



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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*"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to
receive power and wealth and wisdom and
might and honour and glory and blessing!"*

~ Revelation 5:12 ESV

SOUTH SUDAN: Christians Killed in Church Attack

Sources: Religion Unplugged, Barnabas Fund

At least 23 people were killed and 20 wounded when unidentified gunmen stormed an Anglican church in the village of Makol Cheui on July 27th. After killing the church's deacon, along with women and children who had sought refuge in the church compound, they vandalized the church, destroying worship instruments.

After killing the people of the church, the attackers moved throughout the village. When they finished their slaughter of innocent lives, the village was burned to the ground. Initially, six people were missing, and six children had been abducted. However, their bodies were later found in the bush.

Warring factions in South Sudan have created an extremely unstable situation. While 90 percent of Jonglei State would identify themselves as Christians, the overall population consists of many different ethnic groups. Among these groups are also those who oppose Christianity. Hundreds have died in the violence between the various groups. Attacks such as this risk jeopardizing ongoing peace talks within the country, in attempts to end the civil war.

Speaking about this situation, as well as another attack in which an archdeacon and three pastors were killed in the village of Jalle, Bishop Moses Anur Ayom gave the following statement: "I am not happy about this issue of killing and destroying churches. I would like to appeal to the international community to intervene. As a church leader, I forgive the gunmen. The Bible says we have to forgive those who do wrong to us."

Please pray that God's love and peace will prevail in this very troubled nation. Also prayerfully uphold the church leaders who are seeking to provide guidance to their people. May the perpetrators responsible for these recent attacks realize the gravity of their sin and come to Christ in genuine repentance, seeking the forgiveness that only He can provide and ultimately surrendering their lives to Him.

PAKISTAN: Man Charged with Blasphemy

Sources: CLAAS, Pakistan Christian Post, UCA News

A Christian man was beaten and charged with blasphemy on August 5th, following comments made on his Facebook account about the Islamic celebration of *Lailat al Miraj*. The celebration involves eating sacrificial meat. In response, Sohail Masih allegedly posted: "It is not possible that the blood of goats and bulls can wash away sins. The incident of Miraj is based on a lie." The post came to the attention of a mosque leader, who claimed that "Muslims were extremely hurt" by the comment.

As news of the post spread, a group gathered and began to beat Sohail. Police intervened, taking him to the police station. When the crowds heard that charges had not yet been laid against him, they began to attack the station until the accused was charged with blasphemy.

With the help of police, Sohail's wife Shunil, and their two young daughters, escaped to another city where they are being protected, since mobs threatened to burn down their house. Investigations into the incident raise disturbing questions. Those who know Sohail, a salesman at a small shop, say that he could not write and did not know how to share a post on his phone. It is believed someone may have maliciously shared the picture using his account while he was helping a customer. His wife acknowledges that he had seen the post but had not shared it, nor would he have done such a thing.

Pakistan's infamous blasphemy laws have been frequently abused, often as a way to attack Christians and even at times to obtain personal gain in business disputes. For more on the persecution facing Christians in Pakistan, go to www.vomcanada.com/pakistan.htm.

Please remember Sohail in your prayers, along with his wife, young daughters, parents and others who are facing backlash because of this incident. Pray that the truth will be revealed and justice will ultimately prevail, bringing freedom to the innocent. Also intercede for Pakistan's governmental and judicial leaders who need to recognize the many ways in which these laws are being seriously abused. May they be willing to make the necessary changes, despite opposition from Islamic leaders and members of the general public.

PRAISE REPORT

NEPAL: Pastor Finally Released on Bail

Sources: Morning Star News, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, The Himalayan Times

Pastor Keshab Raj Acharya was finally released on bail in late June after spending three months in prison. Sources state that the bail amount was exorbitant, considering the charges against him.

Pastor Keshab was first arrested on March 23rd, after a video was uploaded to YouTube in which he allegedly stated that God could heal COVID-19 through prayer. Despite denying that he uploaded the video, Pastor Keshab was arrested after being asked to pray for a woman who had contracted the virus. He was then charged with spreading false information and misleading his followers.

Released on bail April 8th, Pastor Keshab was rearrested the same day and further charged with "outraging religious feelings" and "attempting to convert." Bail was set at approximately \$5,500 CAD, which his wife couldn't afford to pay, and so he was returned to prison. When the bail was finally able to be posted on May 13th, police arrested him a third time while he was still at the courthouse. This time, he was charged with printing and distributing Gospel tracts.

After being denied bail again, Pastor Keshab was transferred to a remote prison that is renowned for its harsh conditions. In late June, a judge reviewed the case and set bail at \$3,300 CAD. Five days later, Pastor Keshab was finally released. On behalf of their family, which includes the couple's two young children, his wife Junu is thankful for the prayers and support of fellow Christians. During this time, however, as the church was unable to pay the rent for the facility, they had to vacate the building.

Join us in praising God for working out Pastor Keshab's eventual release! Pray that all the charges against him will be dropped and that he will remain free to raise his young children in the ways of the Lord and continue ministering to others, despite this setback. May God provide these believers a suitable worship facility, in fulfillment of the Scriptural promise that He will build His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). Additionally, may this pastoring couple be given wisdom and divinely appointed opportunities as they endeavour to bring this about in their community.

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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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.