

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

for the Persecuted Church

Persecuted: Not Abandoned



Union of Myanmar

Burma/Myanmar

FACTS

GEOGRAPHY

Area: 678,500 sq. km

Population: 47,758,181

GOVERNMENT

Burma is a military junta whose capital is Rangoon.

The Burmese military has prohibited Christian groups in the city of Yangon from holding prayer meetings in private homes, according to a January 13 2009 report from AsiaNews. The property owners of buildings rented by believers for their worship services were recently handed an order by officials of the Rangoon division Religious Affairs Department, demanding they prohibit these meetings or face the confiscation or closure of their property. Since the government rarely permits religious groups from owning or constructing places of worship, local Christians estimate that the majority of churches will be affected.

Pray for Christ's peace and grace to fill the hearts of Christians affected by these new restrictions. Pray that the bold faith of Christians in Burma will be a light that draws others to Jesus (Matthew 5:14-16).

Myanmar, also called Burma has experienced oppression as one of Asia's poorest countries. Ravaged by a junta bent on keeping power at all costs Burma has yet to taste the democracy it desperately seeks.

Many of Burma's Christians are part of ethnic minorities (northern Chin groups, Lisu, and Karen) who are opposed for ethnic, political, and religious reasons. The minority Karen people are among the most discriminated against in Burma.

Buddhism is strongly entrenched in the Burmese majority; only about five percent of Christians in Burma are converts from Buddhism. Christian sites and graveyards are frequently demolished and replaced with pagodas, often using Christians as forced labour. Christians have been raped, tortured and murdered. In the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis, which devastated the country in early May 2008, Burmese authorities reportedly denied relief aid to several Christians.

There remains little regard for any human rights or freedoms in Burma. The words of Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt, the first secretary of the Junta party, in 1992 sum up the situation in Burma—that under military rule there is essentially "**no law at all.**"

PRAYER POINTS

Pray for the Christians of Burma that they may continue to be protected from harm and that the Gospel may be heard and received by all people

Pray that Burmese Christians will be sustained, kept safe and blessed with faith, peace and the assurance of God's love and presence in their lives

Pray for the protection of the Karen people and other Christian minority groups from the hands of their oppressors

Pray for the authorities that God might open their eyes to the truth

Pray for ministry opportunities for Christians to share their faith with others. Pray that more Buddhists will see their need for a relationship with God through Jesus Christ