



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

Thursday, October 5, 2023

*"Do not pray for us;
pray with us."*
~ A North Korean believer

INDONESIA: Mob Attack Forces Church to Host Services Online

Sources: International Christian Concern, Morning Star News, DetikNews

In the early morning of September 16th, a mob consisting of approximately 50 people had gathered at the front gate of the Maranatha Chapel in Depok City. Mob members angrily banged on the gate while shouting and causing a disturbance. Thankfully, at the time, no service was taking place inside the church building and the crowd eventually dispersed.

Following the incident, congregation members were feeling unsettled, and therefore expressed concerns about holding future worship services in the building. The church had just recently begun renting the facility, having held their first worship service at the premises the previous Sunday. Even though the church building fulfilled all the requirements for a permit, some local community members were opposed to the opening of this new place of worship.

After discussing matters with the authorities, the church agreed to host its worship services online for two weeks while all the permit processes were being completed and verified. The congregation has always rented commercial buildings, including the present facility, because permits are not required. However, the Christians decided to go along with the requested process in their efforts to ease any tensions.

Churches are frequently targeted by militant Islamic groups in Indonesia, and the difficult permit process sometimes takes years to complete, particularly when dealing with local governments. For additional reports on the challenges facing Christians in this Southeast Asian nation, go to www.vomcanada.com/indonesia.htm.

Please remember these congregation members in your prayers as they seek to be testimonies of God's grace to others of their community – including those who are opposing the worship services. Pray that these persecuted Christians will come to an amicable agreement with the

leaders of their neighbourhood, allowing them to peacefully continue meeting together for worship in their rented church building.

PAKISTAN: Christian Boy Beaten for Alleged Blasphemy

Sources: Mission Network News, Farrukh Saif Foundation

A young Christian boy was recently badly beaten by his Muslim schoolteacher after he allegedly committed a blasphemous act in class. The incident, which took place in the Pakistani city of Khanewal, has raised concerns about the lack of religious tolerance and justice in the community.

On September 7th, the student was sitting in class with a workbook in front of him. Unable to properly read it, he fiddled with the book and ended up making some rips and tears of its pages. When the teacher saw what he had done, the boy was severely beaten and accused of blasphemy because the book included verses from the Quran. The child was so badly injured during the beating that he ended up in hospital fighting for his life.

At last report, the boy was recuperating at home with his family. No further reports on his present condition, and the safety of this Christian family, have been provided. Regrettably, such incidents frequently result in social stigma, as well as physical dangers from potential mob violence. In addition, there have been no reports of any police action being taken against the abusive teacher. For more information on the persecution of Christians in Pakistan, go to www.vomcanada.com/pakistan.htm.

Pray that God will provide continued comfort, rest and healing to this young child as he deals with the trauma of the painful incident. May the Lord also extend His compassionate love, peace and protection towards him and his family. Pray that justice will not only prevail in this case, but that the Lord would also touch the hearts and minds of people throughout this South Asian nation, so they will demonstrate understanding and acceptance towards those adhering to Christianity rather than reacting in volatile outbursts.

SEPTEMBER 7th, 2023 PAKISTAN REPORT UPDATE

We regret to inform you that information regarding a situation in Pakistan, which was published in the September 7th *Persecution & Prayer Alert*, has proven to be false. The report was about a Pakistani pastor named Eleazar Sidhu who claimed to have been accosted by unknown assailants and then shot on September 3rd. It has since come to light that his allegations were false and his injury was, in fact, self-inflicted. The Presbyterian Church of Pakistan recently dismissed Pastor Eleazar after he confessed to making the false allegations.

In a video published online, Pastor Eleazar claimed that his actions were motivated by stress and a desire for police protection – in response to the violence that had been targeting Christians in

his community. Whatever the motivation for his actions, we encourage prayer for him and the leadership of the denomination during this difficult time.

PRAISE REPORT

NORTH KOREA: Court Ruling Permits Balloon Launches

Sources: VOM Korea, NK News, AP News

Since 2005, The Voice of the Martyrs Korea (VOMK) has used large balloons to carry Bibles and Scripture pamphlets into the restricted nation of North Korea. However, in 2020, the South Korean government passed a law criminalizing the use of balloons after negotiations with the North Korean government. (See www.vomcanada.com/kp-2021-01-07.htm for more details on this restriction.)

On September 24th, South Korea's Constitutional Court struck down the law, calling it an excessive restriction on free speech. The court affirmed that public safety and citizens' rights are best protected when activities such as balloon launches are policed by local law enforcements and not by diplomats or politicians.

In response to the ruling, VOMK issued the following official statement: "Before the anti-leaflet law, The Voice of the Martyrs Korea enjoyed excellent and mutually respectful relationships with local law enforcement and local communities to ensure that our Bible balloon launches into North Korea could be conducted safely, quietly, accurately, lawfully, and in environmentally friendly ways. The Supreme Court ruling affirms that this is the best approach."

VOMK's representatives did not discuss any plans in regards to potential balloon launching activities in the future, citing safety and security concerns. They simply stated, "We will continue to do what we have always done; we will look for every possible way to bring the Word of God to North Korea, with respect for law and in cooperation with local communities."

Praise God that this effective method of sharing the Gospel message has once again been made legally possible, so our Christian brothers and sisters in South Korea can resume reaching out to those across the border who are desperately in need of His salvation and hope. Please join us in praying that the seed of God's Word will yield a bountiful harvest in the restrictive nation of North Korea, and that many new names will be added to the "Lamb's Book of Life" as a result!

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