



PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

Pray for the Persecuted Christians in Myanmar/Burma



Evangelical Christians: About 2.5 %

Total Population: 54,336,000

Buddhist Extremism and a Dictatorial Military

Pressure on Christians has slowly increased and converts face strong pressure from their family and community. Rebel groups are active in Wa State, and many churches have been forcibly closed. Buddhist extremists maintain that to be Burmese—the majority ethnic group in Myanmar—is to be Buddhist, so there is intense pressure on all religious minorities, including Christians. The army also maintains tight control over the government in Myanmar, restricting and minimizing the rights of Christians.

Communities that aim to remain "Buddhist only" make life for Christian families impossible by not allowing them to use community water resources. Some church groups experience opposition, too, especially in rural areas, or if they are known for proselytizing. Christians often meet in homes or business places; otherwise, they risk losing their land and churches that could be forcibly taken. Children of Christians can also face discrimination from teachers and bullying by other children. The government tries to act against radical Buddhist monks, but sends mixed signals. In the past year, it became even clearer that radical monks enjoy the support of the army.

Myanmar's score increased two points, but the country actually went down one rank on the list. This is partly because the violence score decreased slightly, even as scores in other spheres of life increased. Due to ongoing fighting, it is very difficult to obtain accurate reports on faith-based attacks against Christians and churches.

How Christians Are Suffering

In predominantly Christian states like Kachin State, Karen State or in Northern Shan, even well-established historical churches are being attacked. Fighting increased in 2018, adding thousands more to the IDP camps that are already ill-equipped to provide for the huge numbers of people. Due to intense fighting in Kachin and Shan State, more than 100,000 Christians have been forced to flee their homes and are living in camps where they have been denied access to food and healthcare because they are not Buddhists. In daily life, converts are persecuted by their Buddhist, Muslim or tribal families and communities. Christians in rural areas additionally suffer from the brutal and almost forgotten long-term war the Burmese army is fighting against insurgency groups, especially in the north.

Examples

In March 2019, Human Rights Watch published a report about how predominantly Christian Kachin girls and women are trafficked and sold as brides to China ("Give us a baby, and we'll let you go").

In January and February 2019, one pastor and one church elder disappeared in Rakhine State, allegedly abducted and then killed by the insurgent Arakan Army. The elder's body was found, but the whereabouts of the pastor remain unknown.

In most schools, all pupils—including non-Buddhists—are required to recite Buddhist teaching or prayers before classes begin.

Converts from Buddhism are discriminated against in various ways. In one report, a teacher refused to give a Christian student a list of questions provided to others in preparation for tests. In another case, when a family sold a plot of land, the earnings were distributed to all siblings of the family except the convert.

In 2017, more than 100,000 Christians from Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, now live in Malaysia as refugees after recently fleeing their homes because of religious persecution.

Pray for Myanmar

- Christian converts from Islam or Buddhism face strong pressure from their family, friends and neighbors to recant their faith. Recently introduced laws have made conversion very complicated, though it is not forbidden outright. Pray for increased religious freedom. Pray that believers would have courage and endurance in the face of persecution.
- Pray for persecuted Christian minorities, that they would lovingly minister to persecuted Rohingya Muslims, especially those choosing to return from exile in Bangladesh. Pray that many hearts would be opened to the truth of Christ.
- Pray for peace in the land; peace between the Myanmar government and the Kachin Independent Army. Pray that the war would cease and people could return to their homes.
- Pray for the safety and security of displaced believers. Ask God to use His Church to bring provision and medical care.