

THE KALMYK OF RUSSIA

“We are naming our baby ‘Sarana’,” announced Aldar, standing next to his wife Vera who was busy nursing their newborn. “Oh, you’re giving her a **Kalmyk** name?” asked Aldar’s father, Aleksandr. “Yes,” answered Vera. “I myself grew up with a Russian name instead of a **Kalmyk** one and it is proper that your granddaughter has a proper **Kalmyk** name, just like Aldar here.” Aldar added: “We plan to get her blessed by a Buddhist lama.”

Aleksandr smiled wistfully. How he wished his late parents had lived to see the present day where their people were finally free to embrace their ethnic identity.

400 years ago, the Mongol forces expanded the Mongol Empire further west by invading Eastern Europe. Some of these Mongols settled in southern Russia and became the **Kalmyk** people. During World War II, the Soviet dictator Josef Stalin deported almost the entire **Kalmyk** population to Siberian prison camps, accusing them of collaborating with the invading Germans. Half of those deported died of sicknesses and ill-treatment. The **Kalmyk** were allowed to return in 1957 but their ethnic culture, language and religion were suppressed until in the late 1980s.

The **Kalmyk** today number around 180,000, living mainly in Kalmykia in southern Russia’s lower Volga region. **Kalmyk** culture is being revived. Vajrayana Tibetan Buddhism is also being revived with temples rebuilt and Buddhist lamas being trained. Most **Kalmyk** still profess to be Buddhist though a significant minority is non-religious. Christians number possibly only at 1.0% of the population.

- Pray against the spiritual forces of darkness over the **Kalmyk**.
- Pray that the **Kalmyk** may be set free from the lie that ties their identity with Buddhism. Many also equate Christianity with the dominant Russian majority who have historically inflicted injustices upon them.
- Pray for the missionaries serving the **Kalmyk**, that they may present a Gospel message that is both biblical and culturally-relevant.
- Pray for the few **Kalmyk** believers, that they may remain steadfast in Christ in spite of persecution and ridicule.

This is a series of useful prayer profile compilations to pray for people groups collated from various online sources. Please click on the links below for more info: <https://joshuaproject.net/>, <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/>, <http://asiaharvest.org/people-group-profiles/>