



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
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*"For as we share abundantly in Christ's
sufferings, so through Christ we
share abundantly in comfort too."*

~ 2 Corinthians 1:5 ESV

PAKISTAN: Official Threatens Christian with Blasphemy Charges

Sources: AsiaNews, Daily Times, The Express Tribune, Kross Konnection

A Christian security guard at the Jinnah International Airport in Karachi, Pakistan, was recently threatened with blasphemy charges because she insisted on following regulations. Thankfully, the incident was captured on video footage, documenting the entire exchange.

On January 7th, a female security officer stopped a vehicle from entering the airport's cargo area because the driver did not have the necessary documentation. Her superior insisted that the vehicle should be allowed to enter, since the driver was a friend of his. Standing by the airport's regulations, the Christian woman refused, which angered her superior. Threatening to "cut [her] up," he further warned that he would file complaints of blasphemy against her. In response, the security officer challenged him to go ahead with the accusations, stating that it is he who's disrespecting his religion.

Video footage of the confrontation circulated on social media, bringing condemnation from many. Responding to the incident, the Civil Aviation Authority issued a statement announcing that the offending official has been dismissed and a detailed investigation was ordered.

While the Christian woman was vindicated of the allegations against her, the incident demonstrates the treatment commonly experienced by religious minorities in Pakistan. Accusations of blasphemy are frequently used to threaten, punish or gain an advantage over others. For more information on the challenges facing our Christian brothers and sisters in Pakistan, go to www.vomcanada.com/pakistan.htm.

Praise God for the positive response of the authorities in regards to this potentially dangerous situation. Remember to pray for the numerous other Pakistani believers who are receiving similar threats because of their faith in Christ. Despite opposition, may they remain true to their convictions by not compromising their moral values and integrity. As a result, may the truth of God's Word continue to spread throughout Pakistan so that many will be reached with the message of the Gospel.

PRISONER UPDATES

CHINA: Seventeen Months Without a Trial

Source: ChinaAid

On August 7th, 2021, police officers arrested Pastor Wang Xiaoguang and his wife Yang Rongli, along with ten other members of the Golden Lampstand Church in Linfen, China. For Pastor Wang and Yang, this situation was not unexpected, as the ministering couple had previously served prison sentences of three and seven years respectively after being arrested in 2009. (See www.vomcanada.com/cn-2016-12-01.htm for more details on these prior arrests.)

The 12 Christians initially received 15-day detentions; however, at the end of that term, they were further detained on suspicion of "fraud" because tithes and offerings had been received by the church. Each of the imprisoned church members were approached by the police, who demanded that they sever ties with the church and accuse Pastor Wang and Yang of fraud.

After encountering increasing pressure from the police, five church members ultimately agreed to comply and were released on bail. The remaining seven believers (including the pastor and his wife) continue to be held in prison after more than 17 months without a trial. The church's lay leadership has especially requested prayer for Pastor Wang and Minister Yang, who are both elderly and not in good health.

Prayerfully uphold Pastor Wang, Minister Yang, and the other five church members who are presently being detained. May God provide each one of them the strength, endurance and health needed to endure this lengthy ordeal. Pray that court officials will proceed with the case, ensuring that true justice is upheld for these innocent believers so they can be rightfully acquitted of any possible charges and subsequently released. Continue to pray for other church members who are faithfully continuing in ministry, despite the absence of pastoral leadership due to Pastor Wang and Minister Yang's detainment.

CHINA: Christians Released on Bail

Source: Bob Fu (ChinaAid)

With thanksgiving, Bob Fu from ChinaAid reported on social media that Wang Minghai and Wan Hongxia were released from prison on January 13th. The two Christians had been detained since their arrests in August 2021. They were charged with conducting "illegal business

operations" due to their involvement with a private Christian school. (A previous report on the situation can be reviewed at www.vomcanada.com/cn-2022-11-24.htm.)

Few details surrounding the release of these two Christian leaders are presently available. According to fellow prisoners, both leaders were referred to as "great joyful witnesses of the Lord" while in prison.

Please join us in praising God for His faithfulness, giving Him thanks for the release of these two believers from imprisonment. Pray that their legal troubles will be fully resolved so they can resume their ministry activities without fear of further harassment from the authorities. Continue to prayerfully remember other Chinese followers of Jesus who are still being detained for their faith, as well as their concerned family members, asking that each of these believers will experience renewed strength, comfort and peace.

CHINA: Sentence Upheld for House Church Pastor

Source: ChinaAid

In July 2019, Pastor Hao Zhiwei from the Egangqiao Church was arrested for allegedly swindling money. The charges came about because the Christian leader collected financial offerings to support the unregistered house church she was overseeing. Since the church is not part of the country's Three-Self Patriotic Movement, authorities of the Communist government deemed it illegal. (See www.vomcanada.com/cn-2022-02-24.htm to review a previous report.)

On February 11th, 2022, Pastor Hao received notice that she had been sentenced to eight years in prison. Although she had appealed her conviction, the original verdict was upheld by court officials on December 12th. According to Pastor Hao's lawyer, Si Weijiang, since the church is not part of the officially authorized Three-Self Patriotic Movement, the courts have ruled that it cannot be called a church. And since it is not considered a church, Pastor Hao is not recognized as a pastor. Therefore, any money collected to support its function is considered fraud.

Pastor Hao, who is 52 years old, is a single mother of two. Her eldest son, Paul, is a college student. Her younger son, Moses, has struggled with depression because of his mother's imprisonment. Church members have been providing assistance to the family as needed.

Continue to pray for Pastor Hao, as well as her two sons. May God meet each of their needs, granting them grace and healing strength during this difficult time of separation. As they now deal with this further disappointment, pray that God will continue to provide them greatly needed encouragement. Ask the Lord to surround Paul and Moses with a loving community of fellow believers, and that He would also make it possible for Pastor Hao to experience the joy and comfort of fellowship with other imprisoned Christians while she remains in custody.