



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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"...praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints...."

~ Ephesians 6:18 ESV

LAOS: Pastor Tortured and Killed

Sources: Radio Free Asia, Anglican Ink, UCA News, Church in Chains

On October 23rd, an evangelical pastor in Laos was found murdered after he had been kidnapped and badly beaten. His body was discovered near his motorbike in a forested area outside Donkeo village in Khammouane province.

According to an eyewitness, three men in a black truck had seized Sy Seng Manee a few days earlier. At the time, the bystander thought the men were capturing a criminal, and so he did not intervene -- only to realize later that he had instead witnessed the pastor's kidnapping.

Local residents believe that Sy, also known as Pastor Seetoud, was murdered because of his religious beliefs and evangelistic work. According to church leaders, his activities were being monitored. In fact, prior to the abduction, he had received warnings from local authorities, as well as relatives and neighbours, that he could face harm if he continued to share his faith.

While Christians are officially free to practise their faith and preach the Gospel in Laos, they often encounter opposition from local authorities and residents. Previously, back in 2018, Pastor Seetoud had been arrested and briefly detained for his evangelistic ministry. For more reports addressing the persecution of Christians in Laos, go to www.vomcanada.com/laos.htm.

Remember the family and friends of the late Pastor Seetoud in your prayers. May God's grace and comfort fill their hearts, bringing them an unexplainable peace and joy in the midst of sorrow -- knowing that this faithful minister of the Gospel has gone on to receive his eternal

reward. Pray that those responsible for this attack will be brought to justice, in hopes they will turn from their wicked ways and seek God's forgiveness and salvation. Please also pray for the continuance of evangelism in this community, asking that Pastor Seetoud's death would not be in vain, but that the Lord would use his life's witness to draw many more people to Jesus Christ.

KAZAKHSTAN: Banking Access Blocked for Church

Source: Forum 18

For the past five years, the New Life Pentecostal Church has encountered repeated problems while trying to gain access to banking services -- to the point of the recurring situation being described as "incomprehensible." With no access, the church administration has had difficulties paying necessary taxes, along with numerous other challenges.

The problem began during April 2017 when the church, located in Talgar of the southern Almaty Region, received a donation from abroad to help with the purchase of a church building. The bank considered the transaction "suspicious" and referred it to the Finance Ministry, resulting in the church's account being frozen. It took more than three years, along with court action, before access to the bank account was regained. However, the bank then announced that the church had three days to remove all funds before the account was to be permanently closed. Unfortunately, this was not the end of the banking issues.

In April 2021, a different bank branch cancelled an account belonging to the church because the ministry was found to be listed by the Financial Monitoring Agency as a "high-risk" or "suspicious" organization. The list is routinely circulated to all banks for the intent of tracking individuals and businesses potentially connected with terrorism or extremism.

While a church can exist without a bank account, there will be a significant amount of difficulty trying to conduct tax transactions, employment payroll and other financial dealings. This church is not alone in dealing with such issues. Some Islamic organizations, along with the Jehovah's Witnesses headquarters, and 12 of their congregations, have also been listed. When contacted, the monitoring agency was unwilling to state which organizations had been flagged and what procedures were required to be removed from the list. Thankfully, after four years, the Jehovah's Witnesses were finally informed on September 16th that they were no longer listed as a "high-risk entity" and were able to regain access to their bank accounts.

The New Life Church in Kazakhstan and its branches have long been targeted by the government. The New Life Church in Almaty, which is a separate legal entity, has particularly experienced ongoing problems, including the seizure of two buildings and the arrest of three pastors (see www.vomcanada.com/kz-2020-10-08.htm for more details). The pastors, who are now living in exile, would face prison if they returned to the country. For more accounts of the various challenges facing Christians in Kazakhstan, go to www.vomcanada.com/kazakhstan.htm.

Please prayerfully uphold the church leaders presently experiencing these banking issues, including the representatives of the church in Talgar, asking the Lord to mediate on their

behalf so an effective resolution can be obtained. Throughout the process, may the country's various governmental agencies -- namely, the Financial Monitoring Agency -- willingly collaborate, even if they are not in agreement with the congregations' Christian beliefs. Additionally, please pray that the churches in Kazakhstan will be able to continue their ministries unhindered, seizing every opportunity to reach out with the "Good News" of the Gospel.

REPORT UPDATE

CHINA: Trial for Teachers Rescheduled

Source: ChinaAid

In August 2021, four house church leaders were arrested for allegedly carrying out "illegal business operations" due to their involvement with a house church school in Wuhu, Anhui State. Two of the arrested Christians were later released on bail, but the others, Wan Hongxia and Wang Minghai, were formally charged and have since been awaiting trial. For more information on their arrests, see www.vomcanada.com/cn-2022-03-24.htm.

The case involving these two believers had initially been scheduled to go to court earlier this month but was postponed. The trial is now rescheduled to take place tomorrow, November 25th. After speaking to their families, ChinaAid reports that Wan and Wang have expressed their desire to testify without pleading guilty. Their families report that they "constantly pray" and affirm that they are "willing to bear the cross and be imprisoned with other Christians who are jailed for the sake of the Gospel." To learn more about the persecution of believers in China, go to www.vomcanada.com/china.htm.

Please join us in taking time today to pray for this imminent trial. May God honour the prayers of these two imprisoned Christian leaders. Praise God for His strengthening presence, which is sustaining the hearts and minds of persecuted Christians throughout China, even if they are confined in prison cells. Pray that, no matter the outcome of tomorrow's trial, these believers will continue to lean on Christ for ongoing strength, comfort and the peace that "surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

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