

# Raymond Koh

**Country: Malaysia**

Disappeared: 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017



## Abduction and background

Raymond Koh is a Christian Pastor, married to Susanna, with 3 children: Jonathan, Elizabeth and Esther. Their home is on the outskirts of the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur. Raymond was a very well-known, respected Christian in the country, mainly due to his community work. Alongside his ministry endeavours, Raymond had a compassionate heart to reach out to the poor, single and abused mothers, anyone with addiction issues, and those who had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. In 2004, to assist with this, Susanna and Raymond created a local charity – Hope Community.

However, in 2011, at a Hope Community dinner event, Raymond was confronted by officers from the Selangor Islamic Department. 30 officers raided the event which was being attended mainly by sponsors and others from varying religious backgrounds, with the assumption that the event had the sole purpose of evangelizing Muslims (an illegal act in Malaysia). To intimidate and scare the Kohs, the officers took photographs and videos of those in attendance.

Susanna said, “After that incident, my husband and I received a death threat.” They received mail containing a white powder, which was believed to be anthrax. It didn’t end there. Soon, Pastor Koh was to receive a box containing two bullets and a letter threatening to kill him and his wife. Raymond was undeterred. “He continued, though there was some fear and anxiety,” Susanna said. “He felt that the Lord called him to fulfil the Great Commission, and that means to every tribe, nation and tongue. He does not discriminate, so we just carried on our work with the poor, the needy, the marginalized, and with God’s grace we carried through.”

Finally, on 13th February 2017, like any other day, Raymond said goodbye to Susanna and jumped into his car. This was to be the last time she would ever see him. He disappeared within minutes of leaving home! Eyewitnesses said it was like a scene from a movie. On a public dual-carriageway, during daylight hours, three black SUVs (all with black tinted windows) surrounded Pastor Raymond Koh’s silver car and forced it to the side of the road. Men dressed in black got out of their vehicles, smashed his window and grabbed Pastor Koh, shoving him into one of the SUVs. As the professionally executed abduction was taking place, two additional silver cars sat protectively behind, while other men on motorbikes stopped any approaching cars. The 15 men, and Pastor Koh, were gone in 40 seconds and no one has heard from him since.

When Susanna went to the police station to file a report on her missing husband, they interrogated her about her husband's activities, specifically whether he proselytized Muslims. "It was strange that he wasn't asking me the normal questions you would ask the family of the victim of abduction," she said. Finally, at 3 a.m., Susanna lost her patience with the interrogators. "I am not answering any more questions," she told them. "I have my rights and I am going out there to look for my husband. The important thing for you to do is to go out there and look for my husband."

Susanna believes the Lord had been preparing her husband for the abduction. Pastor Koh had begun taking three-hour prayer walks early in the morning, and he had been memorizing large portions of Scripture. "He would tell me, 'I have just finished memorizing 1 Corinthians 15,'" she recalled. "I was thinking that he is really a great example to follow." He was also physically prepared, as he was in good health and had been playing soccer with teenagers in a league he had started.

Despite these reassurances and the knowledge that Raymond is in God's hands, Susanna has struggled with her husband's absence. "The hardest part is not knowing where he is, what happened to him and how he is doing right now," she said. "Right now my children are going for counselling because this has taken a toll on them physically as well as emotionally and psychologically. But we thank God for the Christian community and also the worldwide church that has been an encouragement to us; they have expressed their support through prayers and sending postcards to us. That really lifts up our spirits and encourages us in many ways." Susanna broke down when we told her that Christians in UK knew about Raymond's abduction and were praying for them.

***"From the beginning, I have decided to forgive them because they know not what they do, and I follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. God really had to deal with me first to forgive them and pray for them, because they need to know the Lord. If there is going to be transformation in Malaysia, there needs to be transformation in the lives of individuals."*** (Susanna Koh)

## Pray:

1. That Pastor Raymond is released immediately.
2. That the whole Koh family will be strong, patient and godly, despite these trials.
3. That Churches in Malaysia will be strong amid sometimes subtle, sometimes visible, oppression and intolerance.
4. That truth, justice and love will prevail.

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**Updated: March 2024**

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