



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
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*"What should a church glory in? It
should glory in its suffering for Christ."*

~ Pastor Wang Yi

Early Rain Covenant Church

INDIA: Pastor and His Family Detained on False Accusations

Sources: Morning Star News, Church in Chains, Matters India

On April 24th, Pastor Kirubendran and his family were detained for allegedly conducting "forcible conversion" activities and "insulting religion." The pastor's wife, Manju, was released on bail in early May, along with their 18-month-old daughter. While the toddler had not been charged, she was detained along with her mother. Despite repeated attempts to post bail, Pastor Kirubendran was not released from custody until May 24th.

The imprisoned pastor is puzzled over the charges, as he had been serving in the town of Kasimabad, Uttar Pradesh, for six years without any previous incident. In addition to leading a church, Pastor Kirubendran and Manju also provided free education to 60 impoverished children, using a government-approved curriculum. Therefore, it was a shock when a crowd of opposing community members gathered outside the couple's home on April 23rd, hurling accusations against them. According to a lawyer who is following the case, militant groups had compiled a list of churches in the district with the intention of filing allegations and forcibly shutting down the places of worship.

The complainant, Bupendra Singh, claimed that 50,000 rupees were offered to any villager who converted to Christianity. The Christians were also accused of promising employment and miraculous healing, along with making objectionable comments against Hindus. Though now released on bail, Pastor Kirubendran has been unable to resume services for the 90 people who regularly attend his church. The owner of the building that was being rented by church members for the services has refused to allow the Christians entrance.

According to Pastor Kirubendran, he and his family continue to remain under threat: "Those who have complained against us...are high-caste people. They are the rich and affluent. My life can get in danger; I must stay safe and keep a low profile. We will have to prove that we are not guilty, but innocent."

The state of Uttar Pradesh heads the list for violent attacks against Christians in India, with a total of 149 reported incidents of persecution against followers of Jesus in 2022. So far, in 2023, there have already been 115 recorded anti-Christian incidents. For more information on the persecution of Christians in India, go to www.vomcanada.com/india.htm.

Considering the extreme hostility this family is presently facing, pray that the Lord's ministry will be experienced in their lives, keeping them safe from harm and providing for all their spiritual and practical needs. On behalf of this persecuted family, please also pray that justice would prevail in the courts, and that all charges against them will be dropped. May an amiable relationship be re-established among the Christian and Hindu members of this community, allowing the ministering couple to continue serving the people of Kasimabad without fear of further threat or harassment.

BELARUS: Christian Man Fined for Sharing His Faith

Source: Forum18

On June 1st, a musical group of Baptist believers arranged a performance on the streets of Drogichin in southwestern Belarus. In addition to providing uplifting music, the Christians shared their faith with those who passed by. One of the evangelists, Vladimir Burshtyn, is a Christian man in his early 70s. He travelled 110 kilometres from his home in order to participate in the meeting.

Police soon intervened at the event, forcing the believers to stop their presentation. Vladimir was then taken to the local police station where he was charged for allegedly "[violating] the procedure for organizing or conducting a mass event or demonstration." It is believed that the elderly Christian man was targeted by the authorities because he had been punished in the past for "organizing unapproved events."

Vladimir was detained until he was taken before the judge the next day. During a closed hearing, the judge fined him 555 rubles (about \$300 CAD), which is equivalent to more than a senior citizen's average monthly pension income. An appeal for the ruling is planned.

When the religion laws were passed in 2002, regulations governing faith-based groups in Belarus were considered the most restrictive of all the European countries. As the government is in the process of revising that legislation, with the intent of adding further restrictions, a draft of proposed changes has been released. To read more about the challenges being encountered by our Christian brothers and sisters in Belarus, go to www.vomcanada.com/belarus.htm.

Pray that Vladimir will receive divine guidance and provision as he deals with the charges against him and the resulting fine. In fact, please prayerfully ask the Lord to continue meeting

the needs of all believers in Belarus who are boldly sharing their faith with those around them through their vital outreaches. May the wisdom of God, which He so willingly imparts through His Holy Spirit to all who seek Him, sovereignly direct these believers so they can continue effectively spreading the Gospel message amid opposition.

CHINA: Believers Denied Access to Their Homes

Source: ChinaAid

Several members of the Early Rain Covenant Church who reside in the Languang Changdao apartment complex have been prevented from entering the building. Around noon on June 6th, families who tried to return to their homes were denied access to their apartments. When they attempted to go into the building, security guards and others assaulted the believers.

That evening, the apartment manager stopped Xu Haijun and his wife, Jin Ying, from entering their residence. As other Christians assembled to support the couple, Jin spoke to the gathering crowd, saying, "They don't allow us to live here simply because of our religious beliefs." The Christians shouted in response, "We want to go home! We want to go home!"

While the church members continued to gather, the apartment's managerial staff recruited some people to attack the crowd of believers, beating and robbing them. The injured Christians called the police to report the situation, but the authorities did not show up. Some of the believers went to the police station, seeking assistance, but they were ignored.

Church members living within this apartment complex have faced opposition for several months. In addition to being stopped multiple times, Preacher Wu Wuqing's family remains prohibited from returning to their residence. When the Christian family attempted to move some furniture on May 17th, the security guards would not allow it. In the end, the authorities threw the family's personal furniture in the trash.

On the day of this most recent incident, the Early Rain Covenant Church sent out a statement requesting prayer for the displaced church members. Within the statement, the church leaders also called on fellow believers in other parts of the world to pray about the worsening of religious freedom conditions in China: "Please also pray for Chengdu and China. If law enforcement continues to destroy the rule of law, and the government continues to abuse its power, not only Christians will suffer, but the whole country will face a dark future."

Further information on the difficulties faced by members of this church in recent years, as well as reports addressing other incidents of persecution against believers in this nation, are available at www.vomcanada.com/china.htm.

Pray for wisdom on behalf of these ill-treated church members who are being denied rightful access to their homes. Ask God to clearly direct their next steps as they contemplate how to appropriately deal with the situation, also filling them with comfort, courage and peace. In the process, may these persecuted Christians serve as effective testimonies of the Lord's love and grace to the apartment manager, other tenants living in the complex, as well as the authorities

involved in the incident. Finally, please intercede for the nation of China as a whole, praying that the Holy Spirit will work powerfully in the hearts and minds of people throughout the nation.

The "Persecution & Prayer Alert" is a ministry of:
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