

IDOP 2025 – Testimonies

Testimony 1 – Mohan*

In India, Hindu extremist groups prompted local police to come and arrest Pastor Mohan while he was meeting together with around 50 other Christians in his home. A mob then surrounded the house threatening and provoking the believers.

After his arrest, Mohan was initially released, but he was then accused of forcing people to come to his church, in breach of India's 'anti-conversion' laws.

He was remanded in custody for a month — but he said it felt much longer. The other criminals in the prison bullied him and forced him to do all the menial chores, like mopping the floors and cleaning out the drains.

After a month in prison, Mohan was released and was told by police not to return to his home area. Meanwhile, his court case dragged on. He is regularly summoned to court, and each time there are more court fees to be paid. Mohan said, 'We are under a lot of pressure. We are very stressed.'

Release International's partner in India is providing legal assistance to frontline church leaders like Mohan.



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Testimony 2 – Wang Yi

In China, Pastor Wang Yi is currently serving a nine-year prison sentence because of his Christian work. Back in 2018 he was arrested along with 100 members of his church and was later convicted of ‘inciting subversion of state power.’

The authorities refused to let Wang Yi’s family visit him in prison for three long years, and since his arrest his family and other church members have been closely monitored by the authorities. We know very little about his present condition.

Pastor Wang Yi always knew there was a risk he could be arrested, and he instructed his church to release a statement he had written if that happened. Here is an extract:

‘I hope God uses me... to tell those who have deprived me of my personal freedom that there is an authority higher than their authority, and that there is a freedom that they cannot restrain, a freedom that fills the church of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ.’

Even in prison, Pastor Wang Yi continues to bear witness to God’s power and glory.



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Testimony 3 – Pastor Akashan*

In Sri Lanka Pastor Akashan leads a local church and has trained and nurtured many church workers. However, his ministry is not popular with local residents who have frequently targeted his building. Seven times the church has been set on fire and seven times Pastor Akashan has worked on his own to restore it. Despite the harassment and danger, he continues his ministry.

Pastors in Sri Lanka often face harassment and pressure from the authorities and local residents who want them to stop their Christian meetings. In some parts of the country this opposition comes from Buddhist nationalists, and in other parts from Hindu extremists. Planning permission for new church buildings can be refused without reason and existing buildings are burgled and vandalised.



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