



# Refugee Sponsorship Newsletter

*If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.* 1 John 4:1

## Pakistani Christian Refugees

In 2011 religious intolerance was reported to be at its height; hundreds of minorities were being killed by Islamist fundamentalist extremists, while the Government remained mostly a silent spectator, often only making statements which condemned the ruthless acts of violence by the extremists but taking no real concrete action against them.

It is estimated that about 96% of Pakistan's population are Muslim and the remaining 4% are Christian, Hindu and Sikh. Occasionally the deadly tales of Pakistan's religious minorities makes the news in the West. The stories are horrific but they hardly begin to convey the pervasive sense of dread that Pakistan Christians live with on a daily basis.

They are being falsely accused of blasphemy and the worst thing is that it's not only effecting one person or family, but it's affecting all Christians. The problem has become so serious that they are fleeing the country in droves. As many as 10,000 Pakistani Christian are now believed to be living 'under the radar' in Thailand, fending off arrest by Thai police for illegal entry as they cling to the hope of making it through the grueling UNHCR refugee resettlement process.

The tragedy is not simply the scale of human suffering, but the one-sided response of the Pakistani government. In 2013, thousands of enraged Sunni Muslim's rampaged through the Christian neighborhood of Joseph Colony in Lahore, torching over 100 homes after a Christian man was accused of committing "blasphemy" against Islam. In the two years since, not a single individual from the mob has been convicted. Meanwhile the Christian accused of blasphemy, Sawan Masih was arrested and sentenced to death, a penalty that is mandatory by order of the Federal Shariat Court. This example is consistent with a long-running pattern of persecuting religious minorities while allowing those who persecute them to escape justice. Individuals are often murdered by mob violence before they are even convicted of this so-called 'crime'.

The situation of Pakistani Christians in Thailand is intolerable. They are unable to legally work and their children unable to attend school. They lack basic necessities such as shelter, food and security. In September 2015 International Christian Voice reported massive immigration arrest of Pakistani

Christian refugees in Bangkok, Thailand by the Thai police and army. The Thai government considers these persecuted believers as illegal in spite of the fact they're documented registrants with the UNHCR as genuine asylum seekers. Thailand is not a member state of the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention which means the UNHCR is powerless to protect them from arrest. See similar story in request below.

Please review the attached list of profiles for Pakistani Christian refugees. Currently Canadians are focused on sponsoring Syrian refugees but let us not forget the needs of thousands of Christian refugees in many parts of Africa and Asia who are persecuted and desperate for a durable solution.

**"I have set you an example, that you should do as I have done for you."**

**John 13:15**

## URGENT Can You Help?

**1889-1892 (8) Samson** & wife /2 sons /daughter & husband with 2 children. Since 1994 Samson has been very involved in the leadership of the Pakistan Christian Fellowship Church.

People came to his house for prayer, which some Muslims did not like. On returning from Sunday service, four men armed with guns attacked Samson and his son in law Farhan. They accused them of preaching Christianity and threatened to kill them and their family. Farhan and Samson went to the police station to report the incident but the Inspector hurled insults at them, saying "how dare you preach Christianity in our Islamic state" and refusing to help ordered them to leave.

The next day while riding his motorbike Farhan was chased by a car. Farhan and Samson went to the police station but were again refused assistance. On Nov 15/13 the family filed an official complaint in court and a hearing was schedule for the 29th. On the 16th, extremists came to their home

ordering Samson to stop preaching and for the whole family to accept Islam or his house and family would be set on fire. The family went into hiding but less than a month later Samson was again confronted by a man with a gun who knew his name and where he had come from. The family fled to Thailand Dec13.

They are not allowed to work and to avoid detection by Thai police, the family is forced to stay indoors, even going to church is risky. On Jan 15/16 the police raided their apartment building and the family was arrested and taken to the Immigration Detention Centre. Confinement in IDC is extremely difficult and represents the harshest imaginable conditions .

The options for Samson and family are dismal: remain in jail or deportation to Pakistan. They will only be released if they can raise the money for bail. This family is in urgent need of a sponsorship. Confirmation that an application for resettlement has been submitted to Canada may give this family temporary security in Thailand and hope for a safe future. Please pray for this family.

## The Lord has done great things ...



Yusra and children are Syrians who arrived in ON Dec/15



The Yousef family are Syrians who arrived in BC Jan/16



Agwi and Liora were from Cameroon and arrived in BC Oct/15

## The Year in Review

We are very thankful for the faithful partnership of churches who sponsored all but one of the refugees profiled in the Fall Newsletter.

Applications for 111 people were submitted on behalf of 18 churches to Canadian Immigration; 41 Syrians, 32 Iraqis, the remaining 38 were from Eritrea, Congo, Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Egypt.

We thank and praise God for answering the prayers of 22 people who arrived in Canada to begin their new lives with the assistance of their Church sponsors .

Refugees have requested prayers for their safety in countries where it is dangerous to share the gospel and for those who face a daily struggle for basic survival and security.

City of Refuge is recognized by Immigration, Refugee & Citizenship Canada as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder. This allows City of Refuge to submit applications to IRCC for refugees applying through Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugee Program. This ministry is supported by the Federation of Free Reformed Churches Assistance completing applications is provided for free to refugees.

**For more information, contact the coordinator:**  
Heddie Driegen, 778 475 1151 or [refugee.efrc@msn.com](mailto:refugee.efrc@msn.com)

## Would you like to support City of Refuge?

Donations may be sent to the treasurer:

Mr James VanderZwan  
26829 33B Ave  
Aldergrove, BC V4W 3G8