

Prayer for the Persecuted Church

April 20, 2018

Update on Pastor Andrew Brunson

This is a note from Andrew Brunson's wife Noreen

I saw Andrew today and he is not doing well at all. He has barely eaten anything since he was moved to the Aliaga prison (the first prison he was kept at where he was in a cell intended for eight inmates but housed with 22 others) Sunday morning. This is how he started out Monday's 13 hour long hearing (no food and almost no sleep). It was the grace of God that he did so well in his six hours of defense and questioning. He did not get medication at noon and in the evening, so I am not surprised he broke down at the news that he was to be kept at Aliaga. He is in solitary confinement, which is not easy. He does have a Bible. I took books today that I hope will reach him soon. The Lord was there to help him speak amazingly, but where is the Lord as far as bringing comfort to Andrew? I don't understand.

The judge, embassy and even VP Pence's office have requested that he be moved back to the Buca prison until the next hearing. He had one other cellmate there that he had no problems with. I can't understand why the Ministry of Justice has been "evaluating" the request and done nothing about it. Please pray that Andrew be moved as soon as possible, or that the Lord bring some strong comfort and felt grace. It's hard to see him so distraught.

From International Christian Concern
https://pages.e2ma.net/pages/1806612/7648?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=newsbites&utm_campaign=Persecution%20Digest%20Weekly%20Email

Egypt Approves the Legalization of 166 Churches

4/17/18 Egypt (MEM)

A recent statement by the Egyptian cabinet detailed the approval of legal status for 166 churches. In January, the country's housing minister, Mostafa Madbouly, ordered the expedition of the decision process for roughly 3,730 church applications. The cultural climate seems to reflect a change of attitude in respecting the right to practice religious rites.

How to Pray: Pray for continued favor between Egypt's government and believers; praise God for the approved churches. Pray for intervention in the remaining applications, and for Christians in Egypt to be filled with faith, hope, and love as they share the Gospel.

Gov't Shuts off Water at Beijing Church to Force Supervision

4/16/18 China (China Aid)

Beijing requested that Xi'an Church install surveillance cameras, but was refused due to the intrusion to personnel, finance, and administration. As a result, water was cut off and the elevator was out of service at the meeting place in Longbaochen. Electricity may be shut off anytime and many fear that this tactic will be used on other local churches.

How to Pray: Pray for pastors and ministers to have

discernment in how they react, for believers to have boldness as they meet together, and for authorities to experience the love and truth of Jesus Christ.

American Pastor on Trial in Turkey

4/17/18 Turkey (Egypt Independent)

Andrew Brunson, an American pastor who led a Protestant church in Izmir, went on trial in Turkey, charged with engaging in terror-related activities. He is also accused of espionage for political or military purposes and his hearing is scheduled for May 7. The case has intensified the unfavorable relations between Turkey and the United States.

How to Pray: Pray for Pastor Brunson to know God's heart while praying in the midst of this trial, for authorities to know that God is with him, and for the peace of God to reign, bringing true justice and overturning false charges.

Two Killed in Drive-By Shooting in Pakistan

4/16/18 Pakistan (ICC)

Four men on motorbikes opened fire on a group of Christians, marking the third attack by ISIS in Quetta. Those affected were rushed to Bolan Medical Complex where two of the victims died of their injuries. Pastor Simon told ICC, "The Christian community is feeling insecure and threatened." Hundreds gathered to protest the killings and call for greater security.

How to Pray: Pray for the families in the community to experience God's peace while they process the trauma, for protection for the community, and for the authorities to have wisdom in preventing attacks.

Apr. 19, 2018 | India

Pray for Family of Grandmother Killed for Praying in her Home

A family in India is mourning the death of their 65-year-old wife and mother. Subbaravamma used to climb the stairs of her home every evening and kneel to pray for her city. Stone workers in a nearby Hindu temple observed her prayers. One of the workers took offense and attacked the elderly woman to death with a stick on March 21. He beat her so ruthlessly she was unrecognizable. Police arrested the attacker. VOM workers immediately visited her family to encourage them. Subbaravamma leaves behind her husband, and her three adult children and their families. Her husband, 73, is in deep shock. Pray for her family as they mourn.

Apr. 19, 2018 | China

Pray for Believers as Government Passes Restrictions, Bans Online Bible Sales

Pray for Christians in China as the government continues to further restrict Christian activity. In February, churches were ordered to report their religious activities to authorities. In March, the Communist Party disbanded its Religious Affairs Bureau and the Communist Party's Central Committee absorbed the duty of managing religious life in China. In April, the government banned the online sale of Bibles — a setback in a country where printed Bibles were already difficult for many to obtain. President Xi Jinping continues to increase his control over religious life and promote Chinese nationalism. The Communist Party may also be working on a new Bible translation, meant to inject Chinese values into Scriptures. Pray for Christians in China to stand up under the increasing pressure, and pray for those involved in Bible distribution work.

Apr. 19, 2018 | Egypt

Pray for Christian Widow who Resisted Parents' Wishes to Marry a Muslim

A young Christian widow's family tried to force her to get remarried to a Muslim, but instead she chose Jesus. During her first marriage, Muna and her husband secretly converted from Islam. Muna's husband died when their daughter was 8 years old. Muna's family quickly insisted she remarry. They gave her a choice between two Muslim men. As

she agonized over the decision, a speaker on a Christian television program she watched provided godly wisdom. The speaker said believers were not to be unequally yoked and that marriage is a holy covenant with God. "I knew then I must take a stand and trust that God will help me," Muna said. The speaker's words gave Muna the courage to tell her parents she would not remarry and to move out of their home so she and her daughter would have more freedom to worship. Pray for Muna and the many secret believers like her who are ministered to by godly television programs.

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<https://www.opendoorsusa.org>

CHRISTIANS, SETS CHURCHES AND HUTS ABLAZE IN NIGERIA

February 14, 2018 by Open Doors in Africa

According to a recent report from the field, Boko Haram militants killed 6 Christians in an attack in Gitawa in Northern Nigeria on February 4, 2018. The attack lasted until the early hours of Monday, February 5.

This attack is the third since mid-January. On January 15, attackers set two churches and 93 huts ablaze in the villages of Roum and Matchitchia. Two days later, Boko Haram militants descended on Dafidalo where they set four more houses on fire.

This is incredibly difficult time for Christians in the region. Please join us in prayer today for our brothers and sisters in Christ in Northern Nigeria.

- Ask God to comfort the family mem-

bers who lost loved ones in these recent attacks.

- Pray for stability in the region and for the government to increase their protection of Christians in the area.
- Pray for believers in Nigeria to be bold in their faith in the midst of persecution.
- Ask God to give Christians a heart of forgiveness toward their persecutors.

April 20 | LAOS

Authorities in areas in Laos continue to assert their stance against Christianity by intimidating smaller churches. Pray for the brothers and sisters in Laos who have to find creative ways to meet to worship together.

April 21 | BANGLADESH

Please pray for Open Doors' projects and training programs to strengthen the Bangladeshi church in 2018. Pray for the Lord's guidance and protection, and a peaceful national situation.

April 22 | NIGERIA

Praise God alongside Mercy as she has been the recipient of a sewing machine sponsored by Open Doors, which she uses as a source of income for her and her grandfather.

April 23 | CENTRAL ASIA

Continue to pray for Zania.* Her husband, a pastor of an underground church, was arrested in April. Her emotional condition is still not well, as she often cannot find strength to read her Bible or pray, and she continues to suffer physically. Please remember to pray for this sister.

April 24 | ETHIOPIA

Please pray for Amanza,* 20, who decided to follow Christ last May. As a result, her parents abandoned her. Praise God that through her local church, with the help of Open Doors, she is getting basic needs met and being discipled.

April 25 | CHINA

Marah has moved back to her hometown after finishing her biblical training in southern China. She expressed that she is quite lonely sometimes. Pray for her to have patience and comfort. Pray for her ministry to be fruitful.

April 26 | DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Pray for Toby, 13, from the troubled North Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo where the Islamic radical Allied Defense Forces (ADF) has been wreaking havoc among the mostly Christian population.

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/tamil-christians-protest-against-violence-harassment/82101>

Tamil Christians protest against violence, harassment

Police are allegedly ignoring attacks on Christians committed by hard-line Hindu groups in southern India

Thousands of Christians took to the streets during protests across the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu on April 17 to demand government action to stop what they call increasing harassment and violence against Christians.

Some 20,000 Christians from various denominations filled roads in at least 16 cities and towns shouting slogans against government inaction to check anti-Christian activities allegedly carried out by upper-caste Hindu groups.

The Synod of Pentecostal Churches in Tamil Nadu organized the protest as Christians have been subjected to at least 15 cases of violence in the first three months of this year.

Incidents include the mysterious death of a pastor who was found dead a week after he complained to police about harassment from hard-line Hindus.

"We are facing lot of persecution in our state," synod general secretary K.B. Edison told ucanews.com.

"The peaceful protest was to get the attention of the state and federal government about the serious need for security and protection of the Christian minority.

"In the past four years we have faced many challenges. Our churches are being attacked, they are being burned, pastors' lives are under threat. We are not able to bear these atrocities. They are even burning Bibles.

"We have approached the state government several times but disappointingly no action has been taken."

Nehemiah Christie, the synod's director of legislation and regulations, told ucanews.com that both Protestant and Catholic denominations joined the protest.

He said administrative bodies — including the police — have been apathetic to act against violence committed by Hindu groups because of the strong religious and caste biases in the state.

Catholic Father Gregory Rajan of the Infant Jesus Cathedral of Salem supported the protest. “Hindu extremist forces are behind the attacks,” said Father Rajan.

The priest said a lack of strong political leadership in the state remains a major issue. Tamil Nadu is not ruled by the pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). But the local political party — named All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam — which runs the government “is depending on the BJP for policy and advice on the affairs of the state. Naturally, the local Hindu forces feel emboldened to attack Christians,” he said.

Published data shows violence against Christians has increased across India since the BJP came to power in New Delhi in 2014 in a landslide victory. Hindu groups took the BJP’s victory as a mandate to step up violence against religious minorities in their push to establish a nation ruled by a Hindu upper-caste hegemony.

Attacks have been increasing in India, said Persecution Relief, an ecumenical forum that records Christian persecution in India. There were 736 reported attacks against Christians in 2017, up from 348 in 2016, the forum said.

Local Christian leaders say most of their new members come from the lower strata of the caste-ridden Tamil society. Higher-caste people oppose any Christian gatherings because they believe they pollute their area.

Higher-caste people also believe those in economically and socially poor castes can be attacked and harassed with impunity, Christie said.

He said their protest program was supported by some mainstream political parties such as the Communist Party of India and some Buddhist and Muslim leaders in the state.

“It is an assurance that they will stand by us to ensure that the constitutional rights of minorities be protected,” Christie said.

“Our demands are very simple. Growing violence against Christians and police complicity are matters of deep concern. We want the government to act to end all forms of fascist aggression against Christians and to uphold the rule of law.”

Christians are the largest minority in the state, forming 4.5 million or some 6 percent of its 72 million people. A majority of them — plus the state’s 4.2 million Muslims — come from castes considered low in the social hierarchy.