

***"If the heart is cleansed by the love
of Jesus Christ, and if the heart loves
Him, one can resist all tortures."***

~ Rev. Richard Wurmbbrand

ERITREA: Clampdown Against Christians Continues

Sources: World Watch Monitor

A recent wave of raids against Christians has taken place, with at least 150 arrested in the past two months. On June 23rd, 70 members of the Faith Mission Church of Christ in Keren were arrested (see [this report](#)). The believers were taken to the Ashufera prison which, according to reports, consists of a series of tunnels in a remote area outside of the city. Prisoners there are forced to dig more tunnels when additional space is needed.

Also in Keren, six Christian government employees were taken to court on August 16th where the judge ordered them to renounce their faith. All six refused, saying they would not "negotiate their faith." Two days later, 80 more Christians were detained by security officials in Godayef, an area near the Asmara airport. Those detained had been taken to a police station where they were still being held at last report. For more information on the suffering facing Christians in Eritrea, go to our [online country report](#).



A market in Keren, Eritrea.
Photo: Flickr / David Stanley (c)

Praise God for the ongoing testimony of these believers who are standing firm in the midst of trials. May their faith and endurance be a source of encouragement to other followers of Christ and a testimony to those in need of His eternal salvation – including their captors. Ask the Lord to also continue ministering to the many Eritrean Christians suffering deplorable prison conditions in other parts of the country because of their beliefs. May He mediate on their behalf as well, miraculously making a way for their safe release.

MEXICO: Pastor Shot and Killed

Sources: Christian Solidarity Worldwide, The Global Dispatch, La Prensa



Pastor Alfrery and his family.
Photo: Facebook / AlfLic Cruz

Pastor Alfrery LÍctor Cruz Canseco was waiting in his car following a church service on August 18th when he was shot without warning at point-blank range. The attacker attempted to escape, but members of the congregation were able to capture the gunman and hand him over to authorities. Unfortunately, Pastor Alfrery died while being transported to the local hospital.

Pastor Alfrery was the leader of the Fraternidad Cristiana church in the town of Tlalixtac de Cabrera in Oaxaca state. The motive behind the attack remains unknown. However, this killing comes amidst a series of attacks on religious leaders, often by criminal gangs. More details on the challenges encountered by Christians in southern Mexico, including previously posted reports, can be [reviewed here](#).

Please remember to lift up Pastor Alfrery's wife, Rosita, and their children during this time of shock and grief. May his

family, friends, and congregation find comfort in the knowledge that this beloved spiritual leader is now in the wonderful presence of his Saviour and Lord whom he so diligently served. Pray that the pastor's attacker will be confronted by the Holy Spirit for his sinful action and, as a result, come to a place of repentance and forgiveness in Christ.

IRAN: Appeal Hearing Scheduled

Source: Middle East Concern

An appeal hearing has been scheduled for September 3rd to review the convictions of Christians sentenced because of their faith. Initial reports indicated a combined hearing for three related long-standing cases, each involving a member of the same family.

The first case involves Pastor Victor bet Tamraz, along with two Christian converts, Amin Nader Afshari and Kevian Fallah Mohammadi. The three were arrested during a Christmas celebration in 2014 and each received sentences of ten years ([read more](#)).

Pastor Victor's wife, Shamiram Isavi Khabizeh, was sentenced in January 2018 to five years in prison for allegedly "acting against national security and against the regime by organizing small groups, attending a seminary abroad, and training church leaders and pastors to act as spies." Their son, Ramiel, was arrested along with four converts during a picnic in August 2016 (see [this report](#)). Although Ramiel only received a four-month sentence, it left him with a criminal record, leading to this appeal.

While it appeared the appeal hearing would be for all those involved, only Kevian and Shamiram received a summons to appear as of August 29th. The family is disappointed that the other appeals have been delayed but believe it is intended to pressure the family to leave Iran.

Pray that the upcoming appeals will be successful and that all charges against the accused Christians will be dropped, in hopes the appeals of the others will be heard soon. As these faithful believers seek to serve Christ, whether in prison or elsewhere, may they receive ongoing encouragement, peace, patience and strength. In addition, please remember the many other Christians throughout Iran who are continuing to share the Gospel message despite the opposition they encounter on a regular basis.

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](#).



Pastor Victor bet Tamraz and his wife, Shamiram Isavi Khabizeh.
Photo: Farsi Christian News Network

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