



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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*"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast,
immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,
knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain."*

~ 1 Corinthians 15:58 ESV

UZBEKISTAN: Christian Fined for Distributing Magazines

Source: Forum18

This past Christmas, a neighbourhood celebration in Uzbekistan was hosted by Tatyana Akhmadiyeva, a member of a local Baptist church. At the event, she offered Christian magazines to 15 of her neighbours. Local authorities received a report about the distribution and summoned Tatyana for questioning. She was told that the publications had been imported illegally, since they had not been evaluated by the "Struggle with Extremism and Terrorism Department." As a result, the officials confiscated the magazines, which they claimed were unlawfully distributed, and fined Tatyana the equivalent of two weeks' average wages.

Tatyana's January 18th trial lasted only 15 minutes and resulted in her conviction. On February 12th, the fine was upheld and the magazines were ordered to be destroyed. Tatyana intends to appeal the decision of the court. For more on the difficulties experienced by Christians in Uzbekistan, go to www.vomcanada.com/uzbekistan.htm.

Prayerfully uphold believers who, like Tatyana, are facing legal pressures or other forms of persecution in Uzbekistan, as they seek ways to share the Good News of the Gospel with their friends and neighbours. Specifically pray that a favourable decision will be made by court officials regarding Tatyana's appeal. Also intercede for the members of the Uzbek government, asking the Lord to speak to their hearts about the importance of allowing citizens to freely share their Christian faith without any interference or repercussion.

ERITREA: 35 New Arrests

Source: Release International

In recent months, we joyfully shared the good news that dozens of Christians had been released from prisons in Eritrea (see www.vomcanada.com/eritrea.htm). However, any hopes that the string of releases signalled a change of heart towards Christians in the oppressive regime were dashed when 35 believers were arrested for conducting prayer meetings in late March.

The army raided a prayer meeting in the capital city of Asmara and arrested 23 women, all of whom were taken to the Mai Sarawa prison. Another 12 Christians were arrested at a house meeting in the port city of Assab, which is near the Djibouti border, and transported to a nearby prison. Particular concern has been raised for those detained in Assab, since the prison there is reputed for its harsh conditions.

Eritrea's citizens have been told it is their duty to report anything untoward that may be happening in their community. It is suspected that the sound of vocalized prayer or singing may have alerted nearby neighbours, who reported these meetings to the military. VOMC's Greg Musselman was able to interview Andrew Boyd from Release International about this latest wave of arrests. To view this video, go to www.vomcanada.com/ri-eritrea.

Pray that justice will prevail, and that these newly imprisoned believers will be released soon. As they await their anticipated release, may they stand firm in the face of their circumstances, taking comfort in the ministering presence of God's Holy Spirit. Also remember to pray for the many other Christians who have been held in Eritrean prisons for numerous years without charges or legal representation, asking for their divine rescue as well. May these long-suffering imprisoned believers be endowed with ongoing emotional, mental, physical and spiritual strength, knowing that they are being upheld in prayer by fellow Christians around the world -- and, most importantly, by our Lord Jesus Himself.

REPORT UPDATE

CHINA: Continued Detention of Church Elder

Source: ChinaAid

When Elder Zhang Chunlei, leader of the Renai Reformed Church in Guiyang, attempted to negotiate with officers after a gathering at the church was forcibly broken up on March 16th, the authorities decided to arrest him (see www.vomcanada.com/cn-2021-03-25.htm). Police followed up the arrest by searching the church leader's home, where they confiscated a computer, cell phone and other items belonging to his wife, Yang Ai Qin. That same day, the homes of other church members were also raided.

When Elder Zhang's administrative detention was completed on March 28th, it was expected that he would be released. Instead, however, he was immediately transferred to criminal detention on

allegations of fraud. Attempts have been made for Elder Zhang's lawyer to meet with him, but the requests have been denied by officials.

May Elder Zhang have a deep awareness of God's reassuring presence throughout his detainment, filling him with peace and fortifying his spirit. Also prayerfully uphold this Christian leader's family, including his wife Yang, as well as the congregants of his church, asking the Lord to likewise strengthen and encourage them through this time of trial. First Timothy 2:2 admonishes us to intercede for governmental authorities in order to lead 'quiet and peaceable lives in all Godliness and reverence.' We, therefore, ask the 'King of kings' and 'Lord of lords' to powerfully touch the hearts and minds of China's governing officials, so that they may honour our Almighty God through their decisions and the just, merciful treatment of His people.

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