



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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"Only in the cross of Christ will we receive power when we are powerless. We will find strength when we are weak. We will experience hope when our situation is hopeless. Only in the cross is there peace for our troubled hearts."

~ Michael Youssef

Special times in the Christian calendar are frequently used as opportunities for persecutors to strike out against followers of Jesus around the world. This Easter season, as believers celebrate the spiritual freedom that was made available through the death and resurrection of Christ, please pray that God's peace will guard the hearts and minds of those who continue to place their trust in Him.

NIGERIA: Two Nigerian States Face a Spate of Violent Attacks

Sources: Release International, Morning Star News, The Guardian, International Christian Concern

Recent attacks by militants in Nigeria have resulted in dozens of deaths, along with kidnappings and the destruction of homes. Many Christians were targeted in these repeated violent attacks, often the result of their perpetrators' strict adherence to militant Islamic ideology. For more details on the suffering of Christians in Nigeria, go to www.vomcanada.com/nigeria.htm.

The state of Benue has had more than 60 villagers slain in the past month. On April 1st, at least six Christians were killed in the village of Ikobi in Apa County. According to one resident, several homes were razed. That same evening, a worship service in Logo County was attacked. During the raid, militants killed a Christian man named Orolumunga Changogi, wounded five other worshippers, and kidnapped five church members, including Pastor Gwadue Kwaghtyo.

In Kaduna state during the previous month, 27 Christians were killed as a result of two separate attacks in Zangon Kataf County. On March 10th, the village of Ungwan Wakili was invaded.

According to witnesses, the culprits were "Muslim Fulani herdsmen who came along with terrorists." Four days later, ten Christians were killed in the village of Langson, and dozens more were reportedly left injured.

A couple additional separate incidents took place in March involving the invasion of homes belonging to two different pastors in Kaduna. On March 10th, the residence of Pastor Dadi Babas was broken into during the middle of the night while the church leader was away for his brother's funeral. The assailants killed the pastor's son before kidnapping his wife and three other family members. Pastor Dadi's wife was released later that night because she was ill, but the other three family members remain missing. Then, on March 23rd, terrorists raided Buda 2 village near Kasuwan Magani. The attackers entered the home of another pastor, killing him and taking his wife captive.

Speaking of these recent attacks, Rev. Joseph Hayab, who serves as the chair for the Kaduna chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria, lamented: "Who will we cry to and who will we run to for help except God? Imagine that since the carnage of kidnapping of Christians started in Kaduna state, no arrests have been made."

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada, in coordination with Crossroads Cares, has partnered with Christian Faith Ministries to build Mara's House, a refuge for young women in Nigeria who need shelter after facing persecution and terrorism. For more about the construction of this dormitory building, along with information on how you can help our Nigerian sisters in Christ, go to www.vomcanada.com/ng-videos/video/ng-maras-house.html.

Please prayerfully lift up the grieving families of the many believers who were senselessly killed in these recent attacks, that they will be assured of Christ's resurrection power and resulting eternal salvation of their loved ones. Also pray for the peace, strength and safe release of the surviving victims still being held in captivity. May the newly elected government take these ongoing incidents of violence seriously, committing themselves to the safety of vulnerable Christian communities. Intercede for the perpetrators of the attacks, in hopes they will turn from their sins to faith in the Risen Lord. Last, but not least, pray that the ministry of Mara's House will be a great blessing to the dozens of Nigerian women who are recovering from the aftermath of persecution.

PRAISE REPORTS

CHINA: Joyous Celebration Over Church Elder's Release!

Sources: ChinaAid, [UCA](#) News

On March 19th, authorities released Pastor Geng Zejun after he served 15 months in prison. His wife and son, along with several others – both Christians and non-Christians – brought flowers to the detention centre to joyfully celebrate his release. A video of the reunion can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3dJfXvry64.

Pastor Geng was sentenced in August 2022 for "organizing illegal gatherings" because the Church of the Rock, where he served as pastor, refused to join the government-controlled Three-Self Patriotic Movement. While imprisoned, he found opportunities to continue ministering to the needs of those around him. Respectfully referred to as "Pastor Geng," people in the prison frequently came to him for advice. Even the prison guards treated him with respect. To learn more about his case, go to www.vomcanada.com/cn-2023-02-09.htm.

Upon the pastor's release, his wife Hao Ying posted a message of thanks on social media. "Thank you all for your constant care and concern," she wrote. "May God remember you and keep you. Please continue to pray for God's blessing on each other."

Please join us in celebrating the release of this faithful Christian leader. Praise God that Pastor Geng was able to minister to inmates and prison guards during his incarceration. Pray that, in the days to come, he would receive many more opportunities to reach people with the "Good News" of the Gospel. As he now readjusts to life outside of prison, may Pastor Geng and his reunited family experience a meaningful time of recovery, peace and joy.

CHINA: House Church Leader Released After Lengthy Sentence

Sources: ChinaAid, Christian Solidarity Worldwide

In July 2015, Hu Shigen was taken into custody and accused of inciting "subversion of state power." Convicted the following year, he was sentenced to seven-and-a-half years' imprisonment. While in prison, Elder Hu suffered a heart attack in 2019, and his family was assured by officials that he would be released due to the seriousness of his condition. However, despite this promise, the elderly Christian leader continued to be held in custody. (To review a previously posted report, go to www.vomcanada.com/cn-2019-11-28c.htm.) With thanksgiving, we are pleased to report that Elder Hu was finally released after serving a lengthy sentence and had returned home on March 26th.

Elder Hu is a house church elder and prominent pro-democracy advocate. A former university lecturer, he led several house churches in Beijing prior to his arrest. The authorities referenced his religious activities and ties to foreign groups and human rights lawyers as the basis for his sentence, stating that he had used "illegal religious groups" to "spread subversive thoughts and ideas."

In total, the Christian elder has served over 24 years in prison for his work. In a recently published report on the 68-year-old's condition, a former church member stated: "Elder Hu Shigen has finally returned home, but he has become much, much older. Teacher Hu must have suffered a lot in the Chinese Communist Party's prison.... It is heartbreaking to watch."

Praise God that Elder Hu has finally been released from custody! Pray that he will now be able to rest and recover from his lengthy prison ordeal. Throughout the process, may the Lord minister renewed strength and healing to him – both physically and emotionally – while also blessing his reunion with long-suffering family and friends. Please also continue to remember our other persecuted Christian brothers and sisters in China who are faithfully seeking ways

to convey the message of Christ's salvation to the many spiritually needy people of their vast country.

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