

### Laos: Christians Stand Firm

Fourteen Khmu Christian families in Laos are standing strong in their faith, despite the Communist government forcing them to relocate to another village and their homes and church building being destroyed, according to The Voice of the Martyrs contacts.

In 2003, the families were evicted by the government and relocated to another village where they were moved again. "After these 14 families stayed at this village for a year, the Communist Party members of the village found out that the head of the village loved them," VOM contacts said. "[The village leader] even allowed them to build a bamboo church on his land."

The Communist district governor was not happy with the head of the village. "... [The] governor kicked him out from his post and then replaced [him] with another man. The new head of the village started persecuting them from 2006 to 2009," VOM contacts report. The leader refused to allow them to register, making them illegal residents and he stopped them from farming land, the contacts said.

Only after each family paid 50,000 kip (US\$6) were the 14 families allowed to stay in the village and farm. Locals in the village have also tried to tear down the bamboo church where the families worship. VOM contacts say village officials continually threaten to destroy the church and its bamboo roof has been repeatedly ripped off. VOM has assisted these families with resources to rebuild their homes and church every time they have been displaced. The ministry has helped with zinc roofs, pigs and cattle, among many other things.

In spite of the hardship endured, and the Communist government treating them like second-class citizens, these families remain strong in their faith. "Although this bamboo church has roof tops ripped off, they are still holding worship three times a week with joyful hearts. They love God and are willing to die for their God any time for any cause," VOM contacts said. We encourage you to pray for these courageous families. Ask God to protect them and encourage them. Praise God for their faithfulness.

