



Prayer for the Persecuted Church for July 26, 2024

Prayer for the Persecuted Church: Our Best Practices

Our focus in this hour is on prayer for the global church, not ourselves or our local issues. We can talk and even pray for those other things after prayer meeting is over at 1:00 p.m.

We strive to start our prayers by 12:10.

We are blessed to have a growing number of praying people join us. Let's all offer short prayers throughout our prayer time, allowing time for everyone to pray out loud if they wish. We are blessed by prayers when we can hear them, but silent prayers from our people are as valued as spoken ones.

Thank you for praying for the persecuted church. Encourage friends to pray, too!

Pray for imprisoned or kidnapped Christians

CHRISTIANS IN PRISON: This list is only a sample: CAMBODIA: Theary Seng; CHINA: Li Jie, Hang Xiaodong, Wang Qiang; John Cao, Yan Hwa, Goa Zhisheng, Wang Yi; Hao Zhiwei, Zhang Shaojie, Li Juncai, Lian Xu Liang; ERITREA: Meron Gebreselasie, Mussia Ezas, Dr. Kifly Gebremeskel, Kidane Weldou, Haile Nayzgi; INDIA: Pastor Sawan; KAZAKHSTAN: Pastor Maximov; NORTH KOREA: Zhang Wen Shi PAKISTAN: Zafar Bhatti; VIETNAM: Nguyen Nang Tinh, Nguyen Trung Ton

KIDNAPPED VICTIMS: Raymond Koh, Gilbert Biswas, Leah Sharibu, Sarah Atef, Joshua Hilmya & wife Ruth Sitepu, Hormoz Diril.

From International Christian Concern

Christians Threatened, Attacked Three Times in Two Weeks

07/21/2024 India (ICC)

Three times this month, Hindu nationalists have threatened or attacked Christians in the same area of central India. One of the incidents involved an International Christian Concern staffer. While some of the incidents passed without escalating, others resulted in injuries and property destruction. Following these incidents, police are investigating the attacks.

- *HOW TO PRAY: Pray for healing for all those who were injured.*
- *Pray for protection for those facing ongoing threats.*
- *Pray for Hindu nationalists across India to come to know the love of Christ.*

Indonesian Church Finally Obtains Permit After 24 Years

07/17/2024 Indonesia (ICC)

After 24 years of waiting to obtain a permit to build a church, the HKBP Binjai Baru Church has received a permit. For more than two decades, the HKBP Binjai Baru congregation has worshiped in a makeshift structure with a dirt floor and a tin roof. Though the congregation purchased land in the early 2000s, opposition from the community had prevented the church from securing a building permit.

- *HOW TO PRAY: Pray for this church to spread the gospel effectively in its community.*
- *Praise God for this step toward religious freedom.*
- *Pray for permits to be granted to congregations in similar situation.*

72 Christians Jailed or Missing in 4 Communist Countries

07/19/2024 Global (ICC)

According to an ICC analysis, at least 72 Christians are either imprisoned or missing in four of the world's five communist countries. This finding further highlights the scope of persecution that Christians face while living under communist regimes. Using data from USCIRF, ICC learned that 52 Christians are currently imprisoned in China, Cuba, North Korea, and Vietnam, with 20 more missing.

- *HOW TO PRAY: Pray for the safe return of these prisoners.*
- *Pray for them to shine the light of Christ while they are behind bars.*
- *Pray for peace and comfort for their families during this time.*

Vietnamese Christian Activist's Extradition Hearing Postponed

07/16/2024 Thailand (ICC)

Vietnamese Christian activist Y Quynh Bdap, who has been in Thailand since 2018, had his hearing for his extradition to Vietnam postponed until August. In January, a Vietnamese court convicted the co-founder of the Montagnards Stand for Justice group of terrorism for "organizing anti-government riots in Vietnam's central highland province of Dak Lak," according to the Associated Press.

- *HOW TO PRAY: Pray for justice to be done in Y Quynh Bdap's case.*
- *Pray for protection for Christian activists across Southeast Asia.*
- *Pray for greater religious freedom in Vietnam and Thailand.*

Churches Face New Restrictions

Christians in Tunisia are finding it harder to gather and worship the Lord together. Front-line workers say the Tunisian government has banned Christians from meeting in hotels or other public gathering places without official pre-approval. "Only foreigners and officially registered NGOs [non-governmental organizations] are allowed to meet in those facilities," said a front-line worker. The worker added that one church leader has been harassed and "can no longer lead weekly services on Wednesdays and Saturdays." Since the Arab Spring uprising, which began in Tunisia, the country has grown increasingly democratic; the Tunisian government became the first in North Africa to enact religious freedom reforms. The current government, however, seems to be reversing many of those policies.

from Voice of the Martyrs

GLOBAL PRAYER GUIDE

CUBA

OVERVIEW:

Despite the change in leadership in 2018, churches in Cuba face unrelenting pressure from the government, which remains committed to communism's atheistic ideology and views churches as a threat to the revolution begun by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro in the 1950s. Cubans are poor, and the government seeks to control every aspect of their lives. In April 2021, Miguel Diaz-Canel was announced as Raul Castro's successor as first secretary of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party — the first time the country has been governed by someone other than a Castro since the revolution. Then in July 2021, Cubans protested their deteriorating living conditions and called for an end to dictatorship.

MAJOR RELIGION:

Most Cubans are atheists. A significant number of Cubans engage in superstitious and spiritist practices, including the Afro-Cuban religion of Santeria.

PERSECUTOR:

The government persecutes Christians.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN CUBA:

Unlike the overt violence Christians faced during the Communist Cuban Revolution, more subtle methods of persecution are now used by the Cuban government, largely out of concern for its global reputation. Christian leaders are often summoned by government officials for questioning or detained up to 48 hours to pressure them, and churches are demolished by hired gangs so the government can deny responsibility. Legal church buildings are seized, and no new church buildings have been legally built in the country since the revolution. Many believers meet in illegal house churches, often extensions of the pastor's home or shaded structures in the backyard of a family's home. Churches continue to grow through active evangelistic activity, but some believers have never owned a Bible because of government oppression. Though no Christians are known to be imprisoned in Cuba, many are closely watched and are effectively under house arrest. In addition, Christians are often denied jobs and educational opportunities.

ACCESS TO BIBLES:

Though great strides have been made in Bible distribution, access remains restricted. In 2017, Cuba allowed the purchase and sale of Bibles only to members of the ecumenical Protestant church organization, but most Christian literature remains illegal. There are no Christian bookstores in Cuba. There is a shortage of Bibles, which even when available can cost a third of a worker's monthly income. Give Bibles

VOM WORK:

VOM distributes Bibles and supports discipleship and evangelism. One of the most effective ways VOM supports persecuted Christians is through a vast prayer network.

Public prayer, which embarrasses the Cuban government before the world, has led to the release of some detained pastors.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- *Pray for the believers who will receive Bibles this year.*
- *Pray that those opposed to the gospel will be powerless to stop its advance.*
- *Pray that churches closed by civil authorities will be allowed to reopen.*
- *Pray for Christians who are held for interrogation, harassed or fined.*
- *Pray for successful Bible distributions, which are difficult and often illegal.*
- *Pray for church leaders, pastors and Christians facing government harassment.*
- *Pray for persecutors within the Communist Party who attack and hate the church.*

From Mission Eurasia

Dear Prayer Partners,

Throughout this month, our national leaders in **Mongolia** are working to host over a dozen children's Bible camps across their nation. Please pray for their teamwork and success in this ministry. Pray for more than 1,000 Mongolian children who are expected to hear about Jesus through these camps.

The Central Asian country of **Kyrgyzstan** presents our colleagues with various, distinct challenges. These colleagues are asking for your prayers for an urgent concern that was not foreseen. Please pray for the health of two national, women leaders who have recently been diagnosed with cancer. Please pray for their rapid and complete healing, and for the comfort of their families and loved ones.

Mission Eurasia continues to bring the gospel to many **remote places in the former Soviet Union**. In Russia alone, there are roughly 140 distinct, unreached people groups, many of whom adhere to Islam, Buddhism, or paganism. Please pray

for our national leaders in Russia who train other young national leaders to reach these spiritually difficult places, and for many people in Russia to come to know the Lord and be saved.

In the latter half of this year, our national leaders in the nation of **Belarus** plan to open new School Without Walls (SWW) centers for leadership training. Please pray for the work and logistics that are necessary to establish these centers, and please pray that they would prove fruitful for the advance of the gospel in Belarus. Pray for the leadership, teachers, and students who will be involved in these new centers.

From Open Doors

Global Prayer Calendar

July 26

Pray that others would see their witness and come to faith. Ask God to provide for the family's needs and make a way to finish the construction.

Iran

July 27

Pray with Laleh Saati, an Iranian Christian convert who was baptized in Malaysia while she was awaiting asylum. After returning to Iran to see her elderly parents, she was sentenced to two years in prison.

July 28

During Laleh's interrogation, photos of her baptism in Malaysia were submitted as evidence of her "crime." Ask God to protect Iranian Christians who have fled to other countries.

July 29

Pray with Laleh and her family. She was taken to Ward 209 of Iran's notoriously inhumane Evin Prison. God, keep Laleh from harm and reveal Yourself to her in unimaginable ways.

July 30

Pray with our sister Simin, a former house church leader in Iran before she fled for her life to another country. Ask God to guide their lives.

July 31

Simin participated in Open Doors' discipleship training. Now she teaches the Bible to women in Iran online, preparing them to lead house churches. Pray that God would increase her impact

North Korea

August 1

We recently received messages from North Korean Christians. One believer shared: "Our ministry is difficult, but God has given us this task." Pray for God's strength in their lives.

August 2

Pray with Yun Hee*, the leader of an Open Doors safehouse in China where North Korean refugees can stay. Pray for protection in this critical role.

from Barnabas Aid

Global Prayer Guide

FRIDAY 26

Cousins Asif Masih, 25, and Shan Masih, 28, suffocated on 17 March after inhaling poisonous gases while attempting to clear a blockage in a sewer in Faisalabad, Pakistan. The cousins' deaths were described as "murders through duty," as they were forced to enter the sewer without being given protective gear. This is despite a 2015 court order requiring local authorities to ensure protective gear is provided. Marginalized Christians in Muslim-majority Pakistan often work the lowest-paid, dirtiest and most dangerous jobs, often without proper protective equipment. This has meant that many have died or suffered serious and disabling injuries or health problems. Pray that the families of July/August 2024 8 Asif and Shah are comforted, and that conditions improve for Christian workers in Pakistan.

SATURDAY 27

"All praise to God for this wonderful opportunity!" exclaimed "Priya", a South Asian student at The Shepherd's Academy (TSA) - the undergraduate section of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Public Life (OCRPL). She is one of the cohort of Tamil speakers benefitting from following courses in

their own language, and particularly praised the energetic and engaging teaching style that provided learners with profound insights and practical applications, as well as excellent technical support. The TSA courses are the first of their kind made available to Tamil speakers with limited resources. Give thanks for the opportunities given to the Tamil Christian community and pray that more students will be thoroughly equipped for Christian ministry.

SUNDAY 28

Father God, we pray for Christians in Afghanistan, and those returning to the country, who often face intense persecution because of their faith. We pray for any Christian converts who have come from a Muslim background, who live in hiding under the threat of a death sentence. Please help them and protect them in the situation they are living in – often destitute and unable to make a living. We pray that You will help all our brothers and sisters remain steadfast against the demands of a world around them that would pressure them to deny their faith. In Jesus' Name we pray. M r faith. In Jesus' Name we pray.

MONDAY 29

“When the relief material from our Christian brothers and sisters arrived, it was like a miracle,” said Samana, a Christian mother whose home in a remote, mountainous area of western Nepal was destroyed in an earthquake in November, 2023. Food and other practical aid funded by Barnabas supporters “strengthened our faith in God’s goodness and mercy”, she added. Give thanks that our partners were able to deliver food, blankets and warm children’s clothing to Christians in need, despite destruction caused to mountain roads and tracks by the earthquake.

TUESDAY 30

At least 20 churches were reduced to rubble by a powerful earthquake in a poor and remote, mountainous region of western Nepal in November, 2023. The local authorities and government will not provide for Church reconstruction or repair as Christianity is viewed by many as an “alien faith” that does not belong in Nepal. Pray that, by God’s grace,

the churches will be able to reconstruct their buildings. Give thanks for the steadfast faith of the small, but growing Christian community in Nepal, whose hearts are full of love for the Lord (Ephesians 3:17).

WEDNESDAY 31

Four Christians in Madhesh province, eastern Nepal, face trial, accused of trying to secure forced conversions to Christianity. On April 3 they were required to submit bail of 150,000 Nepali rupees (\$1,130) at the district court in Bara. After the Christians visited a house in Kolhabi on Sunday, March 10, several local residents summoned the police, alleging that the Christians were attempting to convert locals by force. July/August 2024 9 Seven Australian Christians in the town were detained and subsequently deported. Meanwhile, the four Nepali Christians spent 24 days in custody before being bailed. Pray that justice will prevail and that any unfounded accusations of forced conversion will be dismissed.

August

THURSDAY 1

Since its inception in June, 2021, food.gives – a project of Barnabas Aid – has sent 173 containers of food and medical supplies to sick and hungry believers around the world. Since the start of 2024, we have provided 3,500,000 servings of food. Often these servings are life-saving. Give thanks to God that we have been able to help so many hungry Christians through the continued generosity of our supporters. Ask that He will enable us to continue to provide these vital resources to our brothers and sisters.

Prayer Requests from Help the Persecuted

MARIAM, EGYPT

Mariam has been kidnapped by an extremist group who is attempting to force her to become a Muslim. We do not know where she is, and her family is overwhelmed. They have searched all hospitals and police stations for her and are crying out to the Lord to bring Mariam home.

- *Dear Lord, please bring Mariam comfort wherever she is. Please make a way for her to escape so that she can return to her family and so that their grief will end. We ask that You would please intervene and put an end to the evil extremism that is separating families and bringing so much devastation.*

PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS IN IRAN

Many Afghans forced to flee their country after the Taliban's takeover sought refuge in Iran. Among them are Christians who have not been granted identification documents by the Iranian government. This has led to extremely challenging conditions for them, as they cannot access medical care or education for their children.

Isamil was arrested at his residence by the Iranian Intelligence Service. He has contacted his family twice, but they don't know where he is. This difficult situation has happened to many Iranian believers who remain unable to communicate with their family members.

Mina is in poor health, persecuted, and imprisoned in Iran because of her faith in Jesus Christ. She has been sentenced to two years in prison and banned from leaving the country. She is not in good mental condition and is being denied the medical supervision she needs.

- *Dear Lord, please bring comfort to every Christian in Iran who is being persecuted because of their faith in You. Please make a way for Mina and Isamil to be released from prison, and please help the Afghans who sought refuge in Iran to find a path to security and peace. Please surround them with Your love and give them strength.*

THOSE FACING PERSECUTION FROM THEIR OWN FAMILIES

In Morocco, there are several believers who

are facing persecution in their own homes.

- Ahmed and Amina are fearful of sharing the gospel with their family and friends, as it would mean risking severe persecution and abandonment.
- Youness's wife is preventing him from studying the Bible or praying, and his landlord is threatening to evict him.
- Anas's father surveilles him, threatening to evict him if he doesn't renounce his faith soon.
- Finally, Samira was immediately imprisoned at home, persecuted, and disgraced by her parents when they discovered her faith in Christ.

In the neighboring country Algeria, many believers are finding themselves in similar situations as well.

- Ali's son discovered Ali's faith and is demanding that he leave his home.
- Naeem's wife left him because of his faith, and now she is refusing to live with him unless he returns to Islam.
- Abed is the only Christian in his family, and his wife is demanding that he leave the house, threatening him to force him to bless their daughter's marriage to a Muslim man.
- Aya's husband left her when he found out about her faith and married another woman.
- *Dear Lord, please minister to each of these brave believers: Ahmed, Amina, Youness, Anas, Samira, Ali, Naeem, Abed, and Aya. Please comfort them as they face the loss of their own families, reminding them that they have an eternal family in the Church. Please remind them of Your deep love for them.*

ANSWERED PRAYERS

ESSAM'S NEW LIVELIHOOD

Essam was born into a devout Muslim family in Egypt. He rejected extremism but soon turned to drugs. One day, a man gave him a

Bible, and he began to have a recurring dream that he was breaking a cross. He went to a sheik for help, but he said that he needed a Christian priest to stop the dream. He met a priest who gave him another Bible to learn more about the cross, but he kept having the dream.

One day, he met a Christian in a café who shared about how Jesus had freed him from his own addiction. He began to meet with the man, who invited him to church meetings. When he went, Essam felt something new stirring in his heart.

His family persecuted him as he continued to explore Christianity. His father followed him to the church meeting and warned him not to go. When Essam refused, his father fired him from the family workshop.

Overwhelmed, Essam decided to revert back to Islam and spent long periods of time in the mosque. One day, he fell asleep and dreamed of a flock of sheep. When one strayed, the shepherd reached out, lifted it, and carried it on his shoulders. Essam went to the friend who had told him about Jesus in the café that day, learned about how Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and gave his heart to Christ.

In return, his family forced him to give up all his inheritance rights and kicked him out. His uncles and cousins threatened to kill him. He fled and lived in secret for a few years, but then his parents found him, and he had to flee for his life a second time. Then, in response to complaints from his family, the authorities forced him to return to his hometown. He lived in a safe house until he could find a place of his own away from his family.

When our team met Essam, he shared about his talent for working in electrical maintenance, and we helped him create a business plan for his own installation and air conditioning company. He found a place to rent a building, and, with your support, we provided seed funding to help him get started! After so much persecution and loss for the sake of Christ, Essam is now on a path to independence and hope. Thank you for your prayers and giving that made his story possible.

- *Dear Lord, we thank You for the journey You have guided Essam through, leading him from darkness into Your marvelous light. We praise You for transforming his life and revealing Your love and truth to him. We ask that You surround him with Your protection and peace and bless his new business!*

from International Christian Concern

A Silent Slaughter: The Ongoing Persecution of Christians in Nigeria

7/23/2024 Nigeria (International Christian Concern) — During the past week, Islamic Fulani extremists have killed numerous Christians in North Central Nigeria, particularly in Benue and Plateau states. The militants even killed a Fulani leader advocating for peace. Bandits in the Northwest persist in abducting Christians and preventing them from farming.

Targeting Christian Farmers in Benue State

On Sunday, July 14, suspected Fulani extremists launched attacks on Benue communities, killing 13 Christian farmers. In the village of Egwuma in Agatu, 12 individuals were killed, with another fatality in Gwer West County. Local reports indicate that one displaced person was injured, and five others are missing.

Godwin Edoh, a lawmaker representing the Agatu state constituency, highlighted the ongoing violence in these areas, refuting claims of returning peace and the safe return of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Jacob Terna, a former IDP camp manager, reported additional attacks on displaced individuals, resulting in one death, one injury, and five missing persons. The state police confirmed five deaths in Agatu but were unaware of the incident in Agagbe, Gwer West.

“International Christian Concern (ICC) urges Nigerian authorities to thoroughly investigate and address these security

concerns to ensure the safety of the affected Christian communities,” an ICC staffer said. “Continued assistance to IDPs and affected persons is crucial.”

Assassination of a Peace Advocate in Plateau State

On Thursday, July 18, Yakubu Muhammad, a prominent member of the 17-man Peace Implementation Committee of Irigwe/Fulani-Bassa County, was assassinated in Jebbu-Bassa. He was an active member of the committee and the leader of the Fulani Youth, providing intelligence to security officials and Christian leaders to help prevent attacks on Christian communities in Bassa County, Plateau state.

Muhammad’s murder, which some believe was conducted by Islamic Fulani extremists, underscores the dangers faced by peace advocates and raises urgent concerns about the safety and security of all peace advocates in Irigwe/Fulani-Bassa and beyond.

Kidnappings in Southern Kaduna

In addition to Islamic Fulani extremist attacks, Christians in Southern Kaduna also face kidnappings by bandits targeting Christians for ransom. Recently, 57 Christians were abducted, and 11 were killed after failing to pay ransom. These incidents have severely disrupted community life, particularly farming and church activities.

“International Christian Concern (ICC) calls for the Kaduna state government to investigate these abductions thoroughly and ensure justice for the victims,” an ICC staffer said. “Psychological support for affected individuals and families is also crucial.”