

PROVIDENCE CHURCH Prayer for the Nations

Kazakhstan

General Information

- Population: about 17 million.
- According to the 2009 Census, 70% of the population is Muslim, 26% Christian, 0.1% Buddhists, 0.2% others (mostly Jews), and 3% non-believers, while 0.5% chose not to answer.
- According to its Constitution, Kazakhstan is a secular state.
- One fourth of the population is Russian Orthodox, including ethnic Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians.
- There are over 500 Protestant churches and prayer houses.

Challenges

- Religious freedoms were guaranteed by Article 39 of Kazakhstan's Constitution. Article 39 clearly states: "Human rights and freedoms shall not be restricted in any way." Article 14 prohibits "discrimination on religious basis" and Article 19 insures that everyone has the "right to determine and indicate or not to indicate his/her ethnic, party and religious affiliation." The Constitutional Council recently affirmed these rights by ruling that a proposed law limiting the rights of certain individuals to practice their religion was declared unconstitutional.
- Robert George, The chairman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom stated in 2013: "the harsh application of highly restrictive laws that were adopted two years ago, have damaged Kazakhstan's international standing and resulted in many Kazakh citizens' religious freedoms being violated."
- Although Kazakhstan's religion law does not require religious groups to register to be allowed to function, prosecutors are increasingly relying on an article of the administrative code introduced last year which renders the activity of unregistered religious organizations liable to punishment. Two other Baptist pastors are known to be facing charges for leading unregistered churches.

Prayer

- Pavel Leonov is one of more than 100 people from various faiths in Kazakhstan fined so far this year for offenses such as leading or participating in religious meetings without state permission, sharing their faith with others without being personally registered as missionaries or distributing religious literature away from licensed venues.

Reference

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kazakhstan#Religion>
- <http://baptistcourier.com/2012/02/kazakhstan-heightens-religious-crackdown-2/>