



"Please rejoice for me! Jesus has died on the cross for me. It is my utter joy to be imprisoned for my Lord. This is a reality and not self-comfort nor self-encouragement."

~ Pastor John Cao, in a message he shared during imprisonment.

ETHIOPIA: Christian Workers Attacked While Constructing Church

Source: Voice of the Martyrs USA

On April 7th, a group of Christians were working to construct a church building when they were violently attacked by a mob of Muslim militants. Armed with machetes, the attackers attempted to stop the construction, wounding several of the workers who were present.

The believers had been constructing the building in western Ethiopia, near the border with Sudan. Despite prior warnings to abandon the project, they continued because there was no place for Christians in the region to gather for worship. Even after the attack and their resulting injuries, the workers persevered with the construction project.



This man was attacked while building a church.
Photo: VOM International

To review additional reports concerning the opposition experienced by Christians in this East African country, as well as specific ways you can pray for our persecuted Ethiopian family in Christ, go to our [country profile](#).

- ***Pray for the complete healing of the physically injured and/or emotionally traumatized church workers, asking that they would also tangibly experience God's comfort, strength and peace in the aftermath of this recent attack.***
- ***As the believers of the mentioned Ethiopian congregation endeavour to meet together and courageously serve the Lord amid opposition, may they consistently extend His love and***

forgiveness to the neighbouring members of their community – even touching the lives of the perpetrators involved in the mob attack.

- *Ask God to soften the hearts of those in Ethiopia who are resistant to the Gospel, drawing them to Himself and revealing His truth and grace in life-changing ways.*

EGYPT: Almost 200 More Churches Officially Legalized!

Sources: Mission Network News, Egypt Independent, Watani

In 2016, legislation was passed to expedite the approval process for churches in Egypt. Prior to this, congregations that had applied for registration encountered significant opposition over the years, and the construction of new worship facilities was often delayed. Since 2017, however, the committee responsible for reviewing the applications approved an average of approximately 475 churches each year.

During its most recent meeting on April 16th, the committee approved 191 additional church buildings. This decision brings the total number of approvals to 3,804 out of the 5,415 submitted applications. Reflecting on this

encouraging development, Duane Friesen from Voice of the Martyrs Canada referred to the approvals as a "good step." At the same time, he urged caution, noting that registration can sometimes result in increased government involvement. For more information, including reports addressing the various challenges encountered by Egyptian Christians, see our [country profile](#).



A church in Egypt.
Photo: Flickr / David Hoffman (CC)

- *Pray that God will continue to open doors for spiritual growth to take place in Egypt, nurturing a society where freedom of belief is respected and all citizens are treated with dignity and fairness.*
- *May the country's newly approved churches become places of peace and security, where believers will be further encouraged and strengthened in their faith.*
- *Continue to remember our Christian brothers and sisters in Egypt who are experiencing other forms of persecution, asking the Lord to fill them with courage, wisdom and love as they faithfully share the Gospel of Christ with those around them.*

REPORT UPDATE

CHINA: Pastor John Cao Suffers Major Health Concerns

Sources: ChinaAid, Church in Chains

In 2017, Pastor John Cao was arrested by Chinese authorities for allegedly "organizing illegal border crossings." Sentenced to seven years in prison, he was finally freed in March 2024. Following his release, Pastor John hoped to reunite with his wife and two children in the United States, where he holds permanent residency. However, Chinese authorities have withheld the church leader's passport, forcing him to remain in China. (For more details, see our [previously published report](#).)



Pastor John Cao and his family.
Photo: ChinaAid

In recent months, Pastor John has been suffering physically due to serious health concerns. After experiencing severe pain in his back and legs, he was hospitalized and diagnosed with late-stage cancer which is now affecting his prostate, spine and bone marrow. In an answer to prayer, his wife and children were recently granted permission to visit him – ending their enforced separation of nine years. April 26th also marked the 40th anniversary of the Christian leader's faithful ministry work.

On April 30th, Pastor John was discharged from hospital and returned to his mother's home in Changsha, Hunan Province. His doctor intends to continue monitoring the pastor's health condition before determining whether surgery is possible.

- ***Prayerfully ask the Lord to graciously minister comfort, fortitude and healing to Pastor John; all the while, granting him and his family peace in the midst of this difficult time.***
- ***Pray that a way would be made for this church leader to travel back to the United States, so he can be permanently reunited with his wife and children – plus, receive the medical care and nurturing he needs.***
- ***As family members – along with fellow believers across China and beyond – reflect on Pastor John's decades of faithful service, courage and compassion, may many others be inspired, raised up and equipped by God to likewise proclaim the Good News of His eternal saving grace and mercy.***

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