



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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"Whoever does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."

~ Matthew 10:38-39 ESV

SRI LANKA: Christians Beaten Following Prayer Meeting

Source: NCEASL

On the afternoon of November 20th, the pastor of the Gospel Tabernacle Church in Polgolla, Sri Lanka, went to visit a Christian family with another member of his congregation for a time of prayer. As they were concluding their time together, the Christians noticed that a crowd had gathered outside, including a Buddhist monk.

Concerned about what was happening, the pastor and homeowner went to speak with the people. When the monk found out who the pastor was, he admonished the resident, declaring the town a "Buddhist village" in which the pastor is not welcome. In an effort to peacefully diffuse the situation, the visiting pastor suggested they discuss the matter further at a local temple, but his offer was refused.

The crowd then surrounded a home across the street, which belonged to another member of the pastor's church. They began shouting at the resident, demanding to know why she goes to church and the reason her children no longer attend *Daham pasal* (Buddhist religious instruction). Since the woman was alone, the pastor and other Christians attempted to intervene on her behalf. Yet the mob began to beat them, inflicting cuts on the body of one of the defending believers. The pastor and three other wounded congregants have since received medical treatment at a local hospital for their injuries.

For reports on previous incidents of violence against Christians in Sri Lanka, please go to www.vomcanada.com/srilanka.htm.

Praise God that no one was seriously injured in this recent attack. Pray that the peacemaking efforts of each targeted believer will serve as a vibrant testimony to their opposing neighbours, reflecting the light of Christ's love to all those around them. Please also intercede for the ongoing ministry of this pastor and the members of his church, asking the Lord to fill them with wisdom, courage and strength as they endeavour to share the Gospel in the midst of a hostile environment.

ALGERIA: Pastor Receives Fine

Sources: Morning Star News, International Christian Concern

In July of this year, an Algerian Christian referred to as "Ahmed Beghal" (name changed due to security concerns) was sentenced to six months in prison and fined 100,000 dinars (\$920 CAD) for "shaking the faith of a Muslim," along with printing Christian literature and distributing Bibles. Ahmed denied all charges against him and appealed his sentence.

On December 1st, the results of the appeal were announced. Though the six-month sentence was suspended, the fine has been upheld. The conviction was for allegedly "accepting donations without a license" in order to spread Christianity.

The accusation goes back to the summer of 2020 when the accused Algerian Christian was stranded in Tunisia due to COVID-19 restrictions. To assist with accommodations while there, his friend in Germany sent him 200 euros. When the believer was eventually able to return home to Algeria, he discovered that the police had accessed his bank account during the interrogation about the money. The police claimed that the payment was for religious propagation.

This case is one of many in an apparent crackdown on Christians in Algeria, which has been taking place over the past few years. For more information on the persecution facing Christians in Algeria, go to www.vomcanada.com/algeria.htm.

Pray that Ahmed will experience God's provision, strength, favour and peace as he faces this sentence. May the truth become known by court officials so that this faithful follower of Jesus will be exonerated from the false accusations against him. Continue to pray for the many other Christians throughout Algeria who are encountering opposition for their faith.

PRAISE REPORT

NIGERIA: All Emmanuel Baptist Hostages Released!

Sources: Church in Chains, The Guardian, NaijaNews, International Christian Concern, Vanguard

Christians in Kaduna State, Nigeria, were devastated after an attack took place in the village of Kakau Daji on October 31st in which at least one worshipper was killed and 66 kidnapped. (See www.vomcanada.com/ng-2021-11-11.htm for an earlier posted report about this incident.) Sadly,

five of the hostages were shot by their captors on November 6th, leaving two dead and three others hospitalized.

We are grateful to receive news that all 61 remaining hostages from the church were released on December 3rd, along with nine other hostages unrelated to the abduction of the congregation members. Rev. John Joseph Hayab, chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria, announced the release, stating that a ransom had been paid to gain their freedom. All the surviving hostages were taken to a hospital for post-trauma evaluation and have since been reunited with their families.

While kidnapping for ransom is becoming increasingly common in Nigeria, many of the incidents have the added element of religious opposition, as Islamic militants specifically target Christians. Unfortunately, ransom is not always available and, even when paid, does not guarantee the safe release of the victims.

On November 8th, Pastor Dauda Bature was kidnapped and ransom had been demanded by his captors. When his wife brought money for his release on November 18th, she was also abducted. The kidnapers eventually released her on December 6th, keeping the money, and then demanded more money for Pastor Dauda's freedom. Days later, before any funds could be raised, the pastor was tragically killed.

While we can praise God for the recent release of the 61 Christians, we are reminded of the need to continue praying for the many others still being held in captivity by militant groups. May He provide these abducted Nigerian brothers and sisters in Christ -- as well as all who are mediating on their behalf -- wisdom, guidance and encouragement so they can respond to persecution with His forgiveness and love. In the midst of the threats and violence, ask the Lord to ensure the safety of Christians throughout the country by helping Nigeria's governing authorities to take necessary steps to end the bloodshed of innocent lives.

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