



**"For to us a Child is born,
to us a Son is given; and the
government shall be upon His
shoulder, and His name shall be
called Wonderful Counsellor,
Mighty God, Everlasting
Father, Prince of Peace."**

~ Isaiah 9:6 ESV

INDONESIA: Community Clashes Halt Christmas Activities

Sources: Morning Star News, Fahas News, The Christian Post, ECSPE

Much of the harassment encountered by followers of Jesus in Indonesia arises from local community members who are opposed to Christian activities. Two recent incidents of community opposition have affected churches in their preparations for this Christmas season.

On December 1st, a church choir in the village of Caile, which is located within South Celebes Province, was rehearsing for a Christmas service when a group of community members suddenly interrupted the meeting. The opposing Muslim villagers insisted that the church members obtain permission from community leaders in order to conduct the practice session. The head of the community association, a man known as Aples, told the members of the Catholic church that the gathering also had to be reported to the local government, further explaining that he was working as a mediator to "protect [his] Catholic friends."



Believers in Indonesia.

Photo: VOMC

According to one parishioner, the practice was taking place in a multipurpose building. Although the facility had originally been constructed for use as a place of worship, opposition from local Muslims has prevented church leaders from holding any services there. Instead, worship gatherings are taking place in a home outside the community, and the building is being used for other church activities.

In a separate incident on December 8th, Christians were prevented from attending a Christmas service at a pastor's house in Cibinong, West Java, when approximately 100 protestors blocked the believers from accessing the home. The community members claimed that the pastor was not authorized to hold the service in his residence.

According to Pastor Nicky Jefta Makaray, meeting in a private home does not require permission from the Indonesian government. Nevertheless, he had given prior notice to the neighbourhood association, the head of the residents' association, the local police, as well as the military. After tense discussions with the protestors, the pastor changed the location of the service to an open field. However, access was also blocked to that location, preventing the Christians from gathering together to celebrate Christmas.

For Christians in Indonesia and other nations around the world, Christmas is frequently a time of increased hostility from those who oppose the message of Christ. Further information on the persecution of the church in Indonesia is available at our [country report](#).

Pray that God will provide the members of these churches needed encouragement, comfort and guidance as they deal with the objections of their opposing neighbours. Ask the Lord to also provide these believers wisdom as they mediate with community leaders who may likewise disapprove of their Christian beliefs. May He honour the desire of these congregation members by making a way for them to gather peaceably together to worship Him – not only during this Christmas season but also throughout the new year and beyond....

SUDAN: Church Leaders Face Violence from Multiple Sides

Sources: ACI Africa, Catholic News Agency, Morning Star News

The bishop of the El-Obeid diocese in Sudan recently suffered a harrowing ordeal at the hands of both members of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and those of the opposing rebel Rapid Support Forces (RSF). On December 1st, Bishop Yunan Tombe Trille Kuku Andali reported that he was travelling with a deacon named Joseph. The ministry team had just arrived in El-Obeid when they were suddenly stopped and harassed by the SAF. The troops seized the small sum of money in U.S. dollars that the bishop was carrying, claiming that it was forbidden currency. During the robbery, the soldiers also physically harmed the two men.

Shortly after the December 1st incident, Bishop Tombe Trille and Deacon Joseph were accosted by RSF members who proceeded to severely beat the Christian leaders. The bishop believes that the rebels had intended to kill them, but one of the soldiers in the group eventually persuaded the others to stop the beating. When the assailants departed from the scene, the assaulted church leaders were left abandoned with serious head and neck injuries.

This is not the first time that Bishop Tombe Trille has been dangerously threatened. On April 20th, 2023, he and other members of the clergy narrowly escaped death when rockets hit the premises of his residence, destroying the main gate of the cathedral, as well as his home. Thankfully, no one was injured during that incident. Despite the threats against him, the bishop has been a vocal opponent of the ongoing civil conflict in Sudan, publicly urging both sides to lay down their weapons. For more reports addressing the violence perpetrated against Christians in Sudan, go to our [country profile](#).

Please pray for the complete healing of Bishop Tombe Trille, Deacon Joseph, and their fellow clergy members, as they recover physically and/or emotionally from the attacks perpetrated against them. May these Christian leaders, and the many other believers in Sudan who are encountering harassment because of their faith, be divinely protected from any further threats against them. All the while, may they sense the Lord's reassuring presence. In general, pray that there would finally be an end to the long-term civil war in Sudan, so that lasting peace and harmony can be established throughout this African nation.



A church in Sudan.

Photo: Flickr / David Stanley (cc)

KYRGYZSTAN: New Religion Law Passes First Reading

Source: Forum 18

While the Kyrgyzstan constitution guarantees freedom of religion, various laws imposing significant restrictions on religious gatherings have been passed over the years, as well those forbidding proselytism and the distribution of religious literature. Since the 2008 Religion Law came into effect, churches were required to register with the government and, in order to do so, they had to consist of more than 200 adult members. In the years following, further modifications have frequently been proposed. One such bill was introduced in October 2023, but the parliament rejected it on June 6th, 2024. ([Read more.](#))

Lawmakers have continued to attempt modifications which then resulted in further religious restrictions. The most recent draft bill passed its first reading on December 12th; however, several human rights organizations have since expressed concerns about the new legislation. One religious leader has referred to the bill as "a very dangerous law." For not only does the proposed legislation continue to ban all unregistered religious activities, this time the religious communities must have a minimum of 500 adult members in order to gain legal status. The proposed law further mandates that all places of worship are to be registered, and that an individual's freedom to publicly share their faith will be prohibited. Additionally, the new proposal requires religious communities to re-register every ten years.

Along with these specified restrictions, the State Commission for Religious Affairs (SCRA) would also be given wide-ranging powers to ban religious communities and seemingly arbitrary powers to reject registrations. Not only will



Parliament building in Kyrgyzstan.

Photo: Flickr/Katie Putz (cc)

communities have to obtain approval for any activities outside of their registered premises, but also all individuals must receive permission from the SCRA before conducting any "preaching activity." Fines for violating the restrictions would be sharply increased as well. If passed, the bill is scheduled to come into effect on February 1st, 2025.

The motives behind the increased restrictions are unclear. One human rights defender, who wishes to remain anonymous, stated: "Parliament is discussing the draft law in secrecy without publishing on its website the details of discussions and their results," adding that the lawmakers "seem to be in a rush, and this is alarming." To learn more about the challenges experienced by Christians in Kyrgyzstan, go to our [country report](#).

Pray that God will swiftly intervene in the current deliberation process, guiding the decisions of Kyrgyzstan's parliamentary officials by granting them divinely inspired wisdom and discernment. As a result, may all unreasonable restrictions be rejected, enabling Christians the freedom to gather for worship and reach out to others in their communities – thus blessing Kyrgyz society as a whole. While our brothers and sisters in Christ prayerfully await a favourable outcome, may they rest in the knowledge that since the Lord is their Victor, His great Kingdom purposes will ultimately prevail.

The "Persecution & Prayer Alert" is a ministry of:
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