

International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church  
Sunday, November 3, 2019

*"Pray for us..." is the cry of persecuted Christians around the world. Today across the earth, more than 245 million of them are suffering for their faith in Jesus Christ. Each year, fellow believers in over 130 countries stand in prayer with our persecuted brothers and sisters through the International Day of Prayer for the persecuted church (IDOP). Please join with us in the prayerful remembrance of those experiencing persecution for declaring Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord. For more information and resources, visit [www.idop.ca](http://www.idop.ca).*

***"Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body."***

~ Hebrews 13:3 ESV

### **UKRAINE: Worship Ban in Luhansk**

Source: Forum 18

As of 2014, the Luhansk region of eastern Ukraine has been under the control of rebels. Since then, the self-declared government imposed oppressive religious restrictions. Last year, an order was made that no religious groups may hold services of any kind without registration. Subsequent to the deadline of October 2018, no Protestant church of any kind was granted registration. (See [this report](#) for more details.)

Now, a year later, the ban remains in effect, and those who do not heed the restrictions have been taken to court. At least six court cases in 2019 have ensued, including that of Pastor Vladimir Rytikov of the Krasnodon Baptist Church. This June, he was sentenced to 20 hours of community service for leading unregistered worship. His appeal was rejected on October 21st. Others have faced fines, though some of them have avoided further forms of punishment.



Police raid at the Krasnodon Baptist Church.  
Photo: Forum 18

Many church buildings now sit empty. While these church communities officially own their buildings, they no longer can legally use them. At least one church has begun using Skype to provide broadcasts for congregants. Members of other churches have been meeting in homes, but they are carefully limiting these gatherings to no more than four people at a time.

Along with restrictions on public worship, foreign religious leaders have been banned from visiting the territory. As a result of being denied contact with fellow believers, many individuals are feeling isolated.

***Uphold the Christians in Luhansk by praying for them to be granted the freedom to meet peacefully together in worship. Ask the Lord to work in the hearts of the governing officials within this region, impressing upon these leaders the importance of honouring their Creator and respecting the rights of all citizens. In the meantime, may the isolated church members receive needed encouragement and fellowship by meeting together in small groups.***

## MALAYSIA: "Release Raymond Koh" Petition

Source: The Voice of the Martyrs International



On February 13th, 2017, Pastor Raymond Koh was abducted from the streets of Malaysia. He hasn't been seen or heard from since, and his car has never been located. Video footage of the entire crime was captured by nearby security cameras.

Early in 2019, Malaysia's Human Rights Commission issued a report blaming the abductions of Pastor Raymond and others on the "Special Branch" of the country's police force. Yet, as of this present time, no one has been held accountable, and Pastor Raymond's whereabouts and condition remain unknown. A previous report is [available here](#).

***The Voice of the Martyrs ministry has initiated a campaign calling for the Malaysian government to explain the pastor's mysterious disappearance. The petition will be delivered directly to the Malaysian Embassy in Washington, D.C. To date, more than 36,000 people have signed the petition. You may add your name today by going to [VOMCanada.com/raymond](http://VOMCanada.com/raymond).***

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## PRAISE REPORT

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### IRAN: Released from Prison

Sources: Middle East Concern, VOM USA

Ebrahim Firouzi has been imprisoned since 2013 on charges including "actions against national security." He was originally sentenced to one year in prison, followed by two years of exile. However, after serving the first year, he was re-tried and sentenced to an additional five years.

We are pleased to announce that Ebrahim was released from Rajaei Shahr prison on October 26th. While he still must serve two years of exile in the Sarbaz region of southeastern Iran, this Christian young man has been allowed temporary release to sort out his personal affairs.

Ebrahim states that he is in good health and happy to receive calls from friends. In addition to his prayer request for more patience – specifically when feeling upset or angry – he asks that we pray for a friend in prison who has unspecified urgent needs. For more details on Ebrahim and other Christians facing persecution in Iran, go to our [country report](#).

***Join with us in praising God for Ebrahim's release from prison, as well as his reported good health. Pray for his emotional well-being, including the need for peace while preparing to serve time in exile. May his friend and the many others suffering in prison because of their faith in Christ also receive needed ministry, strength and encouragement as they await their hopeful release.***

*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](#).*



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The Persecution & Prayer Alert is a ministry of:  
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For information on additional ways to support members of the persecuted church overseas, review this [listing of options](#).