



Five Christians shot dead outside church in Pakistan

Twelve masked men shot five Christians dead as they came out of their church building in Sukkur in southwest Pakistan on 15 July. An independent government source confirmed the shootings, adding that local Islamist pressure had prevented media from reporting on it.

Pastor Aaron John of Full Gospel Church and the four members who were killed alongside him (**Rohail Bhatti**, **Salman John**, **Abid Gill** and **Shamin Mall**) were leaving the church building after meeting to discuss security in the light of threats they had received. "As we came out of the church, a group of a dozen armed gunmen came and opened fire at us," said the pastor's son, Shahid John. "The police arrived 45 minutes after the incident, and we waited for over 45 minutes for the ambulance to arrive." Shahid John survived a bullet to his arm, and five other church members were also wounded in the attack. (*Compass Direct*)

The above news has been overshadowed by the devastating floods that hit Pakistan in early August. Although Church in Chains is not an aid agency, it has responded to this crisis by sending a grant of €3,000 to our partners at Barnabas Fund, who have sent aid to local churches and Christian organisations to buy essential supplies – mainly water, food and medicine – for distribution among Christian families, who are often overlooked in such situations. To obtain more information or send a donation, contact [Barnabas Fund](#) or [Tearfund Ireland](#).

PRAY... for those who mourn the deaths of Pastor Aaron John, Rohail Bhatti, Salman John, Abid Gill and Shamin Mall. Pray also for God's blessing on those bringing aid to flood victims in Pakistan.

Bishop refused licence for church building in Egypt

Bishop Agathon (pictured) has been refused a licence to rebuild a church in Maghagha, a city of Upper Egypt located on the west bank of the Nile. At the end of July 2010, clergy and parishioners from the Coptic Diocese of Maghagha and Edwah (which serves 250,000 Copts) staged a sit-in at the bishopric grounds. They were protesting against the refusal of the state governor to grant them a permit to rebuild their old church premises. Building or repairing churches has long been a contentious issue in Egypt and it has been very difficult for Christians to obtain permission from the authorities.



Bishop Agathon first applied for a licence to rebuild in April 2007, when the old church building had fallen into a dangerous state of repair, and had become too small for the growing congregation. After nearly three and a half years of negotiations and appeals to President Mubarak, an agreement was reached in March 2010 between the Governor and the Bishop. **The old church building was demolished in March but the Governor has ignored this agreement and ruled that the rebuilding work needs a new decree from President Mubarak.** (*Assist/Watani*)

PRAY... for Bishop Agathon and the Christians of Maghagha as they seek to erect a church building where they can meet for worship.



Iranian Christian released on bail

After spending 87 days in custody, Christian prisoner **Ali Golchin (29)** was released from Evin prison, Tehran, on Sunday 25 July 2010 after payment of €150,000 bail. Ali had been arrested on 29 April 2010 at his home in the city of Varamin. Security agents searched the house and confiscated books (including Bibles), a computer, personal belongings and identification documents.

The majority of Ali's detention was spent in solitary confinement in the notorious Section 209 of Evin Prison. Throughout this time he was only allowed to meet his family once for ten minutes. He faced long, harsh interrogation and his family reported that Ali described his time in prison as "unbearable".

No reason has been given for Ali's detention and he has not been formally charged, so the heavy bail is inexplicable to his family and friends. This bail has been inflicted upon the whole family in the form of a bond against the title deed of family property of equivalent value. (FCNN)

PRAISE GOD... for the release of Ali from prison and pray for God's blessing on him and his family as he recovers from his ordeal in prison.

Irregular family visits for Alimujiang

Uighur Christian prisoner **Alimujiang Yimiti** was moved in April 2010 to a prison on the outskirts of Urumchi in north-west China where it was expected that normal prison rules would allow routine monthly family visits by his mother, his wife Guli Nuer and their two young sons. However, the authorities are creating difficulties for the family. Alimujiang had brief visits in April and May, but not in June.



Guli Nuer said that the family was able to visit in July. When asked about his condition, she replied, **"How good can he be in the prison? But I think he looked quite well in spirit."** Alimujiang is serving a 15-year sentence on a charge of providing state secrets to an overseas organisation (in fact, he simply met and talked with visiting Christians from the USA).

(Radio Free Asia)

PRAY... that Alimujiang's family will be allowed to visit and encourage him regularly and pray also that his long sentence will be reviewed by the Chinese authorities.



Pre-Register for Athlone Conference

Pastor Manuel Arias from Chiapas in Mexico is the invited guest speaker for the Church in Chains Conference to be held at the Athlone Springs Hotel on Saturday 11 September. He has been pastor to **The Innocent of Acteal** group of prisoners and their families for many years and will speak about their long struggle for justice. *Tomas and Rosa Perez (previously advertised as speakers) have not been able to secure passports.*

The conference will run from 11am - 4pm. All welcome, admission free, conference folder to take away. It would be very helpful if you could let us know if you are planning to come.

You can pre-register using the form on our website <http://www.churchinchains.ie/node/353>

You can also contact the Church in Chains office or Seán Ó Cluaid at 090 – 647 5410.



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