

"There are many things God could give to help us through life's challenges.... But the best gift He gives is Himself. This is the greatest comfort we have: whatever happens in life, He will be with us; He will never leave nor forsake us."
~ L. Koh referencing Hebrews 13:5

ERITREA: Confiscations and Arrests Include Children

Sources: Church in Chains, Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Security officers raided the Faith Missions Church in Eritrea's second largest city of Keren on June 23rd, confiscating property and arresting a number of those present – including pregnant women and children. The church has been operating in the country since the early 1950s and seeking registration since 2002. However, the government has outlawed any religious practice not associated with either the Roman Catholic, Eritrean Orthodox or Evangelical Lutheran denominations, or Sunni Islam.

Even those groups registered with the government are not immune to prosecution. Authorities seized and closed 21 health facilities run by the Catholic church on June 12th, potentially risking the healthcare of thousands in rural areas. The next day, five Orthodox priests were also arrested. It is believed these actions result from recent calls for peace and reconciliation by church leaders.

In response to the current increase in oppression, Daniela Kravetz, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Eritrea, released a statement on June 21st, saying: "These actions show that, despite the improved regional climate for peace and security, the human rights situation in Eritrea remains unchanged." For more information on the persecution of Eritrean Christians, go to our [country report](#).

Continue in prayer for our oppressed and imprisoned brothers and sisters in Eritrea, asking God to give them strength and peace in the midst of horrific conditions. Remember the children who so often suffer without understanding the reasons for the difficulties their families face. Lift up the leaders of the country and, in particular, President Afwerki. May they turn to faith in Christ and work towards upholding His statutes so the people can be governed with justice.



Photo: Flickr / David Stanley (cc)

CHINA: Multiple Church Raids and Closures

Sources: China Aid, VOM Korea



Photo: VOM Korea

Opposition to unregistered house churches in China has increased significantly, with multiple raids and closures in recent days. Officials in Xiamen have stated their intent to shut down all house churches within the city over the next two years, which is only one small part of a nationwide campaign.

On June 13th, Xiamen police burst into the Xinzhao Church during a Bible study. Those attending were filmed and at least 30 believers, along with the minister, were taken away and released several hours later. On June 16th, the Xunsiding Church in Xiamen was also raided. Police confiscated cell phones to prevent anyone from recording the attack. The same day, authorities marched into the Taiyun Cornerstone Church in Shanxi. Worshipers were hauled away and the building was closed.

Raids continued on June 26th when police entered the Morningstar Church in Beihai, detaining many of the Christians present and confiscating cell phones. On June 29th, authorities also banned the Dao En Presbyterian Church in Xuzhou. No further details on these two most recent attacks are available at this time.

For those released after detainment, there is not always the freedom promised. On June 13th, it was reported that Jiang Rong, the wife of Pastor Wang Yi, had finally been released on bail following several months in prison (see [this report](#)). However, despite being released on bail, she is under "residential surveillance" at the home of one of her brothers and not allowed any visitors other than the members of her biological family.

Uphold the many believers affected by these church raids and closures due to the increase of government crackdowns taking place across China. Pray for God to grant His people wisdom and protection as they seek ways to gather together for worship and teaching. Intercede for the freedom of those in detention, whether it be in prisons or homes. May the eyes of the Chinese leaders be opened spiritually so they can see the futility of trying to shut down the church of our Risen Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:18).

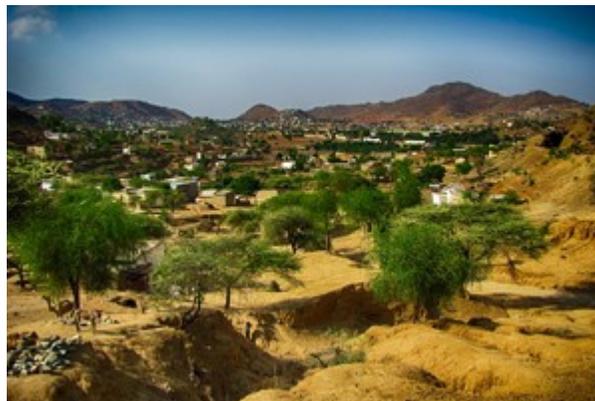
SRI LANKA: Protest Demands End to Worship

Sources: NCEASL

On the morning of June 6th, approximately 50 individuals from the village of Divulapitiya, along with 12 Buddhist monks, gathered outside a village church to demonstrate a protest.

In response to the threat, the pastor called on police to intervene. Instead, the authorities ushered the crowd into the church and, together with the monks, began questioning and threatening the pastor and his wife. The protestors demanded that all worship activities cease immediately. After three hours of deliberation, the mob disbursed, and the police left.

For more information on the difficulties facing Christians in Sri Lanka, as well as the practical and spiritual ways in which The Voice of the Martyrs Canada is providing assistance, go to our [country report](#).



Please lift up this threatened pastor and his wife, along with the members of their church, asking God to intervene on their behalf in the midst of this hostile environment. Pray for the Lord's peace to reign in the situation and for the authorities to dutifully honour their responsibility to provide help and protection to all the various people groups in their country, regardless of religion.

If you would like to post a prayer of praise or petition on behalf of our persecuted family around the globe, visit [VOMC's prayer wall](#).

The Persecution & Prayer Alert is a ministry of:
The Voice of the Martyrs Canada, P.O. Box 608, Streetsville, Ontario, L5M 2C1
Tel. (905) 670-9721 Website: www.vomcanada.com

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For information on additional ways to support members of the persecuted church overseas, review this [listing of options](#).