

Saudi Arabia Police Beat, Imprison Indian Christians

Even as the world waits and watches to see if the storms of revolution will hit Saudi Arabia—riot police there arrested protesters on Monday—Christians working in Saudi Arabia are actively suffering for spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Muslim nation.

According to International Christian Concern (ICC), two Indian Christians were arrested and beaten in Batha, Riyadh, then sentenced to 45 days in prison. Vasantha Sekhar and Nese Yohan were accused of proselytizing in the name of Jesus. However, ICC contacts in Saudi Arabia believe the duo was arrested to keep them from practicing Christianity privately in their home.

ICC reports that Sekhar's and Yohan's apartment was ransacked while they sat in prison awaiting trial. One of the men has reportedly lost his job and will be expelled from the country when he is freed from prison. The other is awaiting information about his legal and employment status post-arrest.

"These two Christians have faced false charges and false evidence," says Logan Maurer, ICC Advocacy Director. "The Saudi government continues to engage in an array of severe violations of human rights as part of its repression of freedom of religion."

Indeed, Saudi Arabia has a long history of below-the-radar Christian crackdowns. In 2004, 28 Indian workers were arrested in Messriam for practicing Christianity, according to ICC. The charges were dropped, but in 2010 they were reintroduced. One Christian was deported, and one has been arrested.

In another case, ICC reports 16 Indian workers were arrested in February 2008. The workers were released after three days.

In 2010, eight of the 16 chose to leave Saudi Arabia, but three were issued deportation orders and expelled.