

# RELEASE INTERNATIONAL PRAYER ALERT

Tuesday, September 14, 2010

*Prayer support is crucial to those who suffer for their faith in Jesus. Please use these alerts to prompt your own prayers, and to facilitate prayer in your church and other Christian meetings. Please also send it on to other Christians. This information can also be reproduced in church magazines and news bulletins, provided the source is acknowledged.*

## **August 27 2010 - INDIA – Protests in Karnataka follow BJP call to ‘weed out’ Christianity**

Release partners and church leaders in Karnataka have protested about inflammatory remarks by a senior politician calling for Christianity to be ‘weeded out’ of the state.

Prahlad Remani, a senior legislator with the ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), called publicly for ‘followers of any religion’ to stop the spread of Christianity.

The remarks, made at celebrations for India’s Independence Day on August 15, drew sharp criticism from Release partners and senior church leaders, including the Archbishop of Bangalore and the Bishop of Belgaum, who raised their concerns with state officials. Karnataka’s Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa reportedly told them later that he regretted Remani’s comments.

The state of Karnataka has been a flashpoint for Christian persecution since the BJP came to power there in May 2008. The Global Council of Indian Christians reports that the number of ‘anti-Christian incidents’ in Karnataka since then now stands at ‘more than 200’.

As recently as August 15, the very day Remani made his inflammatory speech, a church meeting in Mandya district was raided by about 30 Hindu militants.

When police arrived on the scene, they arrested two pastors working with Campus Crusade for Christ and ten other Christians and held them all for questioning. The ten were later released but the two pastors were detained on suspicion of ‘proselytising’, according to news agency AsiaNews. (Sources: All India Christian Council, AsiaNews, Global Council of Indian Christians, The Hindu online).

- Pray that the church in Karnataka will remain steadfast in their faith amid persecution.
- Pray that moderates in government in Karnataka will resist attempts by Hindu extremists to discriminate against Christians.

## **September 1 2010 – PAKISTAN – Christian aid workers abducted and killed**

The Pakistani Taliban are accused of abducting and killing three Christian aid workers who were trying to bring relief supplies to flood survivors.

Officials reportedly recovered the bodies on August 25, two days after members of the local Taliban attacked an aid vehicle and kidnapped the three foreign workers. They had reportedly been working in and around Mingora city in Swat district, North-West Frontier Province.

Military sources withheld the news from the general media to avoid causing alarm to other aid agencies working in Pakistan – but have now allowed Compass Direct news agency to publish the news in limited form. The international agency that employed the three murdered aid workers has not been named.

A spokesman for the Pakistani army said that the Taliban had given warning that it would attack ‘foreign aid workers and Christian organisations’, according to Compass Direct. He also said that security forces have been deployed in areas such as Swat to provide extra protection for relief workers.

The small Christian minority in Swat have been particularly hard pressed in recent years as Islamist militants and government troops have fought for control of the district. (Source: Compass Direct)

- Ask God to comfort the families and friends of the murdered aid workers. Ask Him to protect all those trying to bring practical support and comfort to flood survivors.
- Pray that the relief effort will reach those most in need in Pakistan. Pray too that Christians will not be discriminated against in the distribution of vital supplies.

### **September 7 2010 - INDIA – Christians detained on ‘false hope’ accusation**

A pastor and two other Christians who were attacked by extremists have been charged with ‘outraging the religious feelings’ of others.

Pastor Dilip Chakravarty, Ganga Ram and Shankar Lal of the Church of God in Chhattisgarh have been held at Dhamtari district jail since police arrested them on August 29. Police officers were acting on a complaint made by Hindu extremists who accused the Christians of ‘forcible conversion’ by offering ‘money and false hope’.

The extremists had already taken the law into their own hands by launching several attacks on the Christians, which had reportedly left Ganga and Shankar with fractures to their hands and legs. The extremists had also tried to force the pair to return to Hinduism.

The three Christians have now been charged with ‘deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion’. Local Christian leaders strongly deny the church was involved in ‘forcible conversion’.

Meanwhile, in Karnataka state, a pastor and a member of his congregation had to go to hospital with serious head and hand injuries after Hindu extremists raided their church and started beating them. About 20 extremists raided Ebenezer Assembly of God Church in Mysore district as Pastor Ravi George led worship on August 29. Pastor Ravi has since filed a complaint with police.  
(Source: Compass Direct)

- Thank God for Pastors Dilip and Ravi and their churches, which are working to extend His kingdom in India. Ask God to strengthen them in their faith and witness.
- Ask God to grant wisdom to police coming under pressure from Hindu extremists to rein in church activity. Pray that police will be unbiased in upholding justice.

### **September 9 2010 - SOMALIA – Militants murder Christian and snatch children for military training**

*Al Shabaab* insurgents in Somalia are reported to have murdered a Christian and abducted his four children for military training.

Extremists shot dead Osman Abdullah Fataho in front of his wife and children at their home in Afgoi near Mogadishu – before kidnapping the woman and her family on July 21. They later released Osman’s wife – but kept her children, who are aged five, seven, ten and 15, according to Compass Direct news agency. Compass sources suggest the children will be forcibly converted to Islam and turned into child soldiers.

Osman, who was ‘deeply involved’ in the activities of his secret Christian community, is reported to have been raised as a Muslim – making him an obvious target for *Al Shabaab*. The insurgents are determined to extend *Sharia* or strict Islamic law across Somalia – and are actively targeting Christians, murdering at least 15 of them last year alone. *Al Shabaab* recently outlawed bell-ringing at the end of school classes – because it evoked the sound of church bells.

Compass Direct reports that this and other instances of anti-Christian violence have forced several leaders of Somalia’s underground Christian movement to flee their homes and go into hiding.  
(Source: Compass Direct)

- Ask God to comfort and strengthen Osman’s grieving and traumatised family. Pray that his children will be rescued and reunited with their mother.
- Pray that God will protect and multiply His church in Somalia so that they will ‘shine like stars’ in this troubled land (Philippians 2:15).