

***"Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved."***

~ Matthew 10:21-22 ESV

## **AFGHANISTAN: New Dangers in Volatile Situation**

Sources: Square One World Media, Release International, Open Doors Canada, Express, Jubilee Campaign

For the relatively small Christian community in Afghanistan, life has always been difficult. While democratic elections were first held in 2004, the constitution was built around a strict Sunni interpretation of Islamic law. As a result, Afghan followers of Jesus could not worship openly and often faced threats of beatings and other forms of torture from opposing family and community members.

With the recent national takeover by the Taliban militant group, the dangers facing believers have increased significantly. The words of Open Doors' Field Director for Asia address this growing concern: "Prior to Taliban rule, they already had a very difficult time living out their faith, as they had to keep it secret from their families for fear of being shunned, or worse, killed. Now that the Taliban is in power, their vulnerability increases tenfold."



[View the full interview](#) with Shoaib Ebadi.

Shoaib Ebadi, the Executive Director of Square One World Media, spoke with VOMC's Greg Musselman about the current situation. This Afghan-Canadian representative further explained that most believers are discovered because their family members report them. These relatives become "the first enemy," as they believe turning in Christian converts will cause their family members to return to the Islamic faith.

Due to Afghanistan's current volatile situation, reports from the country vary. The world's media is presently focussing on the thousands of Afghans pressing in at the Kabul airport in hopes of escaping the country and the tyranny anticipated under Taliban rule. Many foreign Christian workers have also been forced to flee. According to some reports, Afghan church leaders have received letters from the Taliban, stating that their locations and activities are being closely monitored. History demonstrates that the Taliban has no qualms about imposing the death penalty on those who disobey their interpretation of Sharia law.

Andrew Boyd from VOMC's sister organization, Release International, recently received reports that members of the Taliban have been going door-to-door in search of people who have worked with the previous government, as well as those who profess the Christian faith. The Taliban has also demanded the inspection of cell phones. It has been reported that at least one member of the Hazara community was killed merely for having downloaded a Bible app on their device.

Despite the horrific reports, Shoaib Ebadi – who personally has family members in Afghanistan – describes what he refers to as "good news" for the country's growing community of believers. Referencing the many foreign Christian workers who have been forced to flee, he states: "The good news is that Afghan Christians are now leading these groups (small house church fellowships). They are meeting in their homes, risking their lives every day...(while) taking God's Word to the people of Afghanistan. And they are the ones sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with their neighbours, families and friends." To view the full interview with Shoaib, go to [this page](#).

***In the midst of these volatile times, pray that God's presence will be evident in Afghanistan and among Afghan people around the world. As a result, may many of them turn to Christ as their source of hope and salvation. Please also intercede for the many Afghans who are fearing for their lives in this restrictive nation, praying that they will experience the peace of God which surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7). May He mightily intervene in this***

**seemingly impossible situation, turning the hearts of the Taliban leaders away from acts of forceful control and brutality to demonstrations of genuine humanitarian concern and justice for all citizens.**

## INDIA: Two Injured in Church Attack

Source: Morning Star News



The pastor's wife, Raj Rani, after the attack.  
Photo: Morning Star News

On July 12th, a mob comprised of both hard-line Sikhs and Hindus attacked the Evangelical Church of God in the Arniwala area of Punjab, India. Carrying swords and wooden rods, they slashed the head of 19-year-old Lovepreet Singh, resulting in the need for medical intervention and 18 stitches to his scalp. During the violent invasion, the pastor's wife, Raj Rani, had her leg badly broken.

Now weeks after the attack, the injuries to Raj's leg are continuing to pose a problem. Surgeons had to insert rods into her leg and provide treatment for a serious infection that developed in the wounded area. According to her husband, Pastor Roop Lal, the infection has led to skin lesions.

For their safety, the family had to move out of the area. As Raj remains bedridden, her husband and children are caring for her needs and tending to the housework in their new home. Local Christians have provided the family with

financial assistance for Raj's medical bills, as well as other expenses.

A police report has been filed against the attackers who, in turn, have filed counter claims against the pastor and his family. Animosity against the Evangelical Church of God has existed for more than 20 years, intensifying as the church has grown. This recent incident occurred after a confrontation between Pastor Roop and an opposing community member. The pastor had been clearing a clogged storm drain on the church compound when a neighbour angrily accused him of diverting rainwater onto his land.

India remains listed as one of the world's most restrictive nations where being a Christian is extremely difficult. For more information on the persecution experienced by followers of Jesus in India, go to our [country report](#).

***Please remember this family in your prayers as they now deal with Raj's health concerns, as well as the added challenges of the legal situation and home relocation. Pray that she will fully recover from her leg injuries, as well as the resulting infection, and for the complete healing of the young man who was also badly wounded during the attack. In spite of the persecution perpetrated against these believers, may the ministry of the church continue to wonderfully impact their former community for Christ. Pray that those responsible for the attack will come to know the truth of the Gospel and respond by turning to faith in Him.***

## REPORT UPDATE

## CHINA: Public Hearing Held for Pastoring Couple

Source: ChinaAid

The Xunsiding Church in Xiamen, China, has faced regular harassment from local governing authorities. After the church was officially shut down in 2019, congregation members continued to meet in homes and rental facilities. In April 2021, a service held in the Pacific Rim Hotel was raided by the police and the identities of everyone present had been recorded. (Further details about this raid are [available here](#).)

On August 13th, a public hearing was held to determine the administrative punishment of the church's pastor, Yang Xibo, along with his wife, Wang Xiaofei. The pastoring couple received official notice that the Religious Affairs Bureau intended to fine Pastor Yang almost \$40,000 CAD and Wang almost \$20,000 CAD.



Pastor Yang, his wife Wang, and their son.  
Photo: ChinaAid

The hearing lasted two-and-a-half hours. Throughout this time, the couple were forced to defend themselves as their lawyer could not attend due to the pandemic. Members of the church waited expectantly outside the building. After the conclusion of the court session, Pastor Yang announced, "The hearing went well, but the Religious Affairs Bureau does not plan to change anything."

***Please pray that God's provision and grace will be extended to Pastor Yang and his wife Wang. May the charges against them be dropped and the hefty fines of the bureau be cancelled, allowing this Christian couple to continue serving the Lord without the threat of further harassment from governing authorities. Pray that the leaders of the Xunsiding Church will be given wisdom and discernment as they seek God's direction concerning their Christian community.***

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](http://www.vomcanada.com)