



PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

Pray for the Persecuted Christians in NEPAL

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: 206,139,589

Self-Proclaimed Christian Population: 51% – **Evangelical Witness: 15%**

Death Rate: 9.09/1000 per year: Just today: 5,134

Pastor in Nepal Sentenced to Two Years in Prison for Violating Anti-Conversion Law Nepalese Christians Fear Further Use of Anti-Conversion Law

11/30/2021 Washington D.C. (International Christian Concern) - International Christian Concern (ICC) has learned that a Christian pastor in Nepal has been convicted of violating the country's harsh anti-conversion law. The pastor has been sentenced to two years in prison and a fine of 20,000 Rupees (about \$165).

On November 30, Pastor Keshav Acharya was sentenced to two years imprisonment by the District Court in Dolpa for violating Nepal's anti-conversion law. Pastor Acharya was first arrested on March 23, 2020, on charges of spreading what the courts said was false information regarding the COVID-19 virus. He prayed on the internet for the Corona virus to "go and die . . . by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ . . ."

On April 19, 2020, Pastor Acharya was released on bail, but was immediately rearrested outside of the court without a warrant. He was then sent to the Dolpa District Police where he was charged with proselytizing and distributing Christian tracts in Dolpa.

The District Court in Dolpa convicted Pastor Acharya of violating Nepal's anti-conversion laws on November 22. Pastor Archaya's final hearing, however, was held on November 30 where he was sentenced to two years imprisonment and a fine of 20,000 Rupees.

Proselytization is considered a criminal offense in Nepal. The process of criminalizing religious conversion began in 2015 when Nepal adopted a new constitution. Under Article 26 (3) of the new constitution, "No person shall behave, act or make others act to disturb public law and order situation or convert a person of one religion to another or disturb the religion of other people...such an act shall be punished by law."

In August 2018, the Nepalese government enacted this controversial portion of the new constitution when it was added to the country's criminal codes. Under these new laws, an individual found guilty of even encouraging religious conversions can be fined up to 50,000 Rupees and placed in prison for up to five years.

William Stark, ICC's Regional Manager for South Asia, said, "We here at International Christian Concern are deeply concerned by the conviction of Pastor Acharya. For more than a year, authorities in the Doplpa District have seemed bent on convicting Pastor Acharya of something and punishing him for simply being a Christian pastor. Since the new constitution was adopted in 2015, Nepalese Christians have been concerned that Article 26 and its enacting laws would be used to target their community. Today, Nepalese Christians again have seen their fears realized. Nepal's sweeping anti-conversion law must be repealed if religious freedom is truly a right to be enjoyed by the country's citizens."