

"The way to heaven is ascending; we must be content to travel uphill, though it be hard and tiresome, and contrary to the natural bias of our flesh."

~ Jonathan Edwards

REPORT UPDATES

CHINA: Raids Against Banned Churches

Sources: ChinaAid, Pray for Early Rain Covenant Church

In May 2019, local authorities informed the Xunsiding Church in Xiamen, China, that they intended to officially close it down. Church members were threatened with the loss of their jobs unless they complied and, on May 19th, dozens of officers, including those of SWAT teams, raided the church service. In the following days, officers remained on site to ensure no one re-entered the facility (see [this report](#) for further details).

Such action did not stop the church members, who continued to meet in homes and various rental facilities, even though police repeatedly discovered the locations. On April 17th of this year, police raided one of their services in the Pacific Rim Hotel while they were meeting. More than 100 Christians were detained in a single room and each participant was questioned, identified and photographed before they were finally released.



Police checking every church attendee's identification.

Photo: ChinaAid

Another church in China that has experienced repeated harassment is the Early Rain Covenant Church. An extensive crackdown began in December 2018, after which Pastor Wang Yi was sentenced to nine years in prison (review [this page](#)). Despite its official closure, the church has continued to minister to believers in any way it can. Because of their faith in Christ, members have faced ongoing provocation. Employers have been pressured to fire them, and some members have even been evicted from their homes. Utilities have also been disconnected in various residences.

Many families have chosen to educate their children outside of the public schools to avoid Communist indoctrination. On April 21st, police raided a tutoring program, detaining 12 adolescents and four adults. Police ignored requests from parents for information on their minor children. All 16 were finally allowed to leave the police station at around 9 o'clock that evening.

Three Christian men living in the neighbourhood were also detained but not permitted release during the time of compiling this report. No reason had been given for their detention.

Continue to prayerfully lift up believers throughout China who are facing ongoing persecution because of their faith in Christ. Ask God to grant wisdom to the overseeing members of these two mentioned churches as they determine the best way to fulfill their mission in caring for the needs of believers, as well as reaching out with the Gospel message to the communities around them. Please also remember to pray for Pastor Wang Yi who remains in prison, asking our Heavenly Father to give him continued strength, hope and opportunities to boldly share his faith.

ALGERIA: Ongoing Harassment for Exiled Christian

Sources: International Christian Concern, Church in Chains, Morning Star News



Slimane Bouhafis
Photo: World Watch Monitor

In 2016, Slimane Bouhafis was arrested and sentenced to five years in an Algerian prison for alleged blasphemy in a Facebook post. After various appeals, the sentence was eventually reduced for the accused Christian man, resulting in his release during April 2018 ([read more](#)).

After his release, Slimane experienced such ongoing persecution that he was forced to flee to Tunisia, where he has been granted refugee status until he is able to relocate to another country. His wife, who is a Muslim, remains in Algeria, along with their three adult children. He was able to have occasional contact with family members until the borders were closed due to the pandemic.

Even in Tunisia, however, Slimane is not safe from persecution and has continued to face harassment for his faith. When Slimane went to the police station to report an incident involving three men, the officers insulted and

mistreated him after discovering that he was a Christian. As a result, Slimane left the station without filing a complaint. He states, "I am as threatened here as I was in my country." For more information on the persecution of Christians in Algeria, and to review previously published reports, go to our [country report](#).

Pray for Slimane as he faces ongoing harassment and continues to wait for a safe place he can call home. May his steadfast endurance and faith be a testimony to those around him, as well as to his wife and children, ultimately leading many others to accept Jesus as their Saviour and Lord. Please prayerfully uphold all our brothers and sisters in Christ living in North Africa, asking that they would be strengthened and encouraged in their faith, and that they would experience joy in all circumstances.

SAUDI ARABIA: Christian Acquitted from One of Three Charges

Source: Middle East Concern

Last month, a report was released about a convert, referred to only as "A," who faced various charges after speaking openly about his Christian faith in Saudi Arabia (for more details on this situation, go to [this report](#)). He was charged with trying to convert Muslims to Christianity and for assisting his sister to flee the country because of her faith. He was also accused by an opposing relative of stealing money.

A hearing scheduled for March 26th was delayed until April 22nd. During that recent hearing, a dispute broke out between the judge and the lawyers representing the family member who made the theft allegations. The judge, in an angry tirade, concluded that there was absolutely no evidence against the Christian man, who was thereby acquitted of the theft charges.

However, this believer is still facing the two other charges. Over the past few years, he has endured several prison sentences and flogging for following Christ.

Thank God for confounding the false allegations of this Christian man's accusers during the recent court hearing. Continue to pray that justice will be done, and that this servant of Christ will also be acquitted of the other charges against him. May his steadfastness be a testimony of God's enduring love and faithfulness to all those whom he encounters, including his opposing family members.



Pray that Saudi believers will be encouraged in the fact that they are never alone.