



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy
and peace in believing, so that by the power
of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."*

~ Romans 15:13 ESV

VIETNAM: Church Leadership Assembly Forced to Cancel

Sources: International Christian Concern, Morning Star News

Vietnam's largest evangelical church group has called off its assembly to elect new leaders after the Vietnamese government denied permission to hold the meeting. The Evangelical Church of Vietnam (South) announced on November 25th that the gathering scheduled for early February was being postponed. That same day, the government's Bureau of Religious Affairs released a statement urging the ECVN(S) to observe Article 34 of the Law on Belief and Religion in order to hold the assembly.

The issue revolves around a legal requirement introduced during 2018, in which the names and résumés of all leadership candidates must be submitted to the government for approval prior to church elections. This mandate is perceived by the church as a way to filter out candidates who are not supportive of the government. The church insists that such a requirement is contrary to the constitution and practice of the ECVN(S), further declaring that they will not give a Communist government the authority to determine who is fit to lead the church. For more on the challenges facing Christians in Vietnam, go to www.vomcanada.com/vietnam.htm.

Please lift up in prayer this church and others in Vietnam that are seeking ways to faithfully serve our Lord Jesus Christ, even amid these intensifying government restraints. Pray for a resolution to this impasse, asking God to break down the barriers and grant favour to His followers by working in the hearts of governing officials. May the light of Christ shine brightly through the lives of Christians in Vietnam, radiating His love and saving grace to all those around them.

D. R. CONGO: Christians Targeted in Village Raids

Sources: Barnabas Fund, Morning Star News

At least 30 Christians have been killed in a string of attacks on villages in the Democratic Republic of Congo between November 20th and December 3rd. Along with these deaths, ten women and girls were raped and fifteen were abducted. An Islamist rebel group, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), is believed to be responsible.

One of the raids took place in the village of Mayitike, where a local pastor lost his entire family. The unnamed pastor said that the rebels tried to force his wife and four children to convert to Islam. When they refused, all five were slaughtered. The pastor was spared only because he was out of town that day. Security officials confirm that Christians were specifically targeted, as the rebels killed those who refused to convert to Islam.

In 2019, the country's army launched a large-scale operation against the rebel group. It is believed that the numerous attacks perpetrated against civilians since then have been acts of revenge. According to the United Nations, over a thousand civilians died at the hands of the ADF between January 2019 and August 2020.

Prayerfully uphold the many civilians now mourning the loss of innocent lives due to these devastating events. Also intercede on behalf of those who were injured and traumatized in the attacks, asking God to provide these surviving victims greatly needed healing and strength. May fellow Christians gather around them in their time of need, ministering Christ's everlasting compassion and comfort (2 Corinthians 1:4). Pray that the violent invasions of the militants will subside, bringing peace not only between governmental and rebel groups, but to the nation as a whole.

EGYPT: Riots Follow Blasphemy Accusation

Sources: Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin, Mission Network News, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Watani

Egypt's Minya Governorate region erupted in violence on November 25th after rumours spread that a young, barely literate Christian man named Girgis Sameeh posted a message on Facebook that was considered insulting to Islam. In al-Barsha, Girgis' hometown, hundreds of Muslims attacked the homes of Coptic Christians, also looting and destroying local businesses. The fury of the mob spread to the church of Abou Sefin, where the congregation was celebrating the beginning of a fast for the Advent season.

Thankfully, there were only a few reported injuries. Due to the intervention of a concerned Muslim neighbour, the family of Girgis received protection from the rioters. Following the skirmish, police arrested about a hundred Muslims and Christians, detaining those from both sides to avoid accusations of bias. At last report, 20 Muslims and ten Christians face two weeks' detention for questioning.

In retaliation to the lockdowns imposed to stop further riots, some Muslim villagers resorted to burning farm buildings used for cattle and feed, as well as boycotting businesses owned by Christians.

Such violent outbursts are not uncommon in Egypt and are often based on rumours. Girgis' brother cannot believe that he would do such a thing, saying, "That's not how he was taught to behave." To learn more about the persecution of Christians in Egypt, and review previously posted reports, go to www.vomcanada.com/egypt.htm.

Praise God that no fatalities resulted from these violent riots. Ask Him to minister His peace upon this troubled Egyptian community and, in the process, provide the governing authorities wisdom as they mediate between the people groups and seek ways to deal justly with the destructive acts of retaliation. May the Christians of this region walk in obedience to God's Word despite these challenges, serving as wonderful examples of His love and peace. Uphold those who are now without homes or businesses, and experiencing numerous hardships as a result, asking the Lord to bless them with needed provision and restoration. Finally, may His intervention also take place during the questioning period, ensuring that the truth will prevail and the detained believers be freed.

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