

***"The message I bring out from
the underground church is:
'Don't abandon us! Don't forget us!
Don't write us off! Give us the
tools we need! We will pay the
price for using them!'"***
~ Rev. Richard Wurmbbrand

UKRAINE (Luhansk): Christian Literature Deemed "Extremist"

Source: Forum 18

A court in the self-declared Luhansk People's Republic of eastern Ukraine has declared four more Christian books "extremist" after confiscating these resources from local church members. The official list of banned literature now contains 26 titles, including 18 books published by Protestant Christians and six by Jehovah's Witnesses. One of the items is a Russian translation of the Gospel of John, which was banned in November 2019 ([learn more](#)).

The region of Luhansk was seized in 2014 by pro-Russian rebels who have declared autonomy from Ukraine and placed a ban on all religious meetings without registration. For more on the challenges encountered by Christians in this region, read [these reports](#).

Pray for wisdom on behalf of the believers living in this politically turbulent territory as they encounter oppression from self-governing regional authorities.

Additionally, ask God to provide direction to the members of the Ukrainian government, and the international political leaders sharing their concerns, as they collaboratively seek ways to end the conflict and establish peace in the region. May the Lord work mightily in the lives of the rebels instigating the conflict, and those responsible for the censorship of Christian materials, opening their hearts and minds to the message of the Gospel so that they too will come to faith in Christ.



This Russian edition of VOMC's "In the Shadow of the Cross" is thankfully not one of the officially banned books.

REPORT UPDATES

NIGERIA: 28 Students Released from Captivity!

Sources: Reuters, Christianity Today, Al Jazeera



Thank God for answered prayer!
Photo: Morning Star News

In the early morning of July 5th, suspected Fulani militants raided the Bethel Baptist High School in Kaduna State, abducting more than 120 students (read [this report](#)). Since the kidnapping, a few students at a time have managed to escape in various ways.

On July 24th, the kidnapers unexpectedly released 28 of the students, all of whom were thankfully reunited with their families the next day. Even though these united families were overjoyed, we're cognisant of the need to continue interceding for the safe return of the students remaining in captivity. When speaking to members of the press, the president of the Nigerian Baptist Convention called on anyone with information to come forward. In reference to the kidnapers, he implored: "How can we reach these people? What can we do?"

Authorities have attributed the raid to "bandits" looking for ransom. However, many of these types of attacks have directly targeted Christians over the years, adding the element of jihadism as a factor. Additional information on the persecution of Christians in Nigeria, along with access to previously reported incidents, are available at our [country report](#).

Praise God that more students have been recently freed and safely reunited with their families. Continue to pray for the protection of the many students remaining in captivity. Also remember their parents and other family members who are presently trying to cope with the uncertainty and fear of not knowing the whereabouts nor the present status of their missing loved ones. May the students still in captivity, their concerned families and friends, and all who are mediating for them, experience God's abiding comfort and peace while awaiting His divine intervention and rescue.

CHINA: Church Leader Formally Arrested

Source: ChinaAid

On July 20th, the Wenshui County procuratorate approved the arrest of Zhao Weikai, a leader of the Xuncheng Reformed Church in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province. The Public Security Bureau also issued an arrest notice for his wife, Li Xin. Brother Zhao has been charged with "illegal holding of materials promoting terrorism and extremism."

Prior to the arrest, the couple's home was raided by the authorities on May 17th, resulting in the seizure of various books and computer equipment. As part of the raid, Zhao was sentenced to a 15-day administrative detention sentence ([read more](#)). While detained, police again invaded their home where they found video documentaries on the 1989 Tiananmen massacre and the 2009 Xinjiang riots. These old videos were used as evidence for the charge issued against Zhao.



Zhao Weikai
Photo: ChinaAid

Prayerfully uphold Zhao and his wife Li Xin as they deal with the heightened governmental restrictions, including this recent arrest, due to their unrelenting faith in Jesus Christ. Pray that God will bestow wisdom upon their representing lawyer and the officials of the court, granting this wrongfully treated Christian couple a favourable and just outcome. In the meantime, may these faithful followers of Jesus receive the physical, emotional and spiritual strength required to not only endure this time of imprisonment but, of even greater importance, rise victoriously over it – shining His bright light amid the darkness surrounding them and seizing every opportunity to lift up His wonderful name (John 12:32).

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