



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
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*"No matter what empty promises
Satan makes to the world, in the end,
persecuted Godly people achieve the
victory, whether in or outside prison."*

~ Excerpt of poem by Pastor John Cao
Living Lyrics: Poems from Prison

PAKISTAN: Rape Victim Pressured to Drop Charges

Sources: Morning Star News, AGHS Law

Two men have been arrested for repeatedly sexually assaulting a Christian woman and blackmailing her after recording the ordeal. The 26-year-old woman, who remains unnamed, has been facing pressure to drop all charges against her assailants.

In September, Shah Hussain, also known as Badshah, borrowed money from the victim's mother. The following month, when the young woman sought repayment on behalf of her mother, Badshah asked her to accompany him to the home of a friend in Rawalpindi, where he claimed they could get the money. There, the friend, Raja Waleed, sexually assaulted her at gunpoint. The ordeal was recorded on his cell phone and Raja threatened to share the videos on social media unless she did what he wanted.

Over the next few months, the young woman was forced to comply with Raja's demands repeatedly. In November, she discovered that she was pregnant, at which point Raja and Badshah attempted to force her to convert to Islam. When she refused, the Christian woman was beaten, resulting in a miscarriage.

Eventually, the victim told her mother what was happening and the two women reported the incident to the police. Charges were filed on February 13th. Yet, instead of arresting the suspects, police tipped them off, allowing the perpetrators to obtain bail. Since that time, the assailants have been threatening the two women. A second case has been filed against the men for their threats, but no charges have been laid.

Unfortunately, the victim has not received the support of the police. In fact, the sub-inspector, Muhammad Mehboob, pressured the believer to withdraw the case. "He has repeatedly said that since I'm a Christian, I don't stand a chance against the powerful criminals," the young victimized woman explained. The officer denied that he favoured the accused men. After his actions were reported to the police chief, a senior officer was assigned to the case.

Forced conversions and sexual assaults against religious minorities are far too common in Pakistan. For more reports on the injustices experienced by Pakistan's Christians, go to www.vomcanada.com/pakistan.htm.

Pray that God will divinely protect, strengthen and comfort this brave young woman and her mother, providing them both greatly needed ministry, advocacy and support as they seek justice in this legal case. As a result, may justice indeed prevail, so the perpetrators responsible for causing this ordeal will be held accountable for their crimes and reach a point of sincere repentance. Overall, may positive changes take place in Pakistan's legal system – and within the hearts and minds of the authorities enforcing it – ensuring the protection of vulnerable citizens in Pakistan.

REPORT UPDATES

CHINA: Pastor John Cao Released After Seven Years in Prison

Source: ChinaAid

Originally from Hunan province, Pastor John Cao is a permanent resident of the United States and also happens to be married to an American citizen. Before his arrest, he served as a missionary in Myanmar's Wa State, building schools and caring for impoverished people in the region. As part of his ministry work, Pastor John frequently crossed the border between China and Myanmar. The Christian leader was able to continue his ministry activities for three years without encountering any problems from the authorities.

However, in March 2017, Chinese officials arrested Pastor John and a colleague of his on charges of illegal border crossings. Although his ministry colleague, Jing Ruxia, served one year in prison, Pastor John was sentenced to seven years. For more details on this case, you can review previously published reports at www.vomcanada.com/john-cao.htm.

After various failed appeals, Pastor John served his full prison term prior to being released on March 4th of this year. Throughout imprisonment, his relationship with the Lord remained strong as expressed in the poetry he regularly wrote. ChinaAid has published a collection of his poems under the title, *Living Lyrics: Poems from Prison*.

Upon his release, Pastor John was escorted from Yunnan province to Changsha, Hunan. He hopes to soon be reunited with his family in the United States. However, in order to do so, the

pastor will need to obtain travel documents which may be purposely delayed by officials. Local police in Changsha have disclosed that they intend to supervise and "educate" him for five years.

ChinaAid recently released the content of an audio testimony Pastor John gave after his release. He started by proclaiming: "I have been separated from you all for seven years, but these seven years have been filled with joy, filled with God's grace, and everyday God's special presence has been with me." To read a transcript of Pastor John's testimony, go to vomcanada.com/cao-testimony.

Praise God for the joy and peace Pastor John experienced over the past seven years, despite his incarceration. Pray that this faithful Christian leader will receive renewed strength and determination to continue living his life in dedicated service to the Lord. May Pastor John be able to obtain the necessary travel documentation without any delay so he can finally be reunited with his long-suffering family in the United States. Furthermore, pray that God will ensure the continuation of the humanitarian work near the China and Myanmar border, as well as the ministry that took place in the lives of the prisoners and guards who were touched by the love of Christ while Pastor John was in custody.

ALGERIA: Appeal Scheduled for Pastor Youssef Ourahmane

Source: Middle East Concern

Pastor Youssef Ourahmane serves as the vice president of the Église Protestante d'Algérie (EPA). Following a three-day gathering with a few Christian families in March 2023, he was charged with organizing an unauthorized religious assembly. In September, the pastor was sentenced to two years in prison, along with a fine. During an appeal hearing in November, the court ruled to uphold the verdict, but reduced the Christian leader's sentence to one year.

The latest appeal hearing for Pastor Youssef has now been scheduled for March 26th. The church in Algeria has requested prayer for him, in hopes that there will be a favourable result from this upcoming hearing. For more information on Pastor Youssef's case, previously published reports are available at www.vomcanada.com/algeria.htm.

Please continue to remember Pastor Youssef in your prayers. Ask the Lord to stir the hearts of the court officials so that they would rule fairly during the scheduled hearing – ultimately leading to a favourable outcome for the imprisoned Christian leader. Also prayerfully uphold the many other Christians throughout Algeria who have been facing harassment and church closures in recent years. May God sustain each one of these persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ with ongoing encouragement, wisdom and strength, in addition to providing for their specific individual spiritual and physical needs.