



Voice^{of the}
Martyrs

PERSECUTION
& PRAYER
ALERT

Persecution & Prayer Alert

Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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*"When the righteous cry for
help, the Lord hears and delivers
them out of all their troubles."*

~ Psalm 34:17 ESV

INDIA: Supreme Court to Review Anti-Conversion Laws

Sources: India Today, Deccan Herald, Supreme Court Observer, The New Indian Express

The Supreme Court of India has agreed to hear a series of petitions challenging the constitutionality of anti-conversion laws enacted by several of the country's states. On September 16th, the court issued notices to the respective state governments, requesting their formal responses within four weeks. The case is scheduled to be heard in six weeks, and the judges have indicated that they may consider ordering the states to pause the enforcement of their existing laws until a decision is made.

The petitions, which have been filed by various organizations, argue that the anti-conversion laws are being weaponized against religious minorities in India. Petitioners further assert that the legislation enables false accusations – often without supporting evidence – under the guise of preventing forced religious conversions. There is a total of 13 applicants associated with the submitted petitions.

During the initial hearing, a lawyer representing Citizens for Justice and Peace urged the court to expedite the matter, citing recent amendments in at least two states that have made the laws more stringent. Legislators in these states have openly stated that the amendments aim to prevent all religious conversions, not just those deemed coercive or fraudulent. More information on these legislative changes may be reviewed at www.vomcanada.com/india.htm.

- *Pray for wisdom, clarity and courage on behalf of the petitioners and their legal teams as they present their arguments before India's Supreme Court in the coming weeks.*

- *Prayerfully ask the Lord to grant the judges discernment as they consider the constitutional implications of these harmful anti-conversion laws, so that truth and justice will prevail both in and out of the court room.*
- *May the ongoing legal process not incite any hostility or violence from those who are opposed to the petitions and, ultimately, may peace and tolerance reign throughout this South Asian nation.*

RUSSIA: Church Congregations Banned

Sources: Forum18, Christian Network Europe

Courts in Russia have prohibited the activities of several Council of Churches Baptist congregations due to their refusal to register with the state. As a result, at least five church buildings were forcibly closed, and three more are presently under investigation. A court order issued in September 2024 applies to all the congregations of this denomination, which comprise of an estimated 2,500 churches.

In Kurganinsk, one congregation has been gathering outdoors since this May, after bailiffs sealed the doors of their church building. "Last Sunday, I witnessed church members old and young praying on their knees, right on the pavement," recounts a member of this congregation. "The [believers] have one heart and one spirit. The church defends its independence from the state."

Although prosecutors claim that the forced closures are necessary to maintain public order and state security, these Christian communities are reputed for their long history of peaceful worship gatherings. In fact, the churches' opposition to state registration, which has been shaped by past persecution under the former Soviet Union, happens to be a key element of their identity. Since the collapse of the USSR, these congregations have continued to meet openly, often in private homes and prayer houses.

While the current crackdown is particularly targeting the Council of Churches Baptist congregations, Christian leaders of other denominations are concerned that more unregistered churches in Russia may soon face similar opposition. (Additional reports addressing Christian persecution in this country are available at www.vomcanada.com/russia-reports.)

Severe restrictions are also being imposed on congregations in Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine, where courts have penalized individuals and churches for worshipping or sharing their faith without official permission.

- *Please prayerfully uphold our Christian brothers and sisters in Russia and Russian-occupied Ukraine, asking the Lord to provide them wisdom and guidance as they seek to worship peacefully amid the increased pressures.*
- *May divinely appointed opportunities be made available to Christians within these restricted regions, enabling them to continue sharing their faith with others in their communities.*

- *Pray for a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Ukraine; and that, throughout the process, the Lord will grant protection, peace and various other means of provision to believers living within the occupied territories.*

REPORT UPDATES

ETHIOPIA: Attacked Church Seeks New Meeting Location

Source: Steadfast Global

On July 29th, a small congregation in Ethiopia was attacked by hostile community members who were opposed to the church's presence in their village. During the incident, the attackers dismantled the simple shelter where the Christians had been meeting, and then they proceeded to steal its structural materials. (For more details about this incident, see www.vomcanada.com/et-2025-08-21.htm.)

Since the attack, the church's pastor and his wife have been seeking a new meeting place for their congregation. However, they continue to face strong opposition from the local community. This ministering couple had initially arranged to lease a venue, but the owner later withdrew from the agreement due to pressure from militant Muslim activists. Despite the setbacks, these faithful church leaders remain committed to finding a suitable new location where they can continue meeting with local converts who have become part of their congregation.

- *Praise God for the courageous and steadfast witness of this pastor and his wife as they continue to navigate these difficult circumstances – all the while, prayerfully seeking the Lord's will for their congregation.*
- *May a suitable and safe location be found soon, enabling these believers to resume their worship gatherings without the threat of further destruction and harassment.*
- *Pray that each church member will experience spiritual growth and encouragement, so they can remain strong in their faith and pursue their calling as resilient witnesses of God's love and saving grace.*

IRAN: Retrial Denied for Imprisoned Believer

Sources: Article18, Church in Chains

Iran's Supreme Court has recently rejected the application for a retrial that was submitted on behalf of Mehran Shamloui, a Christian believer who is currently serving a ten-year prison sentence for his participation in house church activities. Recipients of previously published *Persecution & Prayer Alert* reports may recall that Mehran had fled to Türkiye in search of refuge. While there, the accused Iranian was apprehended and forced to return to Iran, where he had subsequently been arrested. (The initially posted report regarding Mehran's arrest may be reviewed at www.vomcanada.com/ir-2025-07-24.htm.)

Since his return to Iran, Mehran has remained in custody. Although initially detained at Mashhad Airport, in August, he was transferred to the notorious Evin Prison, where he remains incarcerated alongside several other Christians. To learn more about the challenges facing followers of Jesus in Iran, visit www.vomcanada.com/iran.htm.

- *Pray for strength, encouragement and protection on behalf of Mehran, as well as the many other believers currently being held in Iranian prisons because of their Christian faith.*
- *May the message of the Gospel, which "is not chained," continue reaching the Iranian people – even those who may be confined within prison walls (2 Timothy 2:9).*
- *Lift up the country's political authorities before God's throne of grace, praying that they would realize the importance of making religious freedom available to all who reside within the nation.*

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