

RELEASE INTERNATIONAL PRAYER ALERT

Tuesday, July 6, 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.

June 23 2010 - PAKISTAN – Two Christian families devastated by rape attacks on children

Two Christian families in Pakistan are devastated after their young daughters were raped.

In Kotri village, Sindh province, a brutal assault on a six-year-old girl has left her in intensive care. And in Mohalla Raja Sultan, Rawalpindi, a 14-year-old is recovering from being kidnapped, drugged and raped by five men.

The attackers of the 14-year-old threatened to kill her unless her father allowed her to convert to Islam and marry one of her rapists. The child was freed on June 6 – eight days after she was abducted – during a police raid near Islamabad. Her attackers told her father they believed they would have '70 virgins in heaven' if they raped or married a non-Muslim girl. He has since reported the incident to the police.

In the case of the six-year-old child, however, her relatives' initial attempts to persuade police to investigate only prolonged their torment. A Release source said police arrested the girl's 'close relatives' instead and tortured them to try to extract a confession from them. They were freed only when local media showed an interest in the case.

The same Release source says the six-year-old girl is in a stable condition but is 'extremely traumatised'. It has been reported that she is not receiving 'proper medical care'.

(Sources: Compass Direct, Release International)

- Ask God to heal and restore these two girls and their families.
- Pray for justice for these two girls – and for the many Christian women and girls in Pakistan whose basic human and religious rights are trampled upon.

June 25 2010 - KENYA – Christians oppose new constitution as attack on religious liberty

Kenyan Christians are coming under fire for campaigning against a draft constitution which they say would threaten religious freedom.

Six people died and 104 were injured when suspected grenades were thrown into the crowd at a prayer rally in Nairobi's Uhuru Park on June 13, organised by the Kenyan church. Many were hurt because the explosions caused a stampede.

The church is advocating a 'no' vote in the August 4 referendum on the draft constitution because it would include – and legitimise – *Kadhi* or Islamic courts. These courts deal mainly with matters related to marriage and inheritance for Kenya's Muslim minority. Christians fear that their inclusion in the new constitution would undermine religious tolerance and could cause religious conflict.

Supporters of the draft constitution are reportedly already threatening to use 'hate speech' laws to stall the church's 'no' campaign.

(Sources: Australian Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission, BBC, Daily Nation, VOM Australia)

- Pray that, whatever the outcome of the vote on the constitution on August 4, political and religious leaders of all faiths will work hard to uphold religious freedom in Kenya.
- Pray against further violence and unrest over this issue.

June 30 2010 - INDONESIA – Islamist hardliners in Bekasi declare ‘war’ on ‘Christianisation’

Islamist hardliners are using fighting talk about the ‘Christianisation’ of Bekasi, amid rising interfaith tensions in the city.

Nine Islamic groups meeting in the West Javan city have reportedly joined forces in a campaign to prepare local mosques to ‘wage war on’ the growing Christian influence in the city.

The group is recommending that each local mosque should form its own *laskar* or ‘paramilitary unit’ to enforce *Sharia* or strict Islamic practices on local Muslims – and insisting that the Bekasi administration’s policymaking should reflect this code.

Hardliners say they are reacting to what they see as a concerted attempt by the church to extend its reach in Bekasi, a commuter city for Jakarta. Mass baptisms of Christians who were raised as Muslims are cited as a particular issue for concern.

On June 20, the Pondok Timur Indah Church in Mustika Jaya subdistrict was shut down. A spokesman for the mayor of Bekasi confirmed that the church closure was a response to demands from Islamist hardliners, who had declared the church ‘illegal’. A church-run school in Bekasi was attacked last month, after blasphemy allegations against a 16-year-old blogger.

Church leaders are now calling on President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to defend the Christian minority in the face of mounting intimidation.

(Sources: BBC, International Christian Concern, The Jakarta Globe)

- Praise God that the church in Bekasi appears to be thriving. Ask Him to protect His people in this city.
- Pray against moves to revive religious tensions in a nation still recovering from conflict fuelled by jihadists.

July 1 2010 - INDIA – Pastors beaten and cars burnt amid accusations of forced conversion

Hindu extremists across India are continuing to use anti-conversion laws as an excuse to attack Christians and try to limit church activities.

In the latest reported attack, on June 23, two pastors were seriously injured when men attacked them with iron bars at a tea stall in Chandapura, Karnataka state, accusing them of converting people to Christianity by force. Pastors Shidu Kurialose and Nithya Vachanam from Bethel Assembly of God Church were admitted to hospital after the assault.

The previous day, extremists reported to be from the *Bajrang Dal* organisation burnt at least seven vehicles belonging to the Jesus with Us Pentecostal Church in Mathikere, Tamil Nadu. The attack followed efforts by extremists to prevent the church holding a four-day convention. In the event, the gathering went ahead in a different location, under police protection.

Meanwhile, in Uttar Pradesh, Hindu extremists reported to be from the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* organisation raided a meeting at Jesus Church in Firozabad on June 21 and threatened to harm Pastor Breymond Shastri if he continued to lead worship there. They also persuaded the local media to publish an article accusing the pastor of forcible conversion.

Eight Indian states have introduced anti-conversion laws – though one, Tamil Nadu, has since repealed them.

(Sources: Compass Direct, VOM Canada)

- Pray that the church in India will remain steadfast in their faith.
- Pray that Indian politicians and law enforcers will take a tougher line on extremist elements who are falsely accusing Christians of forced conversion.