by the non-Muslims.

The three provinces bordering Somalia consist of primarily ethnic Somalis, many of whom migrated to Kenya because of the violent civil war in their homeland. Cosmas Mwinzi, a pastor in the affected area, said that this is not news to him since many of the people have made it clear that they want the Christians to leave. He goes on to say that education levels and the standard of living in the area are poor and that non-locals have provided needed support by helping the society.

Most of the non-local teachers have already fled the area after repeated raids by the militants, such as the January 13th attack which took place in the town of Kamuthe. (A report on this incident is available at www.vomcanada.com/ke-2020-01-16.htm.) The crisis has led to numerous schools in the area being forced to close for lack of teachers.

Please pray for the protection of any non-local workers remaining in northeastern Kenya, especially the Christians who have been uniquely targeted by al-Shabaab. Pray that Kenya's authorities will be able to take control of the situation so that peace will be established in this area. Ask our Master Creator of all humanity to enable people of various ethnic backgrounds and faiths to learn of His perfect love so it can be expressed with purity and goodness of heart among the brothers and sisters of our global human family.

TAJIKISTAN: Fines for Bible Translation

Source: Forum 18

Over the past six months, the leaders of four different churches in Tajikistan have received huge fines because they were part of a plan to create a new Tajik translation of the Bible. According to some Tajik Christians, the current translations available in their language use archaic words and sometimes the translation is unclear. In response to the need, these churches arranged to have a new translation made through Linguattec, a translation company.

According to Linguattec representatives, they were visited by the State Committee for Religious Affairs (SCRA) and questioned about the work they were doing. The state committee then issued a warning that the translators must receive permission before translating any religious texts. After assuring the committee of their willingness to abide by all regulations in the future, no penalties were levied. For the churches, however, the SCRA was not as tolerant. Each of the four

churches was fined between \$1,000 and \$1,500 CAD, amounts equivalent to the combined average monthly salaries of five to eight Tajik labourers.

In reference to the situation, one local Christian explains: "The authorities do not want Tajik churches, which is why they pressure them with fines and other punishments. They want to make us weary and stop." Christianity is considered a "foreign element" in this predominantly Muslim nation. For more information on the persecution facing Christians in Tajikistan, go to www.vomcanada.com/tajikistan.htm.

May God's financial provision be made available to the churches penalized with these fines, and His wisdom be granted to their Christian leaders as they navigate ways to overcome the challenges imposed on them by governmental agencies. Ask the Lord to bless these pastors with wisdom, clarity and the empowerment of His Holy Spirit as they present the Gospel in their communities. May those opposing the work of God be enlightened to the truth of His Word, convicted of their sin, and responsive to the love and salvation of Christ.

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.