

# RELEASE INTERNATIONAL PRAYER ALERT

Tuesday, October 25, 2011

*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.*

## **October 07, 2011: PAKISTAN – Extremists kill Christian in attack on colony**

A young Christian man has been killed during an attack on a Christian colony in Multan, Punjab province.

According to Release partner Centre for Legal Aid, Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS), a mob of 40 Muslim extremists targeted the community of Ahata Kamiyan on Wednesday, killing 25-year-old Sabir Masih and injuring 21 others. The injured, mainly women and children, were immediately taken to a hospital in Multan.

(Source: CLAAS)

- Pray for the family of Sabir Masih and the injured in hospital.
- Pray that the Christian community, shaken by the attack, will know the peace of God.

## **October 10, 2011: EGYPT – Violent clashes leave 25 dead**

At least 25 people were killed yesterday during a demonstration in Cairo by Christians protesting about the destruction of a church building in Aswan Province on September 30.

Precise details are still emerging. The demonstration had been called because of concern about the lack of effective intervention by the security forces in Aswan and the attitude of the province's governor.

The protest, which started at around 4pm in the Shubra neighbourhood and ended in the Maspero area of downtown Cairo, was apparently disrupted by thugs. When protesters left Shubra they were attacked by people throwing stones. After some time the protesters continued their march. Eyewitness reports mention that residents of the neighbourhood of Bulaq then attacked the marchers. Once the protesters arrived in Maspero they were met by thugs who attacked them with stones and sticks. When some of the protesters threw stones back at these attackers the army intervened and attacked the marchers. The army used live ammunition and drove into the crowds with armoured personnel carriers.

Later in the evening there were reports of sporadic violence against Christian-owned businesses and fighting close to the Coptic Hospital, where most of the bodies of the dead and wounded had been brought.

Christians are alarmed at the disproportionate use of force. The official death toll is currently 25, allegedly including some members of the security forces. More than 200 were injured.

Egypt's ruling military council has called for a swift investigation into the violence.

(Sources: Middle East Concern, BBC)

- Pray that the Church and other community leaders will know God's guiding wisdom at this time and that there will be effective action to address inter-religious violence.
- Pray that the bereaved will know the comfort and presence of God and that the wounded and traumatised will know the healing touch of Jesus.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would convict all those seeking to stir up religious tensions in Egypt.

### **October 18, 2011: SUDAN – Christians in north braced for stricter Sharia**

The president of Sudan says he will press ahead with plans to adopt an entirely Islamic constitution and strengthen *Sharia* or Islamic law across the north.

President Omar Hassan al-Bashir's confirmation of a proposal he first made last December will dismay Christians living in Sudan (North), who were suffering discrimination and persecution even before South Sudan became independent in July.

Churches report that officials are stepping up the pressure on Christians in areas of Sudan (North), such as South Kordofan, which are known to be pro-southern (*Prayer Alert, July 8, 2011*). Islamist militias were accused of bombing churches and Christian homes in South Kordofan in June.

Reuters news agency reports that many southerners 'no longer feel welcome in the north' since the split. Some have reportedly lost government jobs.

Compass Direct news agency reports that three churches in Omdurman, Sudan's second-largest city, have been threatened with demolition recently if they continue their worship activities. The churches were accused of operating on government land and without permission – but they deny both charges.

An estimated 1 million southerners still live in the north – and are now treated as foreigners requiring work and residency permits, according to Reuters news agency. President al-Bashir's regime has said they now have until next spring to leave or go through the complicated legal process of applying for the right to stay.

The referendum which led to the south's secession was a condition of the 2005 peace deal which ended a long civil war between the mainly Arab and Muslim north and the predominantly Christian and animist south.

#### **NEWS UPDATE:**

Release is urging supporters to continue praying and campaigning on behalf of Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani, who faces the death sentence in Iran. Recently, various sources have suggested that the pastor from Rasht was granted a retrial by the Supreme Court – but his lawyer, Mohammad Ali Dadkhah, says those reports were incorrect, according to the American Centre for Law and Justice (ACLJ). Mr Dadkhah has, however, confirmed that the court requested that Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, should pass final judgment on Pastor Yousef's case, according to the ACLJ. Mr Dadkhah is reported as saying that he believes the Ayatollah's response will come within 20 days. Pastor Yousef's lawyer has himself been sentenced to nine years in jail, for 'actions and propaganda against the Islamic regime'. His appeal could take months and Mr Dadkhah fears that officials could enforce his sentence at any time, leaving Pastor Yousef without legal representation.

(Sources: American Centre for Law and Justice, Compass Direct, Reuters)

- Ask God to build the faith of His people in Sudan and South Sudan. Pray particularly for His protection over churches in the north.
- Pray that Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, will grant Pastor Yousef a pardon and quash the death sentence. Pray that Mr Dadkhah, the pastor's lawyer, will have his appeal heard quickly and that he will be acquitted.