



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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*"Is the distinction between
living for Christ and dying for
Him so great? Is not the second the
logical conclusion of the first?"*

~ Elisabeth Elliot

LIBYA: Six Christians Face Potential Death Penalties

Sources: Barnabas Aid, The Guardian, The New Arab

Six Libyans may face the death penalty for converting to Christianity and encouraging others to do the same. The believers were charged under Article 207 of Libya's penal code, which punishes any attempt to spread views that aim to "alter fundamental constitutional principles, or the fundamental structures of the social order, or overthrow the state, and anyone who possesses books, leaflets, drawings, slogans or any other items that promote their cause."

The Christians, who are from western Libya, had been detained by the authorities in March. One of the believers is a 22-year-old woman who released a video explaining her conversion which took place when she was 15 years of age. In a statement from Libya's Internal Security Agency, it was reported that the arrests were made to "stop an organized gang action aiming to solicit and make people leave Islam."

According to the interim constitution of Libya, while Islam is the state religion and the principal source of legislation, non-Muslims in the country are guaranteed the freedom to practise their religion. To read more about the persecution of Christians living in this North African nation, go to www.vomcanada.com/libya.htm.

Please intercede for the believers who have been recently imprisoned because of their faith in Christ. During their time in captivity, pray that God will wonderfully "restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish" each one of them (1 Peter 5:10 ESV). Additionally, lift up their families before His throne of grace, asking that they will also be filled with peace, encouragement and hope as they deal with this difficult situation. May the Lord sovereignly intervene by

advocating on behalf of the imprisoned Christians in the courts, resulting in a favourable outcome, so they may soon be released and granted the freedom to practise their faith without further harassment.

SUDAN: Christians Wounded Amid Military Violence

Sources: Morning Star News, Barnabas Aid, Monitor, CNN, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Christianity Today

Five Christians were injured when unidentified gunmen entered a Coptic Orthodox church in Omdurman, Sudan, in the early morning hours of May 14th. Those wounded during the attack were Rev. Arsanius Zaria and his son, a church cantor, a guard and another parishioner. All five believers received hospital treatment and have since been released.

During the attack, the assailants reportedly stormed the church building, calling those present "infidels" and "sons of dogs," and ordered the Christians to convert to Islam. They then demanded money, before proceeding to loot and damage the building. While the attackers wore scarves to conceal their identities, witnesses have stated that some of them were wearing uniform items from the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary group that is presently fighting against the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). These two parties have been battling for control of the country since April 15th. However, both sides of the conflict deny any involvement in this particular incident.

Due to the extreme violence, most foreign nationals have been evacuated from the country, and nearly 1.4 million Sudanese people have fled for safety. At least 730 people have been killed since the start of the civil war, and over 5,000 were wounded. In addition, places of worship have been violated during the fighting, and Christians have been left uncertain about the future as their lives crumble amidst the ongoing destruction. As governments from around the world were evacuating their citizens, advocates called on the international community to monitor the situation, fearful that human rights abuses may worsen without a watchful eye.

Pray that the violence, which has been spurred on by internal factions seeking to control the country, will soon come to an end so a peaceful resolution may be achieved. Furthermore, pray that the fighting would not be used as a cover-up for committing religious violence. Continue to prayerfully uphold our Christian brothers and sisters remaining in Sudan, asking God to ensure their safety, as well as the provisions required to meet their spiritual and practical needs.

REPORT UPDATE

EGYPT: An Additional 216 Church Buildings Legalized

Sources: Church in Chains, Egypt Independent, Ahram Online

Seven years ago, the Egyptian government formed a committee to work through applications to legalize unlicensed church buildings. When the committee was first formed, there were 3,730 outstanding applications. Though the process has been exceedingly slow, thankfully that number has been gradually decreasing. To review previously posted reports on this situation, go to www.vomcanada.com/egypt.htm.

In the most recent announcement, an additional 216 Christian church buildings were approved on May 15th. This brings the total number of approvals since the committee was formed to 2,815. The committee, which is chaired by the Prime Minister, includes six other government ministers, along with representatives from various Christian groups.

While we can give thanks to God that the legal obstacles have now been removed from these recently approved churches, please continue to pray that the remaining applications would be dealt with in an expeditious manner. As a result, may the ongoing ministry of God's Word reach many in search of spiritual truth throughout Egypt, so that true religious freedom and equality will be enjoyed by the citizens of this northeast African nation.

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