



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

Thursday, October 12, 2023

"Not all of us are called to die a martyr's death, but all of us are called to have the same spirit of self-sacrifice and love to the very end as these martyrs had."

~ Pastor Richard Wurmbrand
International Founder of VOM

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH November 5th, 2023

Courage to Rise Above is the theme for this year's International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP), which will be taking place on Sunday, November 5th. This is a day set aside by Christians around the world to encourage prayer on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering persecution because of their faith. Download your free resources at www.idop.ca and join us on November 5th in praying that our suffering global family in Christ will receive "courage to rise above!"

NIGERIA: Dozens of Christians Kidnapped, Others Killed

Sources: Morning Star News, Premium Times, Sahara Reporters, International Christian Concern, New Telegraph

Violence against Christians continues unabated in many areas of Nigeria, as recently published reports indicate that militants are increasingly invading villages to kill, injure and kidnap dozens of believers – destroying their homes and church buildings in the process. While the kidnappings are frequently financially motivated, Christians are often the primary targets of radical Islamists' attacks. For further details on how Christians are being affected by the ongoing violence in Nigeria, go to www.vomcanada.com/nigeria.htm.

On September 29th, members of the Christ Apostolic Church in Oke Inga, Akure, were travelling by bus to attend the funeral service of one of their church members. While journeying along the road, the bus – with the name of the church painted on the vehicle's exterior – was ambushed and at least 25 Christians were subsequently kidnapped. While eight of the kidnapped church members were fortunately able to escape their captors, the Nigerian authorities are presently working to recover those who remain abducted.

In a separate incident, which took place on the night of October 1st, militants invaded Du Village in Plateau State. According to one witness, eight people were killed – including two children – and five other Christians have been wounded. In a press statement following the incident, a spokesperson for the community stated: "We're not only saddened by this unfortunate development and occurrence but completely depressed and brokenhearted, knowing fully how peaceful and hospitable Christians have lived with their Muslim neighbours in Plateau State."

Less than one week later, on October 7th, more than 30 Christians were ambushed while working on a communal farm in Chikuri, a village located in southern Kaduna State. The believers were taken hostage by unidentified assailants. One local resident, Dogara Peter, reported that this is the third time their community was victimized by such attacks. At last report, there has been no contact with the kidnappers. As the abducted believers are poor labourers, they can't afford to pay any ransom demands. "We have nowhere to raise money for any ransom," lamented Dogara Peter. "The whole community is traumatized by this sad situation. Our last hope lies in the security agencies and the government."

Please prayerfully remember the numerous Christians currently being held against their will by various militant groups in Nigeria. Pray that the country's governing authorities will be able to adequately provide vulnerable communities with necessary security and protection, while advocating for justice by holding the perpetrators of these violent acts responsible for their actions. May God's Spirit greatly comfort the friends and families of the victims who have been killed, so that His peace – which surpasses all understanding – will fill their hearts and minds.

CHINA: Street Evangelist Rearrested

Source: ChinaAid

Chen Wensheng is a street evangelist who has gained a reputation as a "Gospel Warrior" for his evangelistic work. As a result, he has been arrested by the Chinese Communist Party numerous times. (For previous reports, see www.vomcanada.com/chen-wensheng.htm.) When arrested in April 2022, he saw his time in custody as an opportunity to share the Gospel with those at the detention centre. In a social media post published on WeChat, Chen wrote that he was thankful to the Lord for the opportunity to have led 2,067 people to pray to Christ during the past year.

On August 29th, Chen was intercepted by authorities while attempting to board a flight from Shanghai to South Korea. They told the apprehended Christian passenger that representatives from various departments wanted to speak with him. Consequently, Chen was flown back to his hometown of Hengyang, where he had been held for 15 days of administrative detention. Then,

on September 18th, he was placed under criminal detention. According to his wife, Chen is being held on suspicion of "organizing and financing illegal gatherings."

Praise God for the ongoing testimony of this faithful spiritual warrior for Christ. Pray that Chen will be strengthened and encouraged as he ministers to fellow prisoners and prison workers while in detention. Please also remember his wife, Mo Xiaoju, in your prayers as she faces the uncertainty of the charges. May God raise up others who are willing and able to help further Chen's ministry in his home community of Hengyang and beyond – reaching many areas throughout China.

REPORT UPDATE

BELARUS: New Life Church Faces Liquidation

Sources: Forum18, New Life Church

Since 2002, the New Life Church in Minsk, Belarus, has faced repeated harassment from the country's governing authorities. Though legally recognized by the government, the church has been continually denied a place of worship. After many years of court challenges, the congregation's sanctuary was destroyed in June 2023 (www.vomcanada.com/by-2023-06-29.htm).

When the destruction of the facility did not stop the congregation from gathering to worship, government officials made further accusations against the church which resulted in the arrests of the pastors (www.vomcanada.com/by-2023-08-24.htm). In this latest act of opposition, the authorities turned to the courts in their attempts to remove the church's legal status.

Court hearings to deliberate the church's legal status began on October 6th. After dealing with preliminary matters at that hearing, a second date has been set for October 17th. If the congregation's official registration is removed, any activities of the church will be considered illegal, and therefore may result in jail terms of up to two years for those involved.

Governing officials base their latest action upon a claim that the church failed to re-register by 2004, in accordance with revisions to the religion law established in 2002. They also state that the courts can liquidate organizations that conduct "propaganda of war or extremist activities," which they claim can be found on the church's website and social media accounts.

The church's response to these claims is that although they had gone through the process of re-registration in 2004, the application was rejected because of the ongoing controversy over their building. The church further rejects the contention that their teaching is "extremist."

Pray on behalf of Pastor Vyacheslav and the congregants of the New Life Church, asking the Lord to provide them with ongoing encouragement and guidance. May He work mightily in the hearts and minds of the country's governmental and judicial leaders, especially as this latest case is soon to be deliberated in court. Throughout the process, pray that the Gospel

message will also reach the unchurched members of the community and those in other areas of Belarus, using this congregation's God-honouring response as a testimony of His grace and love.

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