



Voice^{of the}
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PERSECUTION
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ALERT

Persecution & Prayer Alert

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*"Iranian Christians understand the
price of the faith; and, no matter what,
they will follow Christ to the end."*

~ Edwin Abnous

IRAN: New Restrictions on Christian Media Channels

Sources: Article18, Heart4Iran, Open Doors

As Iran continues its repressive actions against the country's Christians, the church as a whole has nevertheless experienced remarkable growth, with numerous people coming to faith in Christ. Because opportunities for Farsi-speaking believers to gather for worship have been severely restricted over the years, many Christians relied on satellite television broadcasts for Biblical teaching and encouragement. However, a new directive from the country's Ministry of Intelligence has now made accessing these resources much more dangerous.

The Iranian government has classified dozens of officially unapproved broadcasts, websites and individuals as "hostile," including many Christian media ministries. As a result, anyone found viewing these banned programs – or cooperating with the organizations behind them – could face prosecution under Iran's espionage laws. At the time of compiling this report, at least five Christians have already been charged.

The list of banned media outlets includes popular Christian broadcasters such as SAT-7, Mohabat TV, Nejat and Seven. Edwin Abnous, Executive Director for Heart4Iran, says that these organizations have played a significant role in the expanse of Christianity throughout the country. Referring specifically to Heart4Iran's broadcast channel, Mohabat TV, Edwin expects communication from viewers inside the country to decrease as they become more cautious. "Our audience will be much more careful, and they would know that they need to take the security measures much more seriously," he further explains.

Despite these added restrictions, observers remain confident that the church will continue to grow. "Mahsa," an Iranian believer living abroad (whose name has been changed for security

purposes), remarked: "The government's latest measures reveal not the weakness of the church, but its enduring influence. If these broadcasts carried no significance, they would not be treated as a threat." While Christians will need to exercise wisdom and caution, Edwin believes their commitment to Christ will remain steadfast. "Iranian Christians understand the price of the faith; and, no matter what, they will follow Christ to the end," he affirms. To review previously published *Persecution & Prayer Alert* reports concerning the oppression of Christianity in this war-torn Persian country, visit www.vomcanada.com/iran.htm.

- *Pray for God's divine protection, wisdom and continued blessings upon ministries that are faithfully proclaiming the "Good News of the Gospel" across Iran through satellite television broadcasts and other forms of media outreach.*
- *Ask the Lord to strengthen our Iranian brothers and sisters in Christ through His sustaining presence – granting them discernment, courage and unwavering faith as they navigate the increased risks and challenges now set before them.*
- *Pray that a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit will take place throughout Iran, leading many more who are searching for spiritual truth to salvation in Christ; and then filling the hearts of these new believers with His everlasting love, supernatural peace, and unquenchable joy.*

INDIA: Audit of Christian Properties in Maharashtra

Sources: International Christian Concern, The Indian Express

The state government of Maharashtra has ordered an audit of all land and properties owned by Christian churches and charities following allegations that some have been misused for private or commercial purposes. The decision was made following a case of alleged fraud involving a Christian organization in the state's Nashik region, where parcels of church-owned land were reportedly leased or sold using forged ownership records.

Various churches and Christian organizations in India have legally held property for many years, with some ownership records dating back to the British colonial era. Even so, committees have been tasked with compiling full ownership records and reporting their findings to officials of the state government by early October.

The mandated review has raised concerns among Christian communities, particularly because it applies exclusively to affiliated churches and organizations, while properties belonging to other religious groups are not being subjected to the same scrutiny. Furthermore, the audit comes amid a broader climate of pressure and intimidation following the approval of Maharashtra's "Freedom of Religion Bill" in March.

State authorities have also recently ordered the demolition of several unauthorized church buildings, leading some believers to fear that similar actions could continue under the guise of the property investigations. Christians in other parts of the country are now concerned that comparable measures may eventually be introduced within their states.

While India is officially a secular nation with constitutional protections for religious freedom, minority religious communities have frequently been targeted, often in connection with anti-conversion regulations. For more information on the various challenges being encountered by followers of Jesus in India, visit www.vomcanada.com/india.htm.

- *Prayerfully ask God to grant all involved in this recently mandated audit (including Maharashtra's state officials and commissioned committees, as well as the leaders/representatives of the targeted churches) wisdom and guidance throughout this investigation, ensuring that all information is handled with efficiency, fairness and honesty.*
- *Pray that churches and ministries throughout the state will be protected from any unjust treatment, and that believers will experience God's peace and reassurance during this time of heightened interrogation and uncertainty.*
- *May Christian organizations across India faithfully serve with all diligence, transparency and indisputable Christlike integrity, shining as powerful testimonies of His righteousness and grace within their communities.*

BELARUS: Exiled Religious Advocates Face Charges

Source: Forum18

Criminal charges have been brought against at least two religious freedom advocates currently living outside the country of Belarus. Both individuals have been added to Russia's federal list of wanted persons, meaning they could risk deportation to Belarus if found residing within countries that maintain close ties with the Russian Federation (such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan or Uzbekistan). When inquiries were made regarding the specific charges against the two believers, Belarusian authorities provided no details.

One of the charged advocates at risk of prosecution is Sergiy Melyanets, a Protestant preacher who fled Belarus in 2024. Prior to leaving the country, Sergiy had regularly supported Christians facing arrests. In fact, he himself had served a short prison sentence due to his ministerial work. Beginning in January, authorities questioned the preacher's parents about his whereabouts and activities, eventually leading to a formal investigation. Despite the pressure, Sergiy remains resolute, stating: "They want me and my family to be in fear. But I continue to do what my Christian conscience leads me to do."

The second believer reportedly under investigation is Natallia Vasilevich. Natallia happens to be an Orthodox theologian and moderator of Christian Vision for Belarus, a Lithuanian-based organization that was officially banned by Belarusian authorities in April 2025. (See www.vomcanada.com/by-2025-05-15.htm for details.) Natallia only became aware that she had been placed on Russia's wanted list after being informed by concerned friends. When asked about the investigation against her, she commented, "It was expected, and it doesn't even really stir up any emotions." While reports indicate that Natallia is being sought by authorities, it remains unclear whether any formal charges have been officially laid against her.

Belarus has consistently maintained restrictive policies towards religious groups operating outside of the Belarusian Orthodox Church. However, even within this state-approved church, individuals perceived by the government as "extreme" could still experience opposition. As a close ally of Russia, Belarus has also taken action against those expressing views contrary to its governmental policies, including oppositional stances that are against the war in Ukraine. Other published reports addressing Christian persecution in this restricted country are available at www.vomcanada.com/belarus.htm.

- *Pray that Sergiy and Natallia – along with other believers living outside Belarus who are facing accusations or threats because of their faith – will be divinely protected and encouraged to remain steadfast in their commitment to Christ.*
- *Please remember Belarusian Christians remaining within their homeland who are similarly at great risk of persecution due to their beliefs, asking the Lord to grant them guidance, courage and peace as they endeavour to honour Him in a country regulated by oppressive political policies.*
- *Despite the present challenges, may God continue to minister mightily in and through the churches of this restricted region as they faithfully proclaim the life-transforming message of our Lord's sacrificial love and eternal salvation, so that many more spiritually needy souls will discover the blessed hope and fulfillment that's only found in Him.*

The "Persecution & Prayer Alert" is a ministry of:
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