



Voice ^{of the}
Martyrs

PERSECUTION
& PRAYER
ALERT

***"God does nothing but by
prayer, and everything with it."***

~ John Wesley

NIGERIA: Pastor Among Dozens Killed in Plateau State

Sources: International Christian Concern, Morning Star News

A pastor was killed, and his son has been wounded, while travelling to a church in Nigeria's Plateau State on Sunday, September 20th. This attack was one of many violent incidents throughout the state that have claimed dozens of lives in recent weeks.

According to available reports, Pastor Samuel Nandi and his son were ambushed while they were on their way to a church service in the town of Maraban Kantoma, which is located in the Barkin Ladi area. Along with this unprovoked attack, numerous other deadly incidents were reported throughout Plateau State, where the violence perpetrated by Fulani herdsmen appears to have intensified during the month of September.



Photo: Flickr / UN Development Programme ([CC](#))

In response to the increased unrest, the Plateau State government imposed a curfew on September 21st. The curfew, which runs from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., will remain in effect until further notice. Nigerian authorities hope the measure will enable security forces to restore stability and provide increased protection for residents, particularly within the three regions of the state most affected by the violence.

While numerous factors contribute to the ongoing insecurity in Nigeria – resulting in thousands of fatalities over the years – hostility towards Christianity remains a significant element of the atrocities carried out by Fulani herdsmen and others who are affiliated with militant Islamist groups. To review previously published Persecution & Prayer Alert reports addressing the persecution of Christians in this West African nation, go to our [country profile](#).

- ***Please prayerfully uphold Pastor Samuel's surviving family as they grieve their sudden loss, asking the Lord to provide them greatly needed comfort, strength and peace throughout this difficult time.***
- ***Also pray for the healing of the slain pastor's injured son, who is not only recovering from the tragic loss of his father, but also from the resulting physical wounds and emotional trauma of the targeted attack.***
- ***Ask the Lord to equip Nigeria's authorities and security forces with wisdom and perseverance as they work to restore peace and stability in the area.***
- ***May those responsible for perpetrating such horrific attacks against innocent fellow Nigerians be convicted of their wrongdoings and brought to justice, in hopes that they will ultimately surrender their hearts to Christ and turn from their wicked ways.***
- ***Continue to pray for Christians throughout Nigeria who live under the shadow of violence and uncertainty, asking that they be strengthened in their faith, encouraged by God's presence, and filled with hope as they look to Him each day.***

REPORT UPDATES

RUSSIA: Sentencing of Elderly Korean Missionary

Sources: Voice of the Martyrs Korea, Mission Network News

In January, Ms. Park Tae-Yeon was planning to return to her home country of South Korea after compassionately ministering to children for many years in eastern Russia as a missionary. However, one week before her scheduled departure, Ms. Park was detained by Russian authorities and charged with immigration-related offences. ([See more information](#) on her arrest.)



Ms. Park Tae-Yeon
Photo: VOM Korea

On October 8th, the 70-year-old believer was sentenced to a total of five years and eight months in a general-regime correctional colony. (A Russian co-defendant, Zinaida Ustinova, received a six-year suspended sentence with five years' probation.) The court also ruled that the number of months Ms. Park had already spent at a detention centre for foreign nationals would not be

credited towards her sentence. When delivering the court's verdict, an appointed judicial representative only cited the formal charges; not the reasoning behind the sentencing. Hopefully, the official written judgement, which was expected to arrive within days of the hearing, will provide a proper explanation.

The court's harsh sentencing has been described as "extraordinary" for an immigration violation. During an interview with Mission Network News, Dr. Eric Foley of VOM Korea stated, "If there was an immigration violation...normally the person would simply be kicked out of the country, especially if they had a plane ticket in their hand and were 70 years old." Considering that Ms. Park was questioned during the trial about her faith, as well as the ministry organization that she had been serving, Dr. Foley suspects that other factors may have contributed to the prosecution.

Although an appeal to a higher court has been planned, the detained believer will remain in custody pending the outcome. If the initial sentence is upheld, Ms. Park would likely be transferred to a women's correctional colony in Zaozernoye, a village near the city of Khabarovsk, where the missionary had been working with Child Evangelism Fellowship. Incidentally, this organization was added to the Russian government's list of "undesirable" organizations this past July.

- ***Pray that the planned appeal will be successful, allowing for Ms. Park's due release from imprisonment and safe return to her home country as originally intended.***
- ***While this believer awaits a hopeful favourable outcome to the future appeal hearing, may she remain deeply aware of the Lord's comforting presence – strengthening, encouraging and sustaining her daily with His perfect peace which surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7).***
- ***Despite the Russian government's efforts to intensify restrictions against religious organizations, pray that those serving in Christian ministries will faithfully proclaim the "Good News of the Gospel" with courage, wisdom and perseverance.***

OCCUPIED UKRAINE: Appeal Denied for Pastor Facing Deportation

Source: Forum18

Pastor Vladimir Rytikov was born and raised in the Luhansk region of Ukraine. Ordained during 1995, he has faithfully served in ministry within this area for more than 30 years. Despite this, the pastor now faces deportation to an unknown location following Russia's occupation and subsequent annexation of the region. Apparently, Russian officials refuse to recognize Pastor Vladimir as a citizen due to his ministry involvement with an unregistered church.



Pastor Vladimr Rytikov

Photo: Council of Churches Baptist via Forum 18

Earlier this year, authorities ordered his deportation, prompting him to file an appeal. ([See more details.](#)) Officials contend that the church leader is a foreign citizen who "advocates for the violent change of the foundations of the constitutional order of the Russian Federation; or by other actions, creates a threat to the security of the Russian Federation or citizens of the Russian Federation."

On October 6th, the Russian-controlled Luhansk Supreme Court rejected Pastor Vladimir's appeal. Officials have also seized official documents pertaining to the ownership of his house and land, refusing to return them despite the ruling that his wife, Lyudmila, is permitted to remain within the region. In addition, the elderly couple, who are both caring for a son who has lived with a disability since 2015, were denied their government pensions. Compounding the family's multiple difficulties, Lyudmila is experiencing health complications.

Pastor Vladimir intends to continue appealing the case — even presenting it before Russia's Supreme Court if necessary. Meanwhile, his lawyer plans to request a suspension of any deportation order while the appeal process remains ongoing.

- ***Pray that Pastor Vladimir's appeal will be rightfully honoured, allowing him to stay in the country where he has lived, served and faithfully ministered for decades.***
- ***During this season of uncertainty, may the Lord strengthen and encourage this church leader and his family, graciously providing for each of their physical, emotional, spiritual and practical needs.***
- ***Intercede on behalf of other believers residing in occupied regions of Ukraine who are facing increased pressures and restrictions, asking that they too would remain steadfast in their faith and further sustained by God's wisdom, grace and hope.***

- ***May the Lord work powerfully in the hearts of all those involved, opening the way for a just and peaceful resolution to the ongoing military conflict.***
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