



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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"Please rejoice for me! Jesus has died on the cross for me. It is my utter joy to be imprisoned for my Lord. This is a reality and not self-comfort nor self-encouragement."

~ Pastor John Cao, imprisoned in China

NEPAL: Pastor Threatened Amidst New Legislation

Sources: Morning Star News, The Voice of the Martyrs Canada, Mission Network News

Pastor Sagar Baizu had stopped at a café for coffee on July 19th when he was suddenly assaulted by a group of men. After beating him on the head, the assailants fled with a warning: "We will blast your church and all the churches with bombs and shoot you and all your leaders." Cafeteria staff assisted the pastor and police were called to the scene. Thankfully, there appears to be no lasting long-term injuries.

Pastor Baizu is head of the Anugrah Vijay Church and spokesperson for the Federation of National Christians in Nepal. As an advocate for Nepali Christians for over 10 years, he is well known for his advocacy.

Christians in Nepal have been facing pressure which is expected to dramatically increase when the new anti-conversion legislation becomes official on August 17th. While sharing the Gospel has been forbidden under the 2015 constitution, the new law removes even more religious freedoms and adds new punishments for those convicted. A strong influencing factor in establishing this legislation is pressure from Hindu nationalists in neighbouring India (see www.vomcanada.com/np-2018-06-21.htm).

According to a local contact for The Voice of the Martyrs Canada, Christian worship and training will continue to be allowed, but any outreach would need to be done indirectly. Christians in Nepal are prayerfully considering how to fulfil their mission in the days to come.

Pray for Pastor Baizu's safety and full healing. Also prayerfully lift up the country's other Christians who are likewise under threat and, therefore, in need of the Lord's protection. May He grant the Nepali believers wisdom and guidance as they seek ways to continue spreading the Gospel, despite this new legislative opposition.

UKRAINE: Armed Raids and Fines in Luhansk

Sources: Forum 18, Mission Eurasia

In the self-declared Luhansk People's Republic, armed police are frequently raiding worship services, seizing literature and fining those in attendance. Along with the raids, the Luhansk State Security Ministry has announced a complete ban on the *All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christian/Baptist Churches*, claiming that the organization has refused to submit to compulsory local registration.

After the Russian annexation of Crimea in early 2014, pro-Russian militants in areas of eastern Ukraine rose up, displacing millions of ethnic Ukrainians. Heavy fighting ensued and, in May 2014, rebels seized part of Ukraine's Luhansk Region, declaring independence. In response to continued fighting, martial law was introduced. The rebel administration has also taken aim at some religious groups, including evangelical Christians. Over the past four years, there have been countless acts of persecution such as abductions, torture and property confiscation.

In one recent example of persecution, men armed with automatic weapons forced their way into the Grace Church of God Pentecostal on August 6th. In addition to seizing the church computer, a number of church leaders were detained for several hours. Among them was the pastor, Victor Koval. When questioned about the incident the next day, the State Security Ministry denied having any knowledge of the event.

Pray for peace in this war-torn area of the world. In particular, ask God to grant the church members peace of mind and heart during this time of upheaval. May these Christians be able to effectively minister to the many needs of the people around them, demonstrating the love of God to their Luhansk community -- even the rebels opposing them.

PRAISE REPORT

SUDAN: Court Ruling in Favour of Church

Source: World Watch Monitor

In a surprising ruling, a Sudanese court has ruled against the government in a long-standing dispute with the Sudanese Church of Christ (SCOC) involving ownership of church property. In his verdict on August 8th, the judge returned the administration of the properties to the church.

The dispute began after the government's Ministry of Religious Affairs set up a land and buildings committee which was to administer all church property. Since then, church leaders

have been regularly harassed and taken to court. For information on one such incident, go to www.vomcanada.com/su-2017-09-14.htm. While this ruling has been welcomed by Christians in Sudan, more action is needed before the persecution ends. Continue to pray for the believers in this northeast African nation.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: On August 19th, it will be six months since 15-year-old Leah Sharibu was kidnapped by Nigeria's infamous Boko Haram rebel group, along with her classmates. While the other students were released, Leah was not for one simple reason: she refused to deny Christ. Fervently pray that Leah will be returned to her family soon! For more details, go to www.vomcanada.com/ng-leah-sharibu.htm.

If you would like to post a prayer of praise or petition on behalf of our persecuted family around the globe, visit VOMC's prayer wall at www.vomcanada.com/prayerwall.htm. Another effective way to serve the persecuted is through volunteering: www.vomcanada.com/volunteer.htm.

The Persecution & Prayer Alert is a ministry of:
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If you would like to encourage someone to read or receive this weekly prayer alert, please use our online form at www.vomcanada.com/pnpforward.htm and help spread the message of the persecuted church around the world.

For information on additional ways to support members of the persecuted church overseas, review the list of options at www.vomcanada.com/take-action.htm.