



Voice^{of the}
Martyrs

PERSECUTION
& PRAYER
ALERT

Persecution & Prayer Alert

Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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*"Do not pray for us;
pray with us."*

~ A member of the underground
church in North Korea

INDIA: New Policies Further Restrict Religious Freedom

Sources: International Christian Concern, Morning Star News, The Economic Times

Recent developments in two Indian states have raised serious concerns for Christians, particularly in relation to the newly heightened restrictions on religious conversions. In the first incident, police in Chhattisgarh notified more than 200 house churches around the state capital city of Raipur that worship gatherings within private homes are no longer permitted.

The directive, issued by the police chief, is reportedly aimed at maintaining law and order following numerous complaints about alleged illegal conversions taking place in house churches. Consequently, Christian worship is now restricted to occur in officially registered buildings. One pastor was detained on August 24th for violating this new order. A legal petition objecting to the police directive has been filed, and court hearings are currently underway.

Meanwhile, in the northern state of Uttarakhand, amendments to the existing anti-conversion legislation were passed into law on August 20th. These changes introduced stringent penalties, along with a ban on digital "propaganda." Uttarakhand is the first state to include digital media – prohibiting activity on social media platforms, messaging apps and other online channels – when referencing its increased restrictions on religious conversions.

Furthermore, the definition of prohibited "inducements" leading to conversion was broadened to encompass not only financial or material gifts but also statements that allegedly "hurt religious faith or glorify another religion." The revised law also expanded penalties for "forced conversions" by raising the previous maximum term of incarceration from ten years to the possibility of life imprisonment. In addition, the ability to post bail has been restricted, now requiring the trial court to be convinced of the accused individual's innocence.

Several Indian states have enacted legislation to curb "forcible conversions," but unfortunately these laws are frequently being misused to target the activities of religious minorities. Recent statements from governing leaders demonstrate that the purpose of such legislation may go beyond preventing coerced proselytization, aiming instead to stop all forms of religious conversion.

In a statement to the media, Uttarakhand's Chief Minister, Pushkar Singh Dhami, declared: "Uttarakhand is Devbhoomi ("Land of the Gods") and a place where holy saints through the ages came and meditated.... The proposed amendment is a major step on our part to ensure that the social fabric of the Himalayan state is not changed." For more reports on the challenges facing Christians in India, go to www.vomcanada.com/india.htm.

- *May the Lord impart wisdom and courage to Christian leaders in Chhattisgarh as they navigate these new restrictions and seek ways to continue ministering to their congregations in the days to come.*
- *Pray for the protection of all followers of Jesus throughout India who are at risk of false allegations being filed against them – with the claim of "induced conversions" – and the harsh penalties that could result when sharing their faith with others.*
- *Also intercede for India's governing and judicial officials, asking that they will rightly uphold constitutional protections for religious freedom as they deliberate current and future legal issues.*

IRAN: Over 50 Arrested Christians Accused of Espionage

Sources: Article18, Church in Chains

Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) recently reported that over 50 Christians have been arrested since the end of the recent conflict between Iran and Israel in June 2025. The country's intelligence agency labelled the detained believers as "Mossad mercenaries," claiming that they had been trained by churches abroad and were now operating "under the guise of the Zionist Christian evangelization movement."

In addition to the arrests, Iranian state media has accused the Christians of engaging in espionage and having connections to foreign entities. A video report released by the media in mid-August includes footage of some believers attending a gathering in Türkiye, along with images of Bibles and other literature which the Christians were purportedly smuggling into Iran.

In contrast to the religious traditions practised by those belonging to the country's historic Armenian and Assyrian Christian communities, who are incidentally permitted to worship in their own languages, evangelical followers of Jesus are branded as "Zionists." As the majority of Iran's Christians are not part of these two traditional groups, they consequently cannot gather for worship legally. As a result, many believers rely on the Internet to access spiritual encouragement and teaching. More information concerning the persecution of Christians in Iran can be reviewed at www.vomcanada.com/iran.htm.

- *Please prayerfully remember the recently detained Christians, along with the many other followers of Jesus in Iran who are currently being imprisoned for their faith.*
- *May the ministries represented by the country's underground churches continue to faithfully serve fellow believers – while also reaching out to spiritual seekers with the life-transforming message of God's love for them – despite the Iranian government's intense restrictions.*
- *Ask the Lord to work mightily in the lives of Iranian officials and others who oppose the "Good News" of the Gospel, praying that "the eyes of their hearts" would be enlightened (Ephesians 1:18).*

NORTH KOREA: Christian Radio Broadcasts Expanded

Sources: Mission Network News, Voice of the Martyrs Korea

While the "radio" may be considered almost obsolete technology in some areas of the world, Voice of the Martyrs Korea (VOMK) acknowledges that it's an effective means of sharing the Gospel message in North Korea. Despite the significant risks involved, an estimated 20 percent of North Koreans regularly listen to foreign broadcasts using headphone radios. Although Christian broadcasting is illegal in this highly restrictive nation, the use of these radios allows individuals to listen to programs discreetly or alone in the dark, reducing the likelihood of detection by onlookers who may report them to the authorities.

"Listening to shortwave radio broadcasting – listening to *any* foreign radio broadcasting – is illegal and highly punishable," explains Pastor Eric Foley of VOMK. In addition to the legal implications, the North Korean government actively works to jam radio signals, in an attempt to prevent the broadcasts from being heard. Yet, the messages being sent by VOMK continue to break through the barriers. In 2024, more than half of the autumn broadcasts were received clearly without jamming; and, during winter season, 89 percent could be heard without substantial jamming.

Encouraged by these results, VOMK recently announced the expansion of its radio ministry, adding a fifth daily 30-minute program to be broadcasted into North Korea. (Details such as the time, launch date and radio frequency are withheld from this report for security reasons.) Each weekday, the new broadcast will consist of sermons that were previously prepared by early Korean Christians (prior to the Communist regime); and, on the weekends, uninterrupted readings of the Bible are to be presented. These broadcasts will not only allow listeners to hear the Scriptures but also enable them to transcribe what they receive, so they can create their own handwritten copies of the Bible.

Although reports from this highly restrictive nation are rare, it is a blessing to learn of the creative ways in which God is continuing to work within North Korea, despite the extreme measures taken by the government to prohibit the proclamation of the Gospel. More information is available at www.vomcanada.com/northkorea.htm.

- *Praise God that the message of His tremendous love – as demonstrated through the life, sacrificial death and resurrection of His Son Jesus – is powerfully reaching into North Korea, despite the many efforts to suppress it.*
- *Pray for His continued provision towards VOMK's radio broadcasts and other forms of outreach, as well as the protection of all those who are involved in these effective ministry endeavours.*
- *As listeners hear the Christian radio broadcasts, may their spiritual ears be open and hearts receptive, so that the seeds of God's Word can take root and flourish in their lives. As a result, may many more North Koreans embrace His gracious gift of eternal salvation.*

The "Persecution & Prayer Alert" is a ministry of:
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