



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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*"You have been my help, and in the shadow
of Your wings I will sing for joy. My soul clings
to You; Your right hand upholds me."*

~ Psalm 63:7-8 ESV

UGANDA: Christian Woman Seriously Beaten

Sources: Morning Star News, Uganda Christian News

A young Christian woman from the village of Luwooko in eastern Uganda was ambushed and beaten on April 7th for sharing her faith. Lydia Nabirye, 23, is the daughter of an area evangelist. In early March, she shared her faith with a young Muslim woman who later came to salvation in Christ. After the new convert was threatened by family members, Lydia's family gave her refuge, along with six other converts from Islam.

On April 7th, Lydia had travelled to another village to visit a bereaved mother. As she returned, she was attacked by a mob, three of whom she could identify. The group said they intended to kill her because she was converting Muslims to Christianity. When nearby witnesses heard her cries, police were called and the assailants fled.

Lydia, her father Paul, and the rest of the family remain vigilant, knowing that Muslim villagers have sworn to harm them. This ministering family has particularly requested prayer for Muslim-background believers in the area.

Praise God for the ongoing ministry of Lydia and her family in reaching out with the message of His salvation. Pray for the protection of this ministering family and other Christians in Uganda who are sharing their faith. Ask the Lord to encourage all believers, especially those who frequently face wrath from their families for turning to Christ. May Lydia's wounds completely heal -- both physically and emotionally -- from the attack, and may she continue to find her strength in God who promises to be an ever-present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1).

INDIA: Christians Arrested for Preparing Relief Aid

Source: Morning Star News

A pastor and seven others were assembling relief packages for the poor in their area when they were assaulted and arrested by police officers. The police falsely claimed the group had gathered for worship in numbers forbidden under COVID-19 restrictions.

The pandemic lockdown has been hardest on the poor, who are now unable to obtain food and other necessities. India's prime minister recently called on citizens to help feed poor families. So Pastor Ramesh Kumar joined with others to answer that call. As they were preparing the gifts on April 25th, police stormed the home where they had gathered. After threatening the group and beating them with clubs, the police arrested four Christians, as well as the homeowner's three sons and nephew who were not members of the church.

While being interrogated, police insisted that the money to provide the aid must have come from foreign organizations, even though Pastor Ramesh insisted that church families had pooled their own resources to help. It was only when the village head, Kallu, arrived that the officers were willing to listen. After he signed a statement that the Christians had obtained permission to collect food for distribution to the village's nomadic beggars, the eight held in custody were thankfully released.

The next day, however, Pastor Ramesh discovered that a case had still been filed against them, alleging that the group had gathered for prayer. A local newspaper also reported that the church had continued gathering for worship in the pastor's home, though all services had been discontinued since mid-March due to quarantine restrictions. This kind of harassment is common in parts of India, where accusations from those opposed to the Gospel message are used to create problems for the followers of Christ. For more information on the persecution of Christians in India, including previously posted reports, go to www.vomcanada.com/india.htm.

Prayerfully lift up Pastor Ramesh and the other community members who assisted him with the humanitarian relief efforts, as they now face these false accusations. May they receive vindication in their case, resulting in all charges against them being dropped. Pray for God's blessing and protection to be upon them as they seek ways to continue reaching out with His love and compassion, despite threats of violence and any other forms of opposition they may encounter. Intercede for those opposed to the Gospel, asking God to help them recognize the love of Christ that is being demonstrated in these small but very significant tokens of kindness.

REPORT UPDATE

IRAN: Sentence Extended on Retrial

Source: Middle East Concern

When the judge requested a retrial for Ismaeil Maghrebinejad, there were hopes that justice would prevail. Ismaeil had received a two-year prison sentence on February 27th for his alleged "membership of a group hostile to the regime" (see www.vomcanada.com/ir-2020-03-12.htm). This sentence was in addition to a previous decision that was made on January 8th, when he was sentenced to three years for "insulting Islamic sacred beliefs."

In the most recent trial, Ismaeil's lawyer claims that the court had not been presented with "one single reason, piece of evidence or document that would justify the verdict." Despite that, the judge further convicted him on May 9th of "propaganda against the state" and added one more year to his prison sentence. Ismaeil intends to appeal all three convictions.

Pray that God will grant Ismaeil and his lawyer wisdom and guidance as they prepare for their appeal. May they rely on the leading of His Holy Spirit to give them the words that need to be conveyed in court (Matthew 10:19-20). Ask for the Lord's peace and comfort to also reign in the hearts of their concerned families and friends who are anxiously awaiting the outcome. While potentially facing an extended time of separation from his loved ones, may Ismaeil receive the strength and grace to persevere -- knowing that the Lord is far greater than any obstacle they encounter.

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.