



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
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*"And when they bring you before the synagogues
and the rulers and the authorities, do not be
anxious about how you should defend yourself or
what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach
you in that very hour what you ought to say."*

~ Luke 12:11-12 ESV

CUBA: Church Building Destroyed

Sources: Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Morning Star News

In the early morning of October 30th, authorities arrived with equipment and began demolishing the Assemblies of God church in Santiago de Cuba. The church, led by Pastor Faustino (Fausto) Palomo Cabrera, belongs to a legally recognized denomination.

Cuban authorities claim that the building had been demolished to make way for train tracks. However, it is the only building in the area that was subjected to destruction. The church has been targeted since 2015, when the authorities initially issued an order for the building to be torn down. At the time, they backed off after church members and Christians from other areas joined to protest the action.

Pastor Fausto and the denominational superintendent are now being pressured to sign an agreement, which could be used to indicate that the demolition was carried out legally. Sources also report that authorities are attempting to charge the pastor for the cost of the machinery used for the demolition. It is believed this is an attempt to show that the action was not in violation of religious freedom.

During the demolition, a human rights advocate and prominent pastor from another church, Pastor Alain Toledano, filmed the scene. Police took him into custody, along with two other members of his church. They were detained for nine hours before being released. For more

information on the persecution of Christians in Cuba, and to review previously posted reports, go to www.vomcanada.com/cuba.htm.

Pray for Pastor Fausto as he deals with the authorities regarding this matter. Ask our Heavenly Father to grant him wisdom -- guiding his every step as he moves forward -- so the members of his congregation can continue meeting together for worship. Mindful that God's greatest glory often follows a time of suffering, may these believers be strengthened and well-equipped to face any challenges that lie ahead while remaining unified in the love of Christ. Also intercede on behalf of the authorities responsible for the destruction of the church building. May they witness the grace and love of our Lord Jesus through the lives of His faithful followers and, as a result, come to acknowledge Him as their personal Saviour as well.

SRI LANKA: Pastor Ordered to Stop Worship Activities

Source: National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka

As a Sunday prayer service was concluding on October 18th, six police officers arrived at the Assemblies of God church in Bakamuna. The pastor and one of his congregation members were taken to the police station where eight Buddhist monks were awaiting them. The Officer-in-Charge (OIC) chastised the pastor for continuing worship activities despite opposition from monks in the village. The pastor was then ordered to cease all church operations immediately.

When the pastor asked to be given the demands in writing, the OIC refused. The church leader then stated that if he was breaking the law, charges should be filed against him. Again, his request was denied. Before being released, the police seized a list containing the names of all the congregants, a document that had been intended for COVID-19 contact tracing.

Churches in Sri Lanka frequently encounter questioning and harassment from authorities. In another recent example, a church in Nawalapitiya was visited by police on September 17th. The officer questioned the pastor about various things, including the church's registration status and the total number of members. To learn more about the challenges facing Christians in Sri Lanka, please visit www.vomcanada.com/srilanka.htm.

Lift up to God in prayer each of these pastors who were recently subjected to interrogation and questioning by local authorities. Whenever encountering such situations of harassment, may these church leaders sense the Lord's empowering presence through the ministry of His Holy Spirit, who will give them the very words to say in their moments of need (Luke 12:11-12). Despite the persecution at hand, may these pastors and their church members be encouraged to continue fervently representing Him in their communities. In a world that's growing cold with hatred, pray that our Christian brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka will serve as shining witnesses of the love and warmth of Christ, so that even their persecutors will be drawn to Him.

PRAISE REPORT

SOMALIA: Arrested Couple Released

Sources: Middle East Concern, Barnabas Fund

On September 21st, police in the self-declared autonomous region of Somaliland detained a Christian couple. They were described as "apostates and evangelists spreading Christianity." To view a previously published report on the arrest, go to www.vomcanada.com/so-2020-10-15.htm.

The couple, who are the parents of three children, appeared in court several times after their detainment. In the wake of pressure from European governmental representatives, the regional court ordered on November 1st that they be released and deported from the area. The couple is now living in a different region of Somalia.

Somaliland declared independence from Somalia in 1991, although it remains internationally recognized as part of Somalia. The constitution of the region specifies 'freedom of belief' but this area is actually being governed by strict Islamic law, barring the propagation of any religion other than Islam and prohibiting Muslims from converting to another religion. For more on religious persecution in Somalia, visit www.vomcanada.com/somalia.htm.

Praise God that this couple have been released without charge and reunited with their children. Ask Him to supply the provisions they need after being forced to resettle in another location of Somalia. As they get settled, pray that this family will be truly safe and free to practise their faith without opposition. May their most recent trial serve to strengthen and deepen their commitment to God, giving them the boldness to share His love with their new neighbours, drawing many out of darkness and into the light of Christ.

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