



## Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada  
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*"We don't pray to be better Christians,  
but that we may be the only kind of  
Christians God means us to be: Christ-like  
Christians; that is, Christians who will bear  
willingly the cross for God's glory."*

~ A believer in former Communist Romania

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### **MEXICO: Over 100 Protestants Forced from Their Homes**

Sources: Christian Solidarity Worldwide, VOM Australia, Evangélico Digital

For several years, leaders in the villages of Coamila and Rancho Nuevo, which are both located within the state of Hidalgo, have been pressuring members of the Great Commission Baptist Church to participate in religious festivals that go against their beliefs. In December 2022, one of the non-compliant Protestant believers was admitted to hospital after being tied to a tree and beaten. Additionally, since 2018, the children of church members in these villages have been banned from attending school.

After years of tension between village leaders and members of the Protestant community, matters came to a head this spring. On March 25th, Pastor Rogelio Hernández Baltazar and other church leaders were arbitrarily detained for 48 hours. Subsequent to their detainment, five plots of land belonging to members of the church were taken over by village leaders in early April.

Since then, church members have been attacked on several occasions, and three Protestant families were prevented from returning to their homes. Furthermore, 139 church members – including at least 70 children – were forced to flee their homes on April 26th after village leaders cut off their electricity. The church building was also vandalized, and guards were posted at the entry points of the two villages in order to keep church members out.

The displaced Baptists are currently being sheltered in a municipal building in Huejutla de los Reyes where they are requesting assistance from the government. Local churches are providing humanitarian aid and have joined in the call for governing municipal leaders to intervene.

When speaking earlier in the year about the treatment of his church members, Pastor Rogelio stated, "When you convert from Catholicism, you lose all rights and all standing in the village." For more reports on persecution in Mexico, go to [www.vomcanada.com/mexico.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/mexico.htm).

*Please prayerfully uphold these displaced Mexican believers, asking God to provide for their practical and spiritual needs. As they determine what steps to take next, may they receive greatly needed guidance, encouragement and strength. Pray that the state government will also respond to the 'call for action' by ensuring these persecuted Christians are duly granted 'freedom of belief,' and thus treated respectfully by village leaders – particularly in areas of Mexico where communities practise a combination of ancestral indigenous beliefs with traditional Catholicism. As a result, may peace and justice be upheld throughout the country.*

### **INDONESIA: Two Women Injured in Attack on Prayer Meeting**

Sources: Morning Star News, Jakarta Globe

Two young women were slightly wounded when a mob attacked a Catholic prayer meeting on May 5th in the city of Tangerang, Banten Province. The group meeting, which consisted of 15 Catholic students who had gathered in a home for prayer, was disrupted when armed assailants forced their way into the residence, injuring two females during the intrusion. Some concerned local Muslims attempted to defend the students, with one of them sustaining a minor cut from the attack.

One of the intruders has since been identified as the local village leader – a Muslim man named Diding. According to police, the conflict began when Diding started shouting threats and statements of profanity in an attempt to incite other members of the community to attack the Catholic group. Diding claims that he was disrespected by the students, whom he had told earlier that worship was only permitted within a church building and not in a home. Four local residents, including Diding, were later arrested by police on charges of assault.

Religious gatherings in homes are frequently targeted by those in the predominantly Muslim country of Indonesia who are opposed to minorities. However, despite local opposition, there are no legal restrictions outlawing citizens from gathering for worship in private homes. To review additional reports addressing the challenges of Christians in this Southeast Asian nation, go to [www.vomcanada.com/indonesia.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/indonesia.htm).

*Pray that a radical cultural shift would take place in Indonesia, bringing the members of this society to a greater tolerance of the religious differences among them. May Christians throughout the country be filled with God's compassion and wisdom as they interact with those around them, serving as testimonies of His love and grace so that many spiritually needy people will likewise come to faith in Christ.*

## **KAZAKHSTAN: Multiple Raids of Unregistered Gatherings**

Source: Forum18

Police in the Shu district of southern Kazakhstan raided four worship gatherings during the months of March and April, resulting in a total of seven fines being laid. During the raids, officers filmed those who were present and demanded that they provide written statements explaining the reasons for their gatherings. These raids affected the worship activities of three unregistered Protestant churches.

On the morning of March 3rd, police invaded the home of Valter Mirau, whose residence is located in the village of Koneyeva, just before he and his fellow church members were about to begin their Sunday worship meeting. Valter was issued a fine for his "leadership of an unregistered, halted, or banned religious community or social organization." Two other church members who had attended the gathering were also fined.

In another incident, police raided a Council of Churches Baptist meeting that was led by Pastor Andrei Boiprav in the village of Shu on April 14th. While no fines were issued at the time, officers took photos and videos of the attending Christians and warned them to stop holding unregistered religious gatherings.

Police returned to Pastor Andrei's congregation on April 28th, claiming that they had received complaints from neighbours, though all nearby residents denied having contacted the authorities. One officer later appeared apologetic, explaining that the order had come from the Religious Affairs Department. Fines were issued against the congregants as a result of their involvement in an unregistered religious gathering. Immediately after raiding Pastor Andrei's church, officers moved on to another Protestant community in the village known as "the Children of God."

Religious groups in Kazakhstan are required by law to register with the government. However, the process to do so is very complex, expensive and restrictive. Some groups, such as those affiliated with the Council of Churches Baptist, choose not to register, sometimes due to concerns that it could lead to increased government interference – as was the case under the country's former Soviet rule. Further information on the persecution of our Christian brothers and sisters in Kazakhstan is available at [www.vomcanada.com/kazakhstan.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/kazakhstan.htm).

*Pray that God will grant wisdom, protection and encouragement to believers throughout Kazakhstan as they navigate how to best deal with opposing officials of the country's governing forces who are mandating the cease of all worship activities. May those directly affected by these recent raids not grow despondent in the face of opposition, but rather become further empowered to effectively live out their Christian faith and witness. As a result, may the Gospel message of God's love and saving grace spread throughout the country, leading many more people to eternal salvation through the provision of His Son Jesus – the Risen Saviour.*