



## Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada  
www.vomcanada.com

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*"Do not pray for us;  
pray with us."*

~ North Korean believer,  
as told to Dr. Eric Foley

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### **INDIA: Christian Beaten into a Coma**

Source: Morning Star News

A Christian family in the village of Kodalmetla, Odisha, experienced the consequences of following Christ when they were attacked on the night of March 11th, and then again the next morning. Kama Sodi and his wife were praying together before bedtime, as was their habit, when villagers shouted death threats and then stormed into the house. Kama's wife, Bhimeshwari, was able to protect their two young children, who were pleading with the attackers to stop. The mob agreed to cease if Kama would renounce his faith in Christ and turn to their tribal religion. He refused to do so.

The next morning, the mob consisting of approximately 60 people returned and again began to beat him until he fell unconscious. The assailants then threw the family's belongings out of the house and ordered them to leave the village.

Christian leaders arrived to find Kama unresponsive and arranged for him to be taken to hospital. Though doctors were not sure if he would awaken, he regained consciousness after a day and a half. Due to the discovery of blood clots in his brain, doctors wanted him to remain hospitalized so they could continue monitoring him closely. A week later, Kama was released but instructed to not return to work until he fully recovered.

When the family returned to the village, they found most of their possessions missing and mud covering their food. As the family is very poor, Bhimeshwari was hoping to pick up extra work to pay for their daily needs, but no one is willing to hire her. The family has been ostracized by the other villagers. Despite the intense opposition they are facing, the Sodi family is trusting in the Lord. "I have no money or food to feed my children, but I have Jesus, and He will provide for us," declares Bhimeshwari.

For more information on the difficulties facing Christians in India, and to review other incidents of persecution in this country, go to [www.vomcanada.com/india.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/india.htm).

*Please lift up Kama, Bhimeshwari and their children in your prayers. Ask God to provide them needed protection, provision and peace as they faithfully honour Him through their lives and testimony. Pray that they will continue to experience the inner joy that comes with serving Christ, despite the harsh repercussions they have encountered. May the Lord not only provide for their daily needs and complete healing for Kama, but also use their Christian witness to reach those opposed to the Gospel. Intercede for the opposing villagers, asking that they be drawn to the eternal hope of Christ and surrender their lives to Him as well.*

## **PRAISE REPORTS**

### **AZERBAIJAN: Christian Community Authorized to Meet After Many Years**

Source: Forum 18

The Baptist community in the village of Aliabad understands what it means to wait patiently. For 25 years, these believers have sought legal status but were repeatedly ignored or denied. Police have regularly raided their church meetings and seized religious literature. Despite the opposition, the church continued to gather for teaching and worship while attempting to get official status.

In late January, Pastor Hamid Shabanov received a letter from the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations. While official status has not been granted at this point, the committee stated that they had "no objection" to the church community meeting for two hours each Saturday morning. The pastor expressed praise to God for this decision which is now allowing them to legally gather together, hopefully without any further opposition. To learn more about persecution in Azerbaijan, go to [www.vomcanada.com/azerbaijan.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/azerbaijan.htm).

*Join with Pastor Hamid and his congregation in praising God for this long-awaited decision. While the decision was quickly followed by restrictions related to COVID-19, pray that these believers will be able to meet together in peace and without any further governmental opposition as soon as the global health concern subsides. In the meantime, may the situation give them increased opportunities to safely assist others of their village, so that more people in Azerbaijan will experience Christ's compassion and place their faith in Him.*

### **SUDAN: Positive Changes Regarding Apostasy Laws**

Sources: Sudan Tribune, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Mission Network News

In recent months, the transitional government of Sudan has been announcing the implementation of significant changes which could lead to expanded religious freedoms in the country. While

Christians remain cautious, there is optimism that some of the dangers they have faced may be abating.

In early March, committees that were once used to confiscate church properties have been disbanded, restoring ownership of the properties to the church members. Then, on March 8th, a government leader announced to the *Sudan Tribune* news that the death penalty for apostasy is to be removed. In its place, officials intend to introduce a law making it a criminal offense to accuse someone of apostasy.

Changes of this kind, if fully enacted, can make a significant impact on the lives of Christians. Around the world, accusations of apostasy have consistently been used as weapons against believers in Christ. Even though the government considers this move a demonstration of freedom of religion, valid concerns persist. While the punishment has been removed, the crime of apostasy remains in the Criminal Code, along with blasphemy. Additional information on the persecution of Christians in Sudan is available at [www.vomcanada.com/sudan.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/sudan.htm).

*Praise God for the positive steps toward religious freedom that have been evidenced thus far due to the decisions of those presently ruling Sudan. Pray that further steps will be taken to ensure true freedom is granted to Christians throughout the country. Also intercede for the stability of the new government, as it eventually transitions from military rule to civilian governance in 2022.*

*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](http://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](http://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](http://www.vomcanada.com/take-action.htm).