



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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*"Give justice to the weak
and the fatherless; maintain
the right of the afflicted and the
destitute. Rescue the weak and
the needy; deliver them from the
hand of the wicked."*

~ Psalm 82:3-4 ESV

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH November 5th, 2023

Multitudes of Christians around the world continue to suffer because of their faith in Christ. On November 5th, you can join with others globally in praying that our persecuted brothers and sisters would have the *"Courage to Rise Above"* the fiery trials of persecution. For more information, and to access free helpful resources, go to www.idop.ca.

CHINA: Christian Tutor Reported by Her Husband

Source: ChinaAid

Liu Cui is a member of the Lishi Christian Church in China, which operates a co-op school group for children, despite ongoing harassment from government agencies that want to restrict the religious education of minors. On October 11th, Liu went to the school to help tutor six students from four different families.

Unfortunately, Liu's husband, who is not a believer, objects to his wife's Christian faith. After following Liu to the school and discovering her work with the students, he issued a report to various governmental agencies. Authorities rushed to the church, confiscated school supplies and Bibles, and recorded the information of parents who were present at the time. Police took Liu

into custody and, that evening, members of the church learned that she had been sentenced to ten days of administrative detention.

Leaders of the Chinese government demand total loyalty of the country's citizens and, in their attempts to target truths in the Bible, they have been distorting passages of Scripture to reflect Communist ideologies. During a recent episode of the *Closer to the Fire* podcast, program host Greg Musselman interviewed Dr. Eric Foley from VOM Korea to discuss the government's latest attempts to promote socialist values. This informative podcast interview is available at www.vomcanada.com/video/china-foley. For further information on the restrictions facing followers of Jesus in China, and/or to review previously posted prayer alert reports, visit www.vomcanada.com/china.htm.

Please prayerfully join us by asking the Lord to watch over the members of the Lishi Christian Church, including Liu Cui, and to provide them peace, direction and wisdom as they endeavour to continue raising their children in the ways of the Lord amid intense opposition. Pray that Liu will not encounter any additional legal problems, but instead would be free to resume her tutoring activities without further interference. Throughout the legal process, may the response of this accused believer be a testimony of Christ's love and grace to her husband, despite his open hostility towards the Gospel, as well as to the others in her community who are opposing her judicially.

BELARUS: Revised Religion Law Passes First Reading

Source: Forum18

A new religion law, which was introduced to Belarus' House of Representatives on September 29th, passed its first reading on October 11th. The text of the draft law was only made public on October 10th. While some aspects of the previous version of the law will remain the same, the new legislation would impose significantly tighter restrictions on the country's Christians if approved.

The wording of the draft document makes extensive use of terms such as "extremism," "terrorism" and "the ideology of the Belarusian state" to justify restrictions on freedom of belief. The new regulations aim to increase censorship on religious literature and provide new reasons that can be used to forcibly close religious communities. The draft law also seeks to impose new restrictions on religious education and prohibit all religious organizations – with the exception of monasteries – from running children's homes.

"We look at the new law with caution," stated one pastor, who wishes to remain anonymous. "It promises nothing good, but depends on how formally it will be applied, as the wording in some parts is obscure." After evaluating the planned legislation, United Nations Special Rapporteurs have expressed various concerns over the proposed changes, stating that they "would fail to meet Belarus' obligations under international human rights law" if implemented.

Religious freedoms have been seriously restricted in the past, and these proposed revisions threaten to make life much more difficult for Christians in Belarus. For more information, go to www.vomcanada.com/belarus.htm.

Pray that the Lord will intervene in the hearts and minds of the legislators involved in the passing of this new law, steering and guiding their decisions in favour of religious freedom. As a result, may the country's restrictive legislation be overturned, granting believers the freedom to practise their faith without any interference. Until then, please continue to prayerfully remember Christians in Belarus who must contend daily with imposed governmental restrictions, asking that they would receive the wisdom and encouragement required to faithfully persevere in their service for Christ amid opposition.

REPORT UPDATE

PAKISTAN: Couple Released on Bail Due to Lack of Evidence

Sources: Kross Konnection, Pak Christian News

On September 8th, Kiran Bibi answered the door to a man who said he noticed pages of the Quran apparently falling from the rooftop of her family's home. When she invited him to investigate this further by going up to the rooftop, they found a bag with loose papers in it. Kiran stated that the bag had been given to her by a Muslim employer to sell to a scrap vendor, and that her children may have unintentionally thrown some of the pages down without realizing their significance.

Despite her explanation, the man filed a police report accusing Kiran and her husband Shaukat of blasphemy, alleging that they had desecrated the Quran. As a result, the Christian couple was taken into custody, leaving their children without parental supervision. For more details, see our previously published report at www.vomcanada.com/pk-2023-09-21.htm.

On October 18th, the Christian couple appeared before a local court. During the hearing, the defence lawyer argued that neither of the believers were present at the time of the alleged crime, and therefore could not be guilty of committing a deliberate act of desecration. Additionally, it was found that the pages were taken from a grade nine Islamic Studies book, and not from the Quran. As the couple's three young children do not attend school, they could not have torn the pages from the schoolbook.

Since the charges require evidence of willful damage, and there were no witnesses to state that the couple deliberately committed an offence, the judge ruled that the Christians were to be released on bail while a more extensive investigation is conducted.

Thankfully, Kiran and Shaukat have since been able to resume caring for their children. Speaking of their family's time apart, Shaukat expressed, "We have been away from our children for over a month, and each day...in prison was spent thinking what would become of them if we

couldn't get out." However, even though these parents have been freed, they do not feel safe returning to the home that was initially provided by their employer.

Praise God that Kiran and Shaukat have been released on bail and are now reunited with their children! Pray that all the charges against them will be dropped so they can remain together as a family and resume their daily lives without the fear of further legal troubles or harassment from members of the community. May the Lord also grant this family a place of safety and provide for all of their needs.

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