



## Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada  
www.vomcanada.com

Thursday, August 8, 2019

*"I am a Christian, and God is with me,  
which enables me to calm down even  
in the midst of this horrible event."*

~ Shi Minglei (featured in China report)

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### CHINA: Family Terrorized by Police

Sources: ChinaAid, Radio Free Asia

A Christian woman from Shenzhen penned a letter titled, "Horrible," to describe the abuse her family suffered at the hands of governmental authorities. Shi Minglei was leaving for work on the morning of July 22nd when she saw a group of officials hiding in the fire escape. They rushed into her home, breaking down the door, to arrest her husband, Cheng Yuan. Cheng was allowed to pack his clothes before being taken away without any information on where he was going.

Police accompanied Shi to drop off the couple's three-year-old daughter for daycare and then returned to their home where she was blindfolded and taken to a government office for interrogation. Questioning her honesty, the officer threatened to bring her young daughter in to cross-examine them together.

That evening, officials announced that Cheng was being charged with subversion of state power and Shi will be placed under residential surveillance. According to Shi, the trauma of the incident has caused them much distress and terrified their young child. Despite this, Shi can say, "I am a Christian, and God is with me, which enables me to calm down even in the midst of this horrible event."

Cheng is reported to be a member of a public-interest law NGO (non-governmental organization), known as Changsha Funeng. Two other members of the organization were also arrested the same day on similar charges. For more information on the persecution of Christians in China, to go [www.vomcanada.com/china.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/china.htm).

*Pray that God's peace -- which surpasses all understanding -- will continue to rest upon Cheng, Shi and their young daughter (Philippians 4:7). May justice be served for Cheng and the two other arrested members of the NGO. Remember to prayerfully uphold the many Christians throughout China who are likewise being imprisoned for their faith. Also pray that the authorities will see the change God can make in the lives of His people, so they themselves may personally come to faith in Christ.*

### **ALGERIA: Another Officially Mandated Church Closure**

Sources: VOMC Sources, Liberté, Votre News

On August 6th, a church in Boudjima was officially closed by the National Gendarmerie for failing to have a permit. A government mandate, requiring permits for all churches, was issued in 2006. Yet, even though applications have been properly submitted, the requested permits were not issued. One Algerian church leader refers to the officials' implementation of such authorization as only a pretext, further surmising that "their goal is to end the church in Algeria."

The church's pastor, Messaoud Takilt, received notification of the closure only three days prior, giving the members limited time to vacate the building. On the closing day, they gathered for worship. When police arrived, the pastor convinced the officers to leave until after the completion of the service, at which time the building was officially sealed. To learn more about the challenges facing believers in Algeria, go to [www.vomcanada.com/algeria.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/algeria.htm).

*Pray for the members of this congregation and those of other Algerian churches facing similar uncertainty and oppression. Ask God to imbue these Christians with strength and wisdom so they can continue reaching out with His love and grace. May the authorities be willing to treat them fairly by issuing requested permits and ceasing from all manner of oppression. Regardless of the current challenges, pray that the country's believers will remain faithful.*

## **REPORT UPDATES**

### **CUBA: Released from Detention**

Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Ricardo Fernandez Izaguirre, an independent journalist and religious freedom advocate, was detained on July 12th, at the same time various religious leaders were being blocked from leaving the country to attend meetings in Washington on religious freedom. (See our previously posted report at [www.vomcanada.com/cu-2019-07-18.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/cu-2019-07-18.htm).)

On July 19th, the day after the symposium in Washington was finished, Richardo was thankfully released. "I was freed without any explanation -- just as they had arrested me," he announced with relief over the outcome.

*Praise God for Ricardo's release, while remaining mindful of the need to pray for his protection as he continues to speak out on behalf of those suffering restrictions in Cuba for their faith.*

### **ERITREA: Patriarch Excommunicated**

Sources: World Watch Monitor, BBC

While the Eritrean government officially recognizes four religious groups, even members of those groups remain under heavy oppression. In 2005, the government forcibly removed the head of the Eritrean Orthodox Church, Patriarch Abuna Antonios, replacing him with a government-appointed lay administrator (see [www.vomcanada.com/er-2006-01-25.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/er-2006-01-25.htm)). The Patriarch has remained under house arrest ever since, stripped of all administrative duties.

Earlier this year, the 90-year-old church leader secretly released a video objecting to the leadership of the administrator, Yoftahe Dimetros, and decrying the care he was receiving. He has been living in the servants' quarters of a residence occupied by a pro-government bishop.

In an unprecedented act, the orthodox church has moved to officially excommunicate Patriarch Antonios for heresy. According to a letter signed by five of the six bishops, his recent activities - - apparently in reference to the video -- demonstrated that "his repentance was not genuine." The letter announces that the elderly church leader may live out the rest of his life in a church-owned building. This excommunication is seen as a way of silencing any further dissent and thus strengthening government control of the church.

*Intercede for Eritrea's true Christ-followers, especially those being confronted with ongoing opposition from the country's leaders -- whether they be political or of a religious affiliation. May these Christians be free to practise their faith without the threat of danger or inhumane treatment. Also prayerfully uphold all who are presently suffering in prison for their faith, asking God to grant them protection and strength as they await their hopeful release.*

*If you would like to post a prayer of praise or petition on behalf of our persecuted family around the globe, visit VOMC's prayer wall at [www.vomcanada.com/prayerwall.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/prayerwall.htm).*

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If you would like to encourage someone to read or receive this weekly prayer alert, please use our online form at [www.vomcanada.com/pnpforward.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/pnpforward.htm) and help spread the message of the persecuted church around the world.

For information on additional ways to support members of the persecuted church overseas, review the list of options at [www.vomcanada.com/take-action.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/take-action.htm).