



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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*"By surrendering our very lives to Jesus,
the objective of oppression cannot succeed,
even though we suffer from it."*

~ Floyd A. Brobbel, CEO

KENYA: Five Church Buildings Burned

Sources: International Christian Concern, Morning Star News, Citizen TV

Five church buildings were destroyed by fire in the town of Otamba, Kisii County, between January 21st and 26th, causing great concern among the residents of the community. While ten people were arrested shortly afterwards, the motive behind the attacks is unknown at this point.

In the first incident, St. Monica's Church was burned in the early morning of January 21st. Over the next few days, The Worldwide Church, the Nyang'eni Seventh Day Adventist church, the Legio Maria church and the Otamba Pentecostal Church compound were also set on fire. The vandals added insult by throwing human feces at the burning buildings.

In the aftermath, church members have been fearful that their homes and families may likewise be in danger. The financial losses suffered by these congregations are huge, as the structures and contents of the buildings were extensively destroyed. Church leaders are calling for increased security in the area, as well as demanding the prosecution of those responsible.

In response to the attacks, the pastor of the Legio Maria church proclaimed, "Evil should not overcome the good that the Gospel of Christ brings." For more on the incidents of persecution experienced by Christians in Kenya, go to www.vomcanada.com/kenya.htm.

Prayerfully lift up the members of these destroyed churches as they seek direction in the days to come. Ask that the financial needs of these congregations would be met, and that they will receive the healing and emotional support required to overcome the resulting trauma. May those responsible for the crimes be held accountable for their actions. Ask God to work

mightily in the hearts of each community member -- including those of the perpetrators -- drawing more people to faith in Christ.

PRAISE REPORT

ERITREA: 83 More Christian Prisoners Released!

Source: Church in Chains

Over the past six months, we have been pleased to announce the release of Christian prisoners from Eritrean prisons. According to a recent report from Church in Chains, at least 83 more Christians have been released since late January. Some of those released had been held in captivity for more than ten years, often under horrific conditions.

Those recently released include Mussie Eyob, who was arrested in February 2011 for preaching to Muslims (www.vomcanada.com/er-2015-04-09.htm). The names of other recently freed believers are also becoming known. It has been revealed that Twen Theodros was released in late 2020. Helen Berhane writes of her friendship with Twen in her autobiography, *Song of the Nightingale*. As they suffered together in the same shipping container, Twen often cared for Helen's physical needs. For more on Twen's story, see www.vomcanada.com/er-twen-theodros.htm.

It is now believed that there are about 150 Christians remaining imprisoned in Eritrea. The reason behind the releases is unclear, but it may be an attempt to deflect international attention away from the involvement of Eritrean troops in the war within the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

Praise be to our Heavenly Father for mightily working on behalf of His suffering children and making it possible for more of them to be freed from prison! May the governing officials of Eritrea refrain from opposing the Gospel and stop their oppression of His people. Pray that the Christians remaining in prison will be encouraged and fortified by the presence of the Holy Spirit among them as they eagerly await their hopeful release from captivity.

PRISONER UPDATE

IRAN: Ebrahim Firouzi Facing Additional Charges

Sources: Middle East Concern, Article18

Iranian convert Ebrahim Firouzi has spent years in prison for his faith. After being released from prison in October 2020, he began serving his two-year exile in another part of the country. For further information on Ebrahim's case, go to www.vomcanada.com/ir-2020-04-02.htm. A more recently produced video interview, in which Dr. Hormoz Shariat references Ebrahim, can be viewed at www.vomcanada.com/video/hormoz.

In early February, Ebrahim released a series of six videos detailing the persecution he was facing while in exile. Even his brother, who is not a Christian, was experiencing harassment because of Ebrahim's faith. As a result of these videos, Ebrahim was charged on February 8th with "propaganda against the Islamic Republic in favour of hostile groups" and moved to Chabahar Prison.

To protest the new charges, Ebrahim started a hunger strike on February 13th, declaring that he would not eat until the new charges were dropped. Shortly after, he received a visit from two intelligence agents who assured him that the case would be "dealt with," and Ebrahim ended his protest. According to local sources, he is due to be released from prison by the end of this week.

Praise God for this quick and positive outcome to Ebrahim's most recent imprisonment. Pray that the authorities will follow through by releasing him from prison and cease the harassment of his family. Ask the Lord to miraculously liberate him from his remaining term in exile. In the interim, may Ebrahim's enduring faith in Christ continue to be a testimony to those around him and, as a result of the international exposure his case is receiving, in many other parts of the world as well.

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