



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

Thursday, September 17, 2020

"Whoever wishes to meet Jesus must meet Him in places where brothers and sisters of Jesus are hungry, thirsty, naked, unwanted, sick or in prison. Whoever keeps himself distant from these places remains distant from Jesus."

~ Pastor Richard Wurmbrand

ERITREA: 31 Christian Prisoners Released

Sources: Release International, Release Eritrea, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, International Christian Concern, Church in Chains

The Eritrean government has released 31 Christians from Mai Serwa prison who were detained without charge or trial for years. It is believed there were 21 men and 10 women in this group, and that none of them were church leaders. At least two of the women were minors when first imprisoned -- one was only 12 years old (age 28 today); and the other was 16 (now 30). This action follows the release of 22 Methodist Christians from another prison in July.

Recently received reports indicate that a total of 54 believers are expected to be released, beginning with those who were imprisoned the longest. The reasons for the release have not been given, though it may be connected to the COVID-19 pandemic. For those who have been liberated, however, conditions remain. It is reported that these prisoners are not free to leave the country, and that property deeds were submitted as a guarantee.

Estimates pertaining to the number of Christian prisoners in the country range from 300 to 3,000. Many of these believers have been detained without charge for more than a decade. Some, such as those in the Mai Serwa prison, have been kept in metal shipping containers -- exposed to the desert heat by day and the cold by night. The remaining prisoners may also face beatings and torture due to the officials' attempts to force the renouncement of these believers' faith. A video report with Dr. Berhane from Release Eritrea will be released shortly. An excerpt is available at www.vomcanada.com/video/release-eritrea.

Praise God for the release of these believers who have stood firm in the midst of extreme trials. May their endurance be a source of inspiration to other followers of Christ. Please pray that fellow Christians would come alongside those who have been discharged as they now seek the Lord's direction and try to readjust to life outside of prison after spending years in custody. Ask God to touch the hearts of Eritrea's governing authorities, in hopes they will change their ways and encourage true religious harmony in the country. Also pray that the Lord will continue ministering to the many Eritrean believers who are still imprisoned for their faith, as well as the family members suffering alongside them. May these incarcerated believers likewise be acquitted.

CHINA: Summer Camp Raided

Sources: ChinaAid, The Christian Post

A church-run summer camp was raided on August 23rd, resulting in the confiscation of personal and church property, as well as the temporary detention of the pastor and his wife. The police and religious bureau officials claim that the church in Gushi was organizing religious events without authorization. According to one church leader, Wang Guangming, the students were learning music theory when the raid occurred.

Officials affirmed that they were acting upon a report from citizens. Earlier in August, the administration of Gushi issued an official notice encouraging citizens to report any non-approved religious events, offering incentives of \$100 CAD. Further details on the persecution of Christians in China can be reviewed at www.vomcanada.com/china.htm.

Please remember the ministry of Christian camps and churches throughout China, asking God to bless these endeavours to spread the Gospel and encourage people to gather for worship despite the government's organized campaign against them. Pray that the hostility of their opposers will dissipate, allowing these Christians to resume worship in safety and peace. May the country's church leaders be granted the wisdom and strength they need to effectively lead their people -- ultimately yielding a vast spiritual harvest for the glory of our Lord.

REPORT UPDATE

PAKISTAN: Zafar Bhatti Recovers from Heart Attack in Prison

Sources: Pakistan Christian News, Church in Chains

Zafar Bhatti has been in prison since 2012 after being charged with sending blasphemous text messages. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2017. Diagnosed with diabetes, the 56-year-old Christian had two minor heart attacks in 2019 and suffers from eyesight problems. It was recently reported that he had another heart attack on September 3rd. Though he received swift medical attention in prison, there are ongoing concerns for his physical and mental health, as well as apprehension over the medical care he is receiving outside of the hospital setting.

Due to threats from fellow inmates, Zafar is presently being held under tight security. His case is under appeal, but the hearings have been repeatedly delayed. (To review a previously posted report on his case, go to www.vomcanada.com/pk-2019-06-27.htm.) In addition to a brief court meeting that was held on September 10th, in which a medical report was ordered by the judge, Zafar's lawyer was allowed to visit him in prison.

The legal team from Centre for Legal Aid Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS) reports the good news that Zafar's faith in Christ remains strong and that he is recovering from his recent ailment. Zafar told them that his Saviour will protect him and that "soon I'll be out of the jail." In the meantime, he has asked for Christians around the world to pray that he will be proven innocent and thus released from prison.

Please continue to intercede for Zafar and his wife Nawab Bibi. May the Lord mediate on his behalf, miraculously making a way for his safe release. In the meantime, pray that he will receive proper medical treatment and be kept safe from those in prison who wish him harm. Pray that the hearts of Zafar's opposers will be radically transformed; that they may witness God's light shining through Zafar's life and countenance. As he continues to faithfully express the love and goodness of Christ, may many others in Pakistan come to a point of repentance and salvation.

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.

The Persecution & Prayer Alert is a ministry of:
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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.