



Voice of the
Martyrs

PERSECUTION
& PRAYER
ALERT

Persecution & Prayer Alert

Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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"Let us not forget: we are a pilgrim church, subject to misunderstanding, to persecution; but a church that walks serene, because it bears the force of love."

~ Oscar A. Romero

SOMALIA: Attacked Christian Loses Ability to Speak

Sources: ICR Canada, Morning Star News

In 2020, Abdulai Ramadan put his faith in Jesus Christ and has since belonged to a secret fellowship of believers in Somalia. His wife, however, is strongly opposed to his newfound faith, which she perceives as his rejection of their family and culture.

On December 25th, 2024, Abdulai invited three other Christians to his home for a Christmas celebration. While his wife refused to participate, the couple's four children – who range between the ages of three and eleven years old – willingly joined in the Christian festivities. During a heated argument later that evening, Abdulai's wife furiously demanded that her husband renounce his Christian faith. Ultimately, she sternly warned him not to hold any further Christian activities in their home.

On January 20th, while his wife was away visiting her parents, Abdulai's Christian friend visited his home. The two men had a short time of prayer and Bible study before they parted company. When Abdulai's wife returned that evening, one of the children told her about the visit, informing her that the believers had prayed and read the Bible together. Infuriated, the wife struck her husband on the head with a heavy metal item, leaving him unconscious.

Abdulai remained unconscious until morning, when he was found by his young children. Not able to use his phone nor speak, the wounded believer managed to get his children to call for help by phoning the pastor of his local fellowship. After the pastor arrived, Abdulai's wife returned with five of her relatives, spewing shouts and insults at the Christians. When neighbours

began to gather due to the sudden commotion, the pastor was able to take the injured Christian man to the hospital.

At last report, Abdulai is receiving medical treatment, but he has lost all ability to speak. His opposing wife and her family are now demanding a divorce. Additionally, due to the nature of the attack and the community's response, there are concerns about the safety of Abdulai and those belonging to his Christian fellowship.

Somalia's constitution designates Islam as the state religion and, therefore, the propagation of any other faith is prohibited. Since the country's legal system is influenced by Sharia law, those who leave the Islamic faith could be subject to the death penalty. For more information on the severe persecution of Christians in Somalia, visit www.vomcanada.com/somalia.htm.

- *As Abdulai recovers from the assault, pray that he will experience complete healing – from both the brain injury and the resulting emotional trauma.*
- *May God provide greatly needed comfort to this dear brother in Christ as he faces the heartbreaking possibility of losing all contact with his wife, children and other family members.*
- *Intercede for the opposing members of his family – including his wife who inflicted the injury – praying that each one of them would experience a revelation of our Heavenly Father's sacrificial love, forgiveness, and plan of eternal salvation through His Son Jesus (John 3:16).*
- *In the meanwhile, ask the Lord to grant His protection, wisdom and strength to Abdulai and the members of this local Christian fellowship as they seek to carry out their faith in an antagonistic society.*

REPORT UPDATES

INDIA: Christian Couple Released on Bail

Sources: Catholic Connect, Church in Chains

In a *Persecution & Prayer Alert* report published earlier this month, it was revealed that a pastor and his wife in India had been convicted of allegedly attempting to convert Dalit villagers within their community. Pastor Jose Pappachan and his wife Sheeja were both fined and sentenced to five years in prison (see www.vomcanada.com/in-2025-02-06.htm).

Following a rapid decision by the Allahabad High Court, the ministering couple has since been released on bail. After the bail documents were presented to the court on January 31st, the Christians' hearing took place on February 5th. Sheeja was released later that same day, while Pastor Jose's release occurred the next day. It was reported that, throughout the ordeal, the Christian couple remained strong in their faith. Pastor Jose was able to proclaim, "Don't worry, God is with me."

Shibu Thomas, who serves as the founder of the Indian organization, Persecution Relief, expressed his gratitude for the swift legal proceedings. The Christian leader believes that prayer played a key role in the court's decision to grant bail. While hoping for an acquittal, he stated that the couple's lawyers intend to continue the legal battle to exonerate Pastor Jose and Sheeja.

- *Praise God for the recent release of these faithful Christian ministers of the Gospel!*
- *Pray that all charges against Pastor Jose and Sheeja will be dropped, and that this missionary couple will be free to carry on their ministry activities without further interference.*
- *Pray that Christians will continue to serve as vibrant testimonies throughout India, helping to meet the physical, mental and spiritual needs of those within their communities so that multitudes more will come to saving faith in Christ.*

CHINA: Imprisoned for Distributing Christian Literature

Sources: International Christian Concern, Bitter Winter

On January 17th, five Chinese Christians who had been charged with "illegal business operations" were convicted and sentenced to prison. Pastor Deng Yanxiang received a sentence of two years' imprisonment, while the other four believers were given sentences ranging from 14 to 17 months.

All five of these followers of Jesus had been distributing Christian literature, charging a small fee to cover costs. As a result, the believers were accused of running an illegal business. In China, this is one of several charges commonly used against those belonging to unregistered house churches.

Because Pastor Deng has already served 18 months in prison on these charges, the Christian leader is scheduled to be released in May of this year. Details on the release of the other detained believers are not immediately available. To read a previously published report on the situation facing these imprisoned church members, go to www.vomcanada.com/cn-2023-07-06.htm.

- *Ask the Lord to strengthen, encourage and meet the daily needs of Pastor Deng and the many other believers who are currently being imprisoned for their Christian faith and practices in China.*
- *In spite of ongoing opposition from the authorities, pray that our Christian brothers and sisters will continue to faithfully reach out to those around them with the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- *Pray that the Holy Spirit will convict the nation's Communist officials, stirring their hearts to the point of repentance and leading them to surrender their lives to Christ.*

PAKISTAN: Acquittal for Christian Brothers

Sources: Morning Star News, Catholic Vote, The Christian Post

Twin brothers Sahil and Raheel (also spelled "Rahil") Shahid were arrested in August 2024 and charged with blasphemy. The young Christian men were accused of throwing scraps of paper containing Quranic verses from an amusement park ride. For more details on the original incident, go to www.vomcanada.com/pk-2024-09-05.htm.

On January 25th, court officials ruled that there was insufficient evidence to convict the 18-year-old Christians, and that police had failed to properly investigate the charges. As a result, the judge overseeing the case ordered that the brothers be acquitted and released from prison. The judge also launched an official inquiry into the investigating officer. The defence lawyer believes that the fabricated accusations could be part of an attempt to seize the property of the believers.

False accusations of blasphemy in Pakistan are frequently driven by self-seeking personal and financial motives. Further information on the various challenges being encountered by Christians in Pakistan is available at www.vomcanada.com/pakistan.htm.

- *We can give thanks to God for this recent court decision which has resulted in the long-awaited freedom of these young Christian brothers.*
- *Pray that there will not be any resulting backlash perpetrated against these young men nor the members of their families; rather may they experience the Lord's divine protection, wisdom and peace as they deal with the aftermath of the accusations.*
- *Continue to pray for the many other followers of Jesus who are similarly facing false accusations in Pakistan, asking that the harmful blasphemy laws would be repealed or amended to recognize the constitutional rights of citizens belonging to the country's vulnerable minority groups.*

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