

Prayer for the Persecuted Church

January 5, 2018

From International Christian Concern (ICC)

<http://info.persecution.org/newsbites-january-5>

Police in India Injure Eight in Attack on Peaceful Protest

1/3/18 India (Asia News)

In August 2017, Christians found a cross demolished in a small village in India. The Christians went to the authorities asking for an investigation and for permission to rebuild the cross, which was granted. In November, the cross was demolished again. Frustrated with the delays in the investigation, a group of women and children peacefully protested the cross' destruction and the poor investigation. In response, authorities sent an all-male police squad to control the protest. The policing turned into clashes which injured eight activists, including a nun.

- Pray for the quick healing of those injured during the attack.
- Pray for this community to be able to rebuild the cross.
- Pray for the authorities to respect the rights of religious minorities in India.

Worshippers Prevented a Higher Death Toll During Church Attack

1/3/18 Egypt (Premier)

Those who witnessed ISIS's recent attack on a church located just outside of Cairo claim that residents and worshippers may have prevented a higher death toll. According to reports, members of the church shut the church's iron gate, preventing the attacker from entering the premises and killing more. This is not the first time that ISIS has targeted Egypt's Christians, but it does indicate a growing trend of activity by ISIS in the area. The militants will target anyone they deem outside of Islam, with Christians being the largest and most obvious target in Egypt.

- Pray for the comfort of the family and friends who lost loved ones in the attack.
- Pray for continued healing of those who were injured during the attack.
- Pray for greater protection for Christian churches in Egypt.

Activists Demand Release of Christian Prisoner in Pakistan

1/2/18 Pakistan (Pak. Christian Post)

Human rights activists are demanding the release of a Nadeem, a Christian who was imprisoned in November on a false blasphemy charge. The grounds of release, according to the activists, is Nadeem's poor mental condition which should absolve him from any charge. After his arrest, Nadeem was tortured by police and now police are looking for Nadeem's brother, despite the fact that the brother is not connected to the case. Such arrests defy the most recent statement from a Pakistani state minister that Pakistan respects Christians.

- Pray for Nadeem's release from prison.
- Pray for Pakistan to respect the rights of religious minorities, particularly in the face of false blasphemy charges.
- Pray for Nadeem to hold strong to his faith despite the difficult circumstances.

Believers Celebrate Christmas in Yangon After 50 Years

1/1/18 Myanmar (Herald Malaysia)

For the first time in 50 years, the Christian communities in Myanmar were able to publicly celebrate Christmas in Yangon. In the past, Christmas celebrations were strictly confined within church buildings. However, with government permission, several liturgies, feasts, and processions were held in the days leading up to Christmas. This year, the government allowed such celebrations to take place in honor of Pope Francis' recent visit and has promised Christians that the Christmas Festival will carry on in the years to come.

- Pray for the government to continue allowing greater religious freedom in Myanmar.
- Pray for many to come to know Christ through the services that were held this Christmas season.
- Pray for this Christian community to be able to effectively witness to their neighbors.

Teen Sisters Beaten, Tied Up by Family for Following Jesus

12/28/17 Laos (Gospel Herald)

Two recently converted Christian teenagers in Laos have experienced persecution following their decision to follow Jesus. The teenage sisters were beaten and tied up by their own family members, threatened by the head of village, and eventually had to relocate to another village. Now, the girls are living with extended family members who are also Christians. In the midst of the hardship, the girls' mother has expressed interest in their faith and even come with her daughters to church.

- Pray for the physical and emotional healing of these two sisters.
- Pray for their mother to continue studying Christianity and place her trust in Jesus.
- Pray for the girls' father to have a change of heart and eventually come to Christ as well.

Fulani Herdsmen Murder Four Christmas Carolers in Nigeria

12/26/17 Nigeria (ICC)

Barely 48 hours before Christmas, suspected Fulani militants attacked a group of Christian carolers. When the gunmen struck, they killed four and injured 10. Those killed in the attack were Jude Haruna, Turaki Dauda, Kaffi Ali, and Amos Musa. In response to the attack, religious leaders have voiced their grief and frustration, lamenting another unprovoked attack on their community. Last year, a similar attack took place on Christmas Eve in Goska village, killing five women and burning down several homes.

- Pray for comfort for those who are mourning the death of these men.
- Pray for the Nigerian government to take greater action to protect those affected by Fulani violence.
- Pray for the Fulani militants to have softened hearts and come to Christ.

From the Voice of the Martyrs website:

<http://www.icommittoprayer.com>

Pray for Three Families Evicted from Their Village

Jan. 04, 2018 | Vietnam

Three Christian families were recently forced from their homes by relatives, with the tacit approval of village authorities. The attackers demolished the Christians' houses and took their farmland, so the believers and their children have been forced to live under a tarp in the jungle. Police have refused to get involved, saying the incident was a family matter. A VOM worker will meet with the Christians to encourage them. Pray that these Christians will be restored to their families and that their faith will remain strong through this trial.

Pray for Pastor Abraham, Charged with Blasphemy

Jan. 04, 2018 | Indonesia

An Indonesian pastor was charged with blasphemy recently after he shared his Christian faith in a taxi. In a widely circulated video, Pastor Abraham Ben Moses is heard speaking with a taxi driver about the Prophet Muhammad's teachings on marriage. He can also be heard asking the driver to convert to Christianity. Pastor Abraham's Internet evangelism has also been cited as a basis for the blasphemy charges, which were filed against him after Indonesia's second-largest Islamic organization complained to authorities. The pastor, who is from Tangerang, Java, faces the possibility of five years in prison if convicted. He is the first member of the Christian clergy in Indonesia to be charged with blasphemy. Pray that justice will be served and that Indonesian Christians will not become too timid to share their faith.

Pray for a Pastor Forced to Stop Holding Services

Jan. 04, 2018 | Sri Lanka

Local authorities in a Sri Lankan village have ordered a pastor to stop holding Christian worship services. On Dec. 9, a police officer and a member of the local peace committee questioned the pastor about his church's worship activities. According to the officer, a number of villages in the area had complained about the Christian services. The officer insisted that the pastor needed approval from the Ministry of Buddha Sasana in order to continue religious activities, and he demanded that the pastor stop holding worship services until receiving that approval. Pray that the pastor will be able to continue holding services.

From Open Doors Prayer Calendars:

<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/take-action/pray/monthly-prayer-calendar/>

January 5 | CUBA

Interdenominational dialogue is being promoted and it is already bearing fruit. Pray for church leaders to continue to talk and move forward in common purposes and ideas.

January 6 | INDIA

The Indian government has plans to deport many Rohingya Muslim Background Believers living in India as illegal immigrants. Pray for them as they face many hardships for their faith.

January 7 | PHILIPPINES

We recently visited believers in evacuation centers. They're requesting prayer for the Lord's peace, an end to the conflict and also for the leaders who are stepping out boldly to help distribute Bibles and practical aid.

January 8 | LEBANON

There is a lot of internal struggle here, including corruption, citizens reluctant to pay taxes and there are many refugees. Pray for the Lord to provide guidance and peace to believers in Lebanon.

January 9 | IRAQ

Most Iraqis have never seen anything but war and rumors of war. This has resulted in many fleeing as refugees, not knowing what tomorrow will hold. Pray for many to come to faith in Jesus in this nation. Pray they continue to look to God for security and peace.

January 10 | INDIA

The anti-conversion law has been initiated by more and more states, so pray for believers trying to be faithful and share their faith, although their government is growing more hostile to the gospel.

January 11 | INDONESIA

Firman* set up a small business with the purpose of sharing the gospel to his customers, and he has successfully began mentoring a peer. The peer's parents became suspicious and complained to the local Islamic leader. Pray for this brother's ministry to continue and not be hindered.

January 12 | CENTRAL ASIA

The mufti (head of local Muslim authorities) in one district has called Christians "betrayers of true religion," and has asked families to forbid their children from communicating with Christian children. Pray for believers to continue to grow despite the hostile environment.