



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
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"If you take care of yourself and walk with integrity, you may be confident that God will deal with those who sin against you. Above all, don't give birth to sin yourself; rather, pray for those who persecute you. God will one day turn your persecution into praise."

~ Warren Wiersbe

INDIA: Church Attacked by Sikh Group

Sources: Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Times of India

On May 21st, Christians who had gathered together for worship at the Sukhpal Rana Ministries Church in Rajewal, Punjab, were viciously attacked by a mob dressed as traditional Sikh warriors. Members of this armed Sikh order, known as "the Nihangs," are distinguishable by their blue robes and large turbans.

According to local sources, members of the mob forced their way into the place of worship and proceeded to tear apart Bibles, attack those present with sticks, vandalize the building, and damage vehicles parked outside. Eventually, the incident escalated to the point of retaliation, with both sides throwing stones at each other.

Since the attack, the congregation has held a protest to demand that action be taken against those responsible. However, the Nihangs have denied any involvement in the incident. The state of Punjab has had a recent wave of evangelism, and the Nihangs have previously accused Christian missionaries of conducting forcible conversions. In August 2022, four masked men from the Nihang group vandalized a Catholic church in Punjab and set the priest's car on fire.

While India is a predominantly Hindu nation, the followers of Sikhism make up more than half of Punjab's population. To learn further about the challenges Christians in India are facing, go to www.vomcanada.com/india.htm.

Pray that the members of this church will be free to continue practising their faith without fear of more harassment and violence. May the Lord provide spiritual guidance and strength to these believers, helping each one to demonstrate the character of Christ in their daily interactions with those around them. Additionally, pray that the perpetrators responsible for the attack would not take any further action against this Christian community, but that their hearts would be radically transformed by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

CHINA: Five Detained During Raid on Christian Education Centre

Source: ChinaAid

On May 24th, police raided the Shengjia Christian Education and Help Centre in Shunde City, which is located within the Chinese province of Guangdong. After forcibly entering the building, the authorities searched the premises and confiscated all the teaching materials. Pastor Deng was arrested, along with four of his coworkers.

The following day, the families of the detained Christians received official notifications stating that each believer had been given a 30-day detention for conducting "illegal business operations." When Pastor Deng's wife, Shaoting, went to the detention centre on May 26th to bring clothing for her husband, she asked the police officers to pass along a Bible to him. They refused to do so. The officers also informed her that the pastor had blisters on his back due to an infection and the resulting inflammation. At the time, she was not told if Pastor Deng would be receiving any medical treatment.

Thankfully, Shaoting was able to deliver letters of encouragement to her husband. In one of them she wrote: "All [of this] happened to us with God's goodwill and for the good of us. Honey, you retreat into God with peace and enjoy the rest while being detained. We can take good care of ourselves, strive to preach the Gospel, and wait for you to come back!" For additional reports on the persecution of Chinese Christians, go to www.vomcanada.com/china.htm.

As these believers serve their time in detention, please pray that each one of them will experience renewed strength, encouragement and peace. Also intercede for the healing of Pastor Deng and any of the other detained Christians who likewise need the ministry of the Great Physician. Amid the ongoing opposition against our Chinese brothers and sisters in Christ, may the life-transforming message of the Gospel continue to spread throughout China.

PAKISTAN: Christian Receives Death Sentence

Sources: Kross Konnection, Morning Star News, Voicepk.net

A 22-year-old Pakistani Christian was sentenced to death for blasphemy on May 30th. Noman Masih was found guilty of blaspheming against the Muslim prophet Muhammad because of the pictures he was accused of distributing in 2019.

The incident began when Noman's cousin, Sunny Waqas, was taken into custody on June 29th, 2019. The police claimed to have received "secret information" proving that Sunny had printed blasphemous sketches of Muhammad and was carrying them in a bag to show others. While under interrogation, Sunny allegedly told the police he had received the images from Noman through WhatsApp.

Police claim that Noman was sitting in a public park at 3:30 a.m. on July 1st, showing images to people gathered around him, when he was arrested. However, his father denies those allegations, stating that Noman was asleep in bed when police entered the home to arrest him.

All allegations against Sunny and Noman have been denied by their family members. Sunny was released from prison on February 3rd of this year since the trial had not concluded within the mandatory two-year period. Noman's family intends to appeal the conviction.

Between January 1st and May 10th, 2023, at least 57 cases of alleged blasphemy have been reported in Pakistan, with four of the accused individuals having since been lynched or otherwise killed because of those allegations. Further information on the persecution of Christians in Pakistan is available at www.vomcanada.com/pakistan.htm.

Pray that truth and mercy will prevail in Noman's case, so he can be freed of all charges. May the Lord work deeply in the hearts and minds of the court officials, as well as the country's governing leaders, so that justice will be upheld on behalf of Noman and the many other believers presently being mistreated due to their Christian faith. Also uphold the grieving loved ones of those who've been martyred following accusations made against them. To discourage further incidents of religious persecution and human rights violations, may Pakistan's greatly abused blasphemy laws ultimately be repealed.

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