



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
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*"Lord, these men take away my life full of misery,
but You will give me life everlasting."
~ Maurice Blanc, martyred in 1547*

PAKISTAN: Tortured to Death by Police

Sources: Morning Star News, Daily Times, Pakistan Today, The News International

While investigating an alleged theft, police detained 28-year-old Amir Masih. Four days later, he died in hospital from wounds inflicted by police officers.

On August 28th, Amir Masih was taken into custody after accusations of theft were made against him by his employer. Two days later, after not returning home, his family discovered that he was being detained. Finally, on September 2nd, they were informed that Amir was going to be transferred to hospital because he was not well.

Video footage at the hospital shows police bringing Amir there on a motorcycle and then kicking him as they dragged him to the entrance. He died later that day, but only after telling his family of his torture. According to his brother Sunny, Amir was urinated on and mocked for his Christian faith. Then he was tortured, beaten and electrocuted in the officers' efforts to force a confession. An autopsy confirms that he had suffered extensive bruising, along with broken ribs.

At last report, six police officers, including a sub-inspector, have been criminally charged. Various political officials have intervened to ensure justice will be done. One of the officials, Shunila Ruth, believes it is very possible that Amir was tortured because of his Christian faith. "Unfortunately, there are segments in our society who continue to be prejudicial towards members of marginalized communities," she states. For more information on the difficulties facing Christians in Pakistan, go to www.vomcanada.com/pakistan.htm.

Please uphold Amir's wife and two young sons, along with their other family members and friends, as they now try to struggle with the shock of their loved one's sudden death and the resulting grief. Pray that true justice will be done, and that in the meantime action is taken to

prevent similar incidents from taking place in the future. Continue to remember the many Christians throughout Pakistan who face opposition from authorities and fellow citizens because of their faith.

CHINA: Christian Orphanage Shut Down

Source: ChinaAid

Authorities in China's Shanxi province forcibly removed all the children from a Christian-founded orphanage on August 26th and placed them in state care instead. The Bethany Home for Children with Disabilities was founded in 1997 and, over the years, has taken in and provided for more than 100 special needs children. Most of them were abandoned by their parents because of their disabilities.

In early August, officials unexpectedly visited the home and notified staff that the children would be transferred to a state-run orphanage based on alleged suspicions that the home was permitting the illegal adoption of children. Despite assurances to the contrary, all the children, along with some elderly residents in the facility, were taken away.

One source, Mr. Huang, explained that the authorities have been cracking down on all religiously operated homes for orphans in fear that personnel may teach religion to the children. For more information on the persecution of Christians in China, go to www.vomcanada.com/china.htm.

Intercede for God's intervention in this troubling situation, especially on behalf of the special needs children and elderly who have been thrust into the midst of turmoil and uncertainty. Even though some of them are not able to understand the many changes they are now experiencing (location, daily routine, workers, etc.), may God's peace settle their anxious hearts. Pray also that the compassion demonstrated over the years through the caring staff will sustain these children into the future, and that religious organizations will have opportunities to continue expressing the love and goodness of the Lord to the people of China.

RUSSIA: Place of Worship Shut Down

Source: Forum 18

Legislation governing religious communities in Russia is complex, contradictory, and often inconsistently applied. In one recent case, a church community was barred from using its place of worship, even though it has done so for two decades.

The Verkhnebakansky Baptist Church in Novorossiysk has been worshipping in a two-story building in a residential area for years. There were no problems until the spring of 2018 when a change of government administration brought new attitudes toward religious communities. One church in the city has been demolished and another banned from using its building. The door of the Verkhnebakansky church building was sealed in early July.

Authorities claim that churches are using residential buildings in ways they were not intended, even though a 1997 law permits religious worship on residential premises. The officials also claim that the buildings do not always meet necessary safety and planning regulations. This problem is further compounded as the construction of buildings designated for worship are being denied and the efforts of those affected by this opposition are refused. Despite the attempts of the Baptist church leaders to prove the building meets all regulations, they have only been met with roadblocks.

The church's leadership has appealed the decision and intend to continue presenting this case to the courts, as far as necessary. According to one of the leaders, Yevgeny Kokora, they are prepared to take this matter to the European Court of Human Rights, if necessary.

Pray for wisdom and direction for this church and others that are attempting to navigate through the maze of Russia's most recently imposed legal regulations. Ask God to grant understanding on the part of authorities, and a heightened awareness of their own spiritual needs, so they will be willing to work with these churches and allow freedom of religious worship. As a result, may Christians be able to freely meet for worship throughout Russia without any governmental hindrance or opposition.

REPORT UPDATE

IRAN: Appeal Hearing Postponed

Source: Middle East Concern

On August 29th, it was reported that an appeal hearing was scheduled to take place on September 3rd for Shamiram Isavi Khabizeh and Kevian Fallah Mohammadi. (More information on this case is available at www.vomcanada.com/ir-2019-08-29.htm.) When it was time for the hearing, the appointed judge failed to appear. Consequently, the hearing was postponed and, as of this report, no new date has been set.

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.

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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 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.