



## Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada  
www.vomcanada.com

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*"It is a persistent evil to persecute a man  
who belongs to the grace of God. It is a calamity  
without remedy to hate the happy...."*

~ Cyprian of Carthage (AD 210-258)

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### **ERITREA: Three Elderly Pastors Arrested**

Source: Church in Chains

Three semi-retired pastors in the Eritrean capital of Asmara were arrested towards the latter part of July. Since they were all over 70 years old, and only occasionally conducted funeral or wedding services, it is unclear why these elderly Christian men had been targeted for arrest.

Pastor Girmay Araya and Pastor Samuel Okbamichael were taken from their homes in the middle of the night for interrogation. Police intended to imprison a third pastor, Georgio Gebreab, but they found him sick in bed. This pastor has since been placed under house arrest until he is well enough to be taken into custody. Pastor Georgio previously served five years in a prison camp before being released seven years ago. He has been very ill for some time.

In June, the United Nations Special Rapporteur to Eritrea reported serious human rights issues persisting in the country. Special note was made of faith groups being detained without any charge or trial. In fact, some Christians have been imprisoned for many years without a trial. For more on the persecution facing believers in Eritrea, go to [www.vomcanada.com/eritrea.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/eritrea.htm).

*Remember to uphold these pastors in your prayers, along with the many other Christians in Eritrea who have been wrongfully imprisoned because of their faith. Pray that, even in the midst of the country's terrible prison conditions, the Lord will fill these believers with renewed strength, hope and endurance. Please also pray that Pastor Georgio will experience a complete physical healing. May the family and friends of those who are presently imprisoned turn to Christ for needed help, comfort and encouragement as they seek His divine intervention on behalf of their loved ones.*

## **BANGLADESH: Church Faces Ongoing Oppression**

Sources: AsiaNews, Christian Post

For several weeks, a small church in Suandrapara, a village of southeastern Bangladesh, has been facing threats from militant Buddhists who were attempting to coerce the Christians to return to Buddhism, even though many of the churchgoers had converted several years before. As a result of the oppression, most of the 50 members of the Bangladesh Tribal Baptist Church have been forced to stay away from their homes for fear of attack.

Along with the threats, the church building has been physically damaged on two occasions. The Buddhist militants first ordered the church members to demolish their place of worship. When the Christians refused, the assailants destroyed parts of the building, including the front gate and cross, on July 15th. The oppressors demanded that there be no further church activities, giving the believers seven days to return to their former religion. When that deadline passed, the church was again attacked on July 22nd, resulting in additional damages – this time to a wall, door and the tin roof. The Christians were threatened that there would be further consequences if they reported the incident to the police or members of the media.

The pastor, Rev. Tubel Chakma Poran Adetion, states that the members of his church have not gone to the police, since they are considered a minority people group within the village. "We want to live in peace with [the Buddhists] and discuss things with them," he explained. However, if a collaborative discussion cannot bring about a peaceful resolution, the believers are prepared to take the matter to court.

Both Christians and Buddhists are a small minority in Bangladesh, with the vast majority of the population being Muslim. To learn about the challenges facing Christians in Bangladesh, go to [www.vomcanada.com/bangladesh.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/bangladesh.htm).

*Pray that God will bestow wisdom upon the members of the Bangladesh Tribal Baptist Church, giving these persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ the right words to say to their neighbours who so strongly oppose the Gospel. May the Holy Spirit provide the inner peace needed so these Christians will remain committed to Jesus, no matter the cost. Pray that God's Spirit will also touch the hearts of the instigators, bringing about radical transformation in their lives and ultimately harmony to this village community as a whole.*

## **NIGERIA: Young Victim's Funeral Raided by Perpetrators**

Source: International Christian Concern

On July 27th, Celina Ishaku's son was murdered by Fulani militants, the same group that had killed her husband two years earlier. The next day, friends and family gathered to bury the boy. Rather than allow those at the funeral to grieve in peace, however, the assailants attacked the community once again, raiding the service and shooting at the mourners. Along with the destruction of ten homes and multiple farms, three youths were killed in the ambush.

Today's Fulani militants have surpassed Boko Haram as the greatest threat to Nigerian Christians. According to a report from the International Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law, a Nigerian non-profit organization, at least 43,000 Christians have been killed by Islamic militants belonging to various groups during the past 12 years. Approximately 18,500 others have permanently disappeared. Close to 17,500 churches have been attacked, along with around 2,000 Christian schools. To read more about the persecution of Christians in Nigeria, go to [www.vomcanada.com/nigeria.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/nigeria.htm).

*Prayerfully uphold Celina in your prayers, along with thousands of other Nigerians who are mourning the loss of their loved ones because of the horrific attacks being perpetuated by militant Fulani Muslims. May God surround each grieving individual with His comfort, peace and protection. Continue to pray for His mighty intervention in this beleaguered nation, which includes helping Nigerian authorities in their efforts to put an end to the militants' reign of violence.*

### **ISRAEL: Messianic Believers Targeted**

Source: Middle East Concern

Messianic believers in Arad, southern Israel, have been targeted by the Gur Hasidim, a strict Orthodox Jewish sect. Recently, graffiti was written on the footpath outside the home of some believers, stating that "the mission" – a term used by Gur members in reference to the fellowship of Messianic Christians – was "a tragedy for the Jewish people."

Gur youth have been encouraged to spit and insult the name of Jesus whenever they encounter Christians. Hostile members of the sect also frequently gather outside prayer meetings. During a previous incident that took place in August 2017, a large group of this sect demonstrated outside a Messianic meeting place. In an effort to identify members of the Messianic community, the Gur antagonists have collected the licence plate numbers of believers and taken photos of those who have attended religious gatherings.

*Please pray that local Messianic believers affected by these ongoing threats and harassment will be given the wisdom and patience required to respond Scripturally to their persecutors. May this opposition serve to strengthen and unify this targeted community of believers, enabling them to remain strong in their faith so that they can serve as courageous witnesses for Christ. Pray that God will have mercy on the troubled Gur members, opening their spiritual eyes to see that the very One they curse and insult is, in fact, their very source of love, hope and salvation.*

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