



## PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

### Pray for the Persecuted Christians in Tajikistan

Remember the prisoners as if chained with them - those who are mistreated - since you yourselves are in the Body also.

(Hebrews 13:3)



Total Population: 9,282,000

Self-Proclaimed Christian Population: About 0.8 %

Evangelical Witness: 0.0%

Muslim: 94%

#### Restrictions and Raids

In this central Asian country, no religious activities beyond state-run and state-controlled institutions are allowed. Local authorities and police monitor religious meetings, detain believers, raid church meetings and confiscate religious materials. Here, Christian converts are the main persecution targets by the central government and from family, friends and community.

By tightening already restrictive laws and strictly enforcing them, the government heavily pressures all "deviating" groups. Christians are seen as extremists for their practice of religion outside of state-sanctioned structures, such as the Russian Orthodox Church. Since 2015, authorities have stepped up pressure, playing out in more raids of Christian meetings and more Christians rounded up for interrogation. Members of the Protestant church are commonly regarded as followers of an alien sect with only one goal-to spy and destroy the current political system. As a result, Christians are seen as threats that need to be controlled or eradicated.

#### How Christians Are Suffering

If Muslim indigenous citizens convert to Christianity, they are likely to experience pressure and occasional physical violence from their families, friends and local community to force them to return to their former faith. Some converts are locked up by their families for long periods of time and beaten, and may eventually be expelled from their communities. Local mullahs also preach against them, adding even more pressure. As a result, converts in Tajikistan will do their best to hide their faith, becoming "secret believers."

#### Examples

A senior official in Tajikistan's customs service confirmed that authorities confiscated and burned 5,000 evangelical Christian calendars ordered by a Baptist church in the Central Asian country.

Specific examples of persecution in Tajikistan usually go unreported by all sources. However, this lack of data doesn't mean persecution isn't occurring, but rather that Tajik believers don't report them to foreign sources.

#### Pray for Tajikistan

- Pray with converts in Tajikistan who are experiencing an increase in stress and problems in their everyday life as a result of persecution. Pray they will seek God's wisdom for how to deal with these growing pressures and stand firm in their faith.
- One of the major problems facing believers in Tajikistan is the lack of cooperation and much division between the various Christian denominations. Unfortunately, there are but few exceptions to this, and that reality plays into the hands of the government. Pray that believers would prioritize peace with each other.
- No religious activities beyond state-run and state-controlled institutions are allowed. As a result, Christians are seen as extremists for practicing their religion. Pray this view of Christians would change.