



## Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada  
[www.vomcanada.com](http://www.vomcanada.com)

Thursday, May 4, 2023

*"Men may spurn our appeals, reject  
our message, oppose our arguments,  
[and] despise our persons, but they  
are helpless against our prayers."*

~ J. Sidlow Baxter

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### PAKISTAN: Church Service Stormed by Mob

Sources: AsiaNews, India Posts, Jihad Watch

Police have increased security around The Voice of Jesus Church in Khokhar, Pakistan, after a mob of approximately 40 men disrupted an evening service on April 16th. Thankfully, the injuries perpetrated by the mob were minimal. Even so, the church's gates and windows were damaged during the incident, and three bullet holes were left in the outer wall of the building.

The conflict arose when three men on motorcycles began to harass the 19-year-old daughter of Pastor Younas Javed before the service. Her brother Sharjeel asked them to stop, but they responded by abusing him. The men then recruited others, and the violence turned against the church facility and the service being held inside.

While police have provided protection for the church, they dispute allegations that religious connections were associated with the attack. The sub-inspector described the incident merely as a "fight between kids." The pastor, however, says that harassment of this kind is common in the area. To learn more about the hardships experienced by Christians in Pakistan, and/or to review informative podcasts/video documentaries, go to [www.vomcanada.com/pakistan.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/pakistan.htm).

*Pray that the members of this church will be kept safe from any further potential violence, and that the police will continue to provide necessary security. Prayerfully uphold the ongoing ministry of Christians in the area who, despite living under the daily threat of hostility, are boldly reaching out with the Gospel. May the lives and words of believers throughout Pakistan be a testimony of God's love and grace to those around them, leading many to faith in Christ.*

## REPORT UPDATES

### **INDONESIA: Church Reopens After 15 Years of Opposition**

Sources: International Christian Concern, UCA News, The Diplomat, The Jakarta Post

For more than 15 years, the Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI) Yasmin Church in Bogor, Indonesia, has sought to meet for worship. The church was initially approved in 2006 but then rejected by local authorities. Although the Indonesian Supreme Court ruled in 2010 that the place of worship could reopen, local officials repeatedly caused delays. The root cause of the delays was influence from opposing militants of the Muslim-majority community. For earlier reports on the challenges encountered by members of this church, visit [www.vomcanada.com/id-2012-11-22.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/id-2012-11-22.htm) and [www.vomcanada.com/id-2014-01-09.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/id-2014-01-09.htm).

With great excitement the new church building, which was constructed in a different location, officially opened on Easter Sunday, April 9th. Various politicians were on scene to participate in the ceremony – a welcomed celebration for congregants who witnessed this long-awaited victory after dealing for years with many setbacks during the building process.

However, the country's ongoing oppression, along with the many blockages faced by the congregation as their new place of worship was being built, brought about mixed emotions for other church members. Even though the mayor of Bogor spoke at the inauguration, they felt the leaders of Bogor were ultimately responsible for repeatedly succumbing to the pressure, and thus had contributed largely to the extensive delays. Due to the frustration experienced over the repeated delays, and the fact that the church was forced to relocate in the first place, these church members refused to attend the ceremony.

An editorial in *The Jakarta Post* raised concerns about the example set: "The government's support for such a compromise has set a bad precedent for solutions to conflicts related to the implementation of freedom of religion in other parts of the country. Rather than ending acts of intolerance, the GKI Yasmin model will only proliferate them."

Despite the recent opening of this specific church, the trend for local officials to oppose places of worship continues unabated in Indonesia. Only a week earlier, the Simalungun Christian Protestant Church in Cigelam was forced to close due to pressure from local Muslims who were opposed to the location where they were worshipping (see [www.vomcanada.com/id-2023-04-13.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/id-2023-04-13.htm)). Unreasonable requirements have forced many Christian groups in the country to forgo registration regulations.

*Let us praise God that the long-suffering congregation in Bogor now has a new place where they can gather together for worship. Pray that they will continue to be free to do so without encountering further interference from governing officials representing the area or other local residents. Pray that Indonesia's leaders will stand firm for what is right, despite the opposition they may face, and that other congregations in the country (including the recently closed church in Cigelam) will likewise be allowed to meet in freedom and peace.*

## **PAKISTAN: Father of Kidnapped Child Murdered**

Sources: AsiaNews, Steadfast Global

On March 30th, the *Persecution & Prayer Alert* reported on a 12-year-old girl who had been kidnapped and, after being recovered, was placed in a women's shelter rather than being returned to her father. Young Hoorab Masih had been abducted by two local shopkeepers in December and then forced to convert to Islam and marry one of her kidnappers. For more details on the incident, see [www.vomcanada.com/pk-2023-03-30.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/pk-2023-03-30.htm).

Hoorab's father, Basharat, was a single dad of four who did not have the funds to fight the case in court to have his daughter returned home. Thankfully, she was finally allowed to return to her family in late March. Kidnapper Muhammad Usman confessed to the fraudulent marriage after his arrest. Both he and his accomplice, Muhammad Mustafa, were arrested.

Sadly, Basharat Masih was murdered on April 24th while taking part in a community pigeon flying competition. His sister, Maryam Bibi, heard screaming and rushed to see a group of assailants attacking Basharat. The chairman of Human Rights Focus Pakistan, Naveed Walter, believes that the murder was committed in revenge for Basharat's part in bringing his daughter's captors to justice. The family has continued to receive threats, even after the court case.

Lamenting over the situation, Mr. Walter said: "Basharat Masih was killed because he was Hoorab's father. We live in a society where a father who demands justice for his daughter is killed." In a recently recorded podcast, Greg Musselman interviewed Pakistani journalist Asher John from Kross Konnection to discuss their concerns over several similar kidnappings of young girls. To view this relevant report, go to [www.vomcanada.com/video/pakistan-girls](http://www.vomcanada.com/video/pakistan-girls).

*Please prayerfully remember traumatized Hoorab and her siblings who are now left without any parents. In addition to experiencing God's needed comfort and healing, pray that these children will be provided a stable home in which they can grow and mature in His ways spiritually. May those responsible for this fatal attack against Hoorab's father be held accountable for their actions. Continue to also intercede for the nation of Pakistan as a whole, specifically praying that the legal system, which has caused extreme difficulties for so many innocent victims, would be radically reformed.*

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