



### Alimujiang sees family for first time in two years

Alimujiang Yimiti has had a visit from his family for the first time since he was arrested in January 2008.

Alimujiang's wife, Guli Nuer, two young sons, mother and sister travelled to the prison in Urumchi, state capital of Xinjiang province (in north west China) where they spoke by telephone for 15 minutes, separated by a glass barrier. His

family said that he was noticeably thinner but in good spirits. Alimujiang's mother was extremely emotional during the visit. She encouraged her son to be strong, and he in turn comforted her. His spirit seemed strong, and he encouraged his wife and children, *"Be strong and take heart! I know that this is God's training for me."*

Alimujiang has been moved recently to the prison in Urumchi from a prison in his home city of Kashgar (over 1,000 kilometres away). He is serving a 15 year sentence on a charge of providing state secrets to overseas organisations. Alimujiang's lawyer, Dr Li Baiguang, claims that Alimujiang's real 'offence' was talking to visiting Christians from the United States.

The family are allowed to visit Alimujiang once a month. (*China Aid/ Compass Direct*)

**PRAISE GOD... that Alimujiang and his family have been able to see each other again and pray for the ongoing efforts to secure Alimujiang's release.**

### Another Christian dies in Eritrean prison

A 28-year-old Eritrean woman, Senait Oqbazgi Habta, died on 23 April in the Sawa Military Training Centre after being abused and denied medical treatment for malaria and severe anaemia.

Senait was arrested in 2008, along with 15 other university students, for attending a Bible study group. They were imprisoned in metal shipping containers where they endured suffocating heat during the day and freezing temperatures at night, and they were deprived of fresh air, sanitation and medical care. Sawa officials reportedly offered Senait her freedom and medical attention if she would recant her Christian beliefs, but she refused. They eventually allowed Senait to be moved to the prison's medical centre, where she died shortly after. (*Open Doors*)



At least ten Christians have died in Eritrean prisons in the past four years. A total of 2,200 Christians are currently believed to be imprisoned in Eritrea.

**The annual protest vigil to highlight the continuing persecution of Christians in Eritrea will be held outside the Eritrean Embassy in London on Thursday 3 June. As the Eritrean Embassy in London is officially the Embassy for Britain and Ireland, a Church in Chains delegation will travel to London to participate in the vigil, which is being organised jointly with Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Open Doors, Release Eritrea and Release International.**

**PRAY... that the Lord will comfort the family and friends of Senait and pray that all those who are in prison in Eritrea will be aware of His presence and encouragement in dreadful conditions.**

## Egyptian Court suspends ID card case

An Egyptian court has suspended the case brought by Mohammed Hegazy to have his change of religion from Islam to Christianity officially recognised on his ID card.

The First District of the Court of the State Council has suspended the case until the Constitutional Court rules on a challenge to Article 47, a section of the civil code that in theory allows Egyptians to change the religion listed on their ID card. *"The court is using this decision as a way of delaying having to make an ultimate decision,"* Hegazy said.

Mohammed Hegazy, 27, said the suspension endangers his children's welfare and will force them to lead a double life indefinitely: at home they will be taught to live in accordance with the Bible, while outside it they will be taught to live according to the Quran.

Hegazy rose to national prominence in August 2007 when he became the first Muslim convert in Egypt to sue for the right to change the religious status on his identification card to "Christian." He and his family, wife Katarina and children, Mariam (2) and Yousef (3 months) live in hiding.

*"I think it's very weird and not fair that when Christians want to convert to Islam there's no problem, their papers go through and there's no discrimination against them,"* Hegazy said. *"But when Muslims want to convert to Christianity, all of the sudden it's a big deal."* ([Compass Direct](#))



**PRAY... for God's protection on Mohammed, Katarina, Mariam and Yousef and pray also that the Egyptian authorities will allow their citizens to have freedom to change their religion.**



## Three Christians jailed after church raid in Uzbekistan

Three members of a large church in Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan, have been sentenced to 15 days in prison.

Artur Avanesyan (assistant pastor of the church) and two other men from the church, Bahodiy Adambaev and Vyacheslav Dechkov, began their sentences immediately at the end of the hasty trial on Tuesday 18 May (the court sat until 10.30pm when the sentences were announced). Five other church members were given large fines. The arrests took place last Sunday (16 May) during a massive police raid on the church in central Tashkent. The church was raided despite the fact that it is registered with the government and is listed as a religious organisation in the Uzbek Golden Pages business directory.

The church raid was carried out without a warrant during Sunday worship on by the Mirzo-Ulugbek District Police, National Security Service secret police, Tax Inspectorate, Fire Brigade, and Sanitary-Epidemiological Service. After a five-hour search the police officially sealed the church, preventing the congregation from having further access, and the Fire Brigade cut off the electricity. Raids, threats, fines and literature confiscations continue to be suffered by Christians throughout Uzbekistan. ([Forum 18](#))

**PRAY... for Artur, Bahodiy and Vyacheslav as they serve their sentences and pray for all Christians throughout Uzbekistan who are suffering church raids, arrests and fines.**



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