



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

Thursday, December 14, 2023

"Our brothers and sisters in Muslim countries can't celebrate Christmas – or any aspect of their faith – openly for fear of persecution and death. And yet we, with all our freedoms, often choose to make Christmas a celebration of commercialism!"

~ Erwin W. Lutzer

INDIA: 42 Christians Questioned, Resulting in Several Being Charged

Sources: Release International, OpIndia, Indian Express, Outlook India

Police in the Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh detained 42 Christians and formally charged nine of them after receiving a complaint about an alleged "Christian conversion racket." The accusations outlined tactics purported to be used by the believers in leading members of the state's impoverished and tribal communities to convert to Christianity.

Based on the complaint, police brought the detained Christians in for questioning. Of these 42 believers, 27 of them were reported to be pastors. Officials also confiscated large quantities of religious literature – along with laptops, cell phones, audio recordings and more. Following the interrogations, nine of the detained believers have been charged under the state's anti-conversion law. While this legislation is intended to prevent conversion by force or deception, in reality, it outlaws Christians from sharing the hope of the Gospel to spiritually seeking community members.

Since the anti-conversion legislation was passed three years ago, nearly 400 followers of Jesus have been arrested in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Most of the arrested believers are Protestant pastors and church members. Currently, India's anti-conversion laws have been enacted in 12 of the country's 28 states, and there is pressure to introduce a similar law on a national level. For more information on the persecution of Christians in India, and/or to read previously published reports relating to this country, go to www.vomcanada.com/india.htm.

Prayerfully uphold our Christian brothers and sisters in India who have been arrested for sharing their faith. Pray that the governing laws of Uttar Pradesh and other Indian states would be used in ways that also recognize and support the constitutional rights of the country's minority groups, so freedom of expression and religion may be experienced by all citizens. In the interim, pray that despite the threat of opposition and false charges, Christians throughout the nation will continue reaching out to those around them with the compassion of Christ, in keeping with the centrality of the Gospel message.

SUDAN: Humanitarian Aid Denied to Muslim-Background Believers

Source: Mission Network News

Now in its eighth month, Sudan's civil war has displaced over six million people, many of whom were forced to take refuge in camps where food and other basic resources are scarce. Some humanitarian assistance has been provided to the country, which is then distributed through smaller local aid groups. According to a Christian ministry worker in the region, this aid has been denied to some displaced followers of Jesus.

The ministry worker reports that when local aid distributors – who are typically Islamic – realize someone has come to faith in Christ after leaving Islam, they refuse to give them food, even though the rations have been supplied by the United Nations and other international organizations to help all who are being severely affected by the war. Some of the Muslim distributors believe it is their duty to withhold any means of compassion towards those who have left Islam.

To overcome this problem, Christian ministries are endeavouring to provide practical relief to believers in areas where the humanitarian aid is being denied. However, the need is enormous and the resources extremely limited. For additional reports on the persecution of our suffering Christian brothers and sisters in Sudan, go to www.vomcanada.com/sudan.htm.

Please uphold the war-torn nation of Sudan in your prayers, and its many displaced people, asking the Lord to minister His peace and provision in this deeply divided part of the world. Pray for the ongoing efforts of humanitarian organizations to help all citizens in need, and that these necessary provisions will also be fairly distributed to our suffering family in Christ. May those opposing the displaced Christians – and trying to prevent them from receiving greatly needed humanitarian aid – come to personally experience God's transforming love and forgiveness, which are available to all through Christ's redemptive work on the cross.

REPORT UPDATE

CHINA: Further Repercussions Follow Church Raid

Sources: ChinaAid, Early Rain Covenant Church

Over five years ago, the Early Rain Covenant Church in China was raided, leading to multiple arrests. In the years that have followed, the Chinese Communist Party has made a concerted effort to harass the members of this Christian community in an attempt to completely shut down the church. To read previously published reports on the persecution of these believers, go to www.vomcanada.com/early-rain-covenant-church.htm.

More recently, on October 28th, the church held a graduation ceremony in a hotel conference room for the students of a small Bible college it operates. However, upon being declared an "illegal" gathering, the event was also raided by the authorities. (Further details on this incident are available at www.vomcanada.com/cn-2023-11-09.htm.)

During the raid, a church deacon named Jia Xuewei suffered a broken rib from being beaten by a national security agent. Even though the Christian leader has filed a complaint against his assailant, the intimidation and persecution committed by Communist officials have continued. Due to the pressure officials have placed on his landlord, Jia was forced to move out of his home. At least two other church leaders have faced similar circumstances, for their lease agreements were likewise terminated. In a separate incident, Preacher Ding Shuqi's family had their water supply cut off in the officials' attempt to force them to leave their home.

On December 9th, which is the anniversary date of the initial raid that took place five years ago, Chengdu authorities deployed numerous tactics to keep church members from participating in online activities, including warnings by telephone or in person, stalking, power outages and forcible detentions. Several of the church's leaders were also detained for interrogation. While some were released later that night, Jia Xuewei has been forced to remain in "administrative detention" until December 22nd. Additionally, Preacher Dai Zhichao, who was arrested on suspicion of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble," is currently being held in the Chengdu Detention Centre.

Please prayerfully remember each of these detained church leaders, asking the Lord to sustain them in the midst of this trying situation by increasing their strength, love and patient endurance. Continue to pray for the other members of the Early Rain Covenant Church, including those who have been displaced from their homes, as they face repeated intimidation and harassment from the authorities. May these believers receive greatly needed wisdom, guidance and peace as they faithfully endeavour to continue their ministry activities despite the government's unrelenting opposition.

The "Persecution & Prayer Alert" is a ministry of:
The Voice of the Martyrs Canada, P.O. Box 608, Streetsville, Ontario, L5M 2C1
Tel. (905) 670-9721 Website: www.vomcanada.com