



Prayer for the Persecuted Church for October 11, 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, Yan Hwa, Goa Zhisheng, Wang Yi; Hao Zhiwei, Zhang Shaojie, Li Juncai, Lian Xu Liang; ERITREA: Mussia Ezas, Dr. Kify Gebremeskel, Kidane Weldou, Haile Nayzgi; INDIA: Sarju Prasad, 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 Voice of the Martyrs

GLOBAL PRAYER GUIDE

ISRAEL (INCLUDING THE WEST BANK AND GAZA)

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION IN ISRAEL (INCLUDING THE WEST BANK AND GAZA)

OVERVIEW:

The decades-long conflict between the Israeli government and Palestinian authorities over the city of Jerusalem, the temple, the land and the status of Palestinian refugees remains among the world's most volatile issues. During this conflict, both Jews and Muslims have been coming to faith in Christ despite their religions' instructions to reject Christ as Lord and Savior. Christian activity is routinely opposed by Islamists among the Palestinian Arab populations of the West Bank and Gaza, and occasionally opposed by ultra-Orthodox and other anti-missionary Jews in

Israel proper. Despite this opposition, some churches include both Jews who have accepted Christ as the Messiah and Arabs who have left Islam and placed their faith in Jesus. Active ministry efforts among both groups involve Bible distribution, discipleship, evangelism, church planting and theological education. The Palestinian Authority maintains some control over the West Bank under Israeli federal authority, while the militant Muslim group Hamas controls the Gaza Strip. Both groups are adamantly opposed to Christian activity and indoctrinate their populace to hate the West, Jews and Christians.

MAJOR RELIGION:

The two major religions in Israel are Judaism and Sunni Islam, with Christians composing a 2 percent minority.

PERSECUTOR:

In Muslim regions, Christian converts from Islam face severe persecution from their families, society, Palestinian government

authorities and Hamas. In Jewish communities, Jews who follow Christ risk rejection, social pressure and occasional violence from ultra-Orthodox Jews and organized anti-missionary groups.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN ISRAEL (INCLUDING THE WEST BANK AND GAZA)

Christian converts from Islam in the West Bank and Gaza face violence at the hands of their family members and local governments, which are run by the Palestinian authorities. Christians in Israel proper often experience family rejection, low social standing and limited hope of job advancement. Jewish anti-missionary groups, especially Yad L'Achim, sometimes protest outside churches, cursing Christians and vandalizing their buildings. The anti-missionary activities have at times included violence against Christians.

ACCESS TO BIBLES:

Bible societies operate in Israel, including the areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. Christians have access to Bibles throughout the country, though they are dangerous for Christians or seekers to possess in Islamist-controlled areas.

VOM WORK:

VOM supports front-line workers in key regions, supports training for local churches and helps with Bible distributions. We also provide legal aid for Messianic (Christian) Jews who are harassed or deprived of their legal rights.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- *Pray for Messianic congregations that have been increasingly targeted by anti-missionary groups.*
- *Pray for Christian families in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip who face continual pressure.*
- *Pray for Christian converts from Islam in Palestinian areas, especially those who have lost jobs.*

- *Pray for young believers from Orthodox Jewish backgrounds trying to restart their lives with little education.*
- *Pray for African congregations and other ethnic churches that face discrimination.*

From International Christian Concern

11 Female Evangelists Arrested on False Charges of Forced Conversions

10/7/2024 India — Eleven Christian women evangelists from Hyderabad, along with seven other local Christian men and women, were arrested and arraigned on false charges of trying to forcefully convert school children in Bhagwanpur, Bihar. Police also impounded three cars used by the evangelists.

The 11 women had come from the southern states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and were doing personal evangelism in the villages.

In one of the villages, the gospel preachers entered a school and, with permission from the school's principal, distributed gospel books and New Testaments to the children. As they were exiting the school, Hindu nationalists stopped the women and questioned their motives. As tensions increased, the Hindus called in the police.

- *How to Pray: Pray that the 11 evangelists and other believers will remain firm in their faith as they fight the false charges made against them.*
- *Pray that the youth who heard the gospel, as well as their families, would read the books they received and seek to learn more about Jesus.*
- *Pray for justice, truth, and mercy to prevail in the court cases of our faithful brothers and sisters in Christ.*

Thai Court Orders Extradition of Christian Activist to Vietnam

10/2/2024 Thailand/Vietnam — A Thai court ordered Christian activist Y Quynh Bdap, co-founder of advocacy group Montagnards Stand for Justice, to be extradited to Vietnam to face charges for alleged terrorist and anti-Communist government activities related to protests in June 2023 in Vietnam.

The Vietnamese government made the unusual extradition request to Thai officials even though Bdap was not in Vietnam during the protests in question. He has been in Thailand since 2018, seeking asylum and resettlement. Bdap's lawyer is appealing the court ruling.

"Bdap's case is hugely important because if he is extradited, he will almost certainly face violence and more persecution in Vietnam," an ICC staffer said.

- *How to Pray: Pray for justice, truth, and mercy to prevail in Bdap's case in Vietnam.*
- *Pray that the judge finds him innocent and dismisses the case against him.*
- *Pray that Bdap's faith is a light to all who are following his case and that more people in Thailand and Vietnam will examine the claims of Christianity as a result of his faithfulness in the face of persecution.*

Surviving the Unthinkable

10/4/2024 DRC — Eleven-year-old Esther is one of nine children in her family, which lives in a rural farming village in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). On January 5, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) attacked her village and started shooting indiscriminately, killing many. The rebels then abducted Esther, along with her mother, father, and three other relatives.

While in the forest, the ADF sexually abused and raped Esther and her mother. Esther,

who was badly wounded, needed urgent medical treatment.

"It is a pity for me to see that this has happened to us, and more especially my daughter whom these enemies of peace have abused," Esther's father said. "I don't know what to say. I'm praying that the Lord shall forgive them."

- *How to Pray: Pray for Esther and each member of her family to be fully healed and restored from all that they suffered through and lost in the ADF attack.*
- *Pray that they will continue to have their needs met and will be able to testify to God's faithfulness and goodness despite all they've endured.*

Muslim Doctor Denies Elderly Christian Medical Care

10/4/2024 Pakistan — When Yousaf Masih Gill first met with the doctor assigned to care for his gravely ill father at Civil Hospital of Sahiwal in Punjab, Pakistan, he found the physician's words chilling.

"If I had known earlier that you are a Christian, I would not have touched your father," the Muslim physician reportedly told Gill on Tuesday.

The physician eventually told the family he would not perform the critical surgery the father needed. After a member of the family publicly protested the hospital's rejection of their father, a hospital manager apologized to the family and said their loved one would receive the surgery he needed.

- *How to Pray: Pray that our brother in Christ receives the surgery he needs, that it successfully alleviates his pain, and that he experiences complete healing.*
- *Pray for the physician who denied him care to experience forgiveness and come to know Jesus. Pray for the*

hospital to enact better standards of care, so nobody else is ever denied care for their faith in Christ.

From Mission Eurasia

Preparations are being made for upcoming School Without Walls (SWW) enrollment and study groups in the country of **Belarus**. In this spiritually difficult region, with war in bordering Ukraine and geopolitical instability at home, our national leaders in Belarus are asking for your continued prayers.

- *Pray for the SWW season coming soon, for the students and instructors throughout Belarus, and for the growth of the gospel here.*

In Acts 14:22, Paul and Barnabas say, “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.” Every believer must face these hardships in his or her life, and our national leaders in **Ukraine** are feeling this burden particularly heavily with the continuing, heavy artillery shelling. As their country carries on into the third year of war against Russia, our colleagues ask you to pray for their encouragement.

- *Pray for them to find fresh faith and renewed strength as they continue striving to serve and reach those around them with the gospel of hope.*

The Lord has brought new believers into His Kingdom over this past summer in **Kyrgyzstan**. Through our summer Bible camps, and other projects, new Christians have heard the gospel and believed in Christ.

- *Please join us in praying for these new brothers and sisters, that they would grow in their faith in Christ, and that those whom the Lord wills would take up the mantle of ministry leadership and outreach among their countrymen.*

Mission Eurasia’s ongoing, tireless efforts to reach the young people of Eurasia with the gospel present many needs for our national leaders. In **Moldova**, our new SWW coordinator, Sergey, has recently joined our colleagues in meeting these needs!

- *Pray for Sergey as he brings his talents and labors to the team, and that many young people in Moldova would be blessed by God’s work through him. Pray for Moldova to be blessed with renewed faith in Christ after many decades of Soviet repression!.*

Open Doors Prayer Calendar

Sudan

October 11

- *Pray for those who are displaced and are discriminated against, that they would find a way to get access to safety and emergency relief aid.*

October 12

- *Pray for Kodi*, a 24-year-old Bible student who brings the gospel to his community on a motorbike that supporters provided.*

October 13

- *Pray for his ministry and his education. Praise God for this blessing. Before, Kodi* walked three hours to attend Bible college. Now he can travel quickly and teach the Bible.*

October 14

- *Kodi also brings Bibles to the people he’s discipling. Pray for his protection as he carries the Word of God to people who have never before held a Bible.*

Pakistan

October 15

- *Pray for Christians in Pakistan who every day live with the knowledge they or a loved one could be accused of blasphemy against Islam and attacked by enraged mobs.*

October 16

- *Pray that Christians would be protected from accusations of blasphemy and mob attacks. Ask God to keep them under His wings (Psalms 91:4).*

October 17

- *Recently, a Christian man, Nazir Masih, was falsely accused in Punjab province and fatally wounded by mob beatings outside his home. Pray for comfort and peace for his grieving family.*

News from International Christian Concern

U.S. Government Commission Finds Worsening Persecution in India Amid Elections

10/9/2024 India (International Christian Concern) — A special mid-year report from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) released last week found that persecution in India has continued to worsen throughout 2024, with government actions and mob violence combining to restrict the rights of religious minorities across the country.

“The Indian government continues to repress and restrict religious communities through the enforcement of discriminatory legislation,” USCIRF stated in the report. “Indian officials have repeatedly employed hateful and derogatory rhetoric and misinformation to perpetuate false narratives about religious minorities, inciting widespread violence, lynchings, and demolition of places of worship.”

The report came during a three-part election in India’s northern Jammu and Kashmir area. This Muslim-majority region has experienced many years of political and religious tensions with the Hindu-dominated central government. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, leader of the Hindu nationalist BJP party, stripped Jammu and Kashmir of its statehood and reorganized it as two union territories directly under the central government’s control.

Results from the election were announced earlier this week, with the BJP handed a surprising defeat and a coalition of the National Conference and National Congress parties taking control of the local legislature. Still, the BJP-led national government will maintain much control over the area through its centrally appointed governor.

The central government’s control of the affairs of religious minority communities is, unfortunately, an increasingly common trend in Indian politics. The implementation of the discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act — which strips many religious minorities of citizenship — is a particularly influential example. Still, others abound as well, including the erection of a Hindu temple on the site of a destroyed mosque in Ayodhya.

Modi has long promised to implement a Uniform Civil Code, which would overrule religious traditions on family and personal matters. While his ability to accomplish these goals was tempered by a surprisingly tepid performance in national elections earlier this year, the threat of these policies remains as Modi settles into his third term as prime minister.

While these laws and others have targeted many non-Hindus, religious repression in India typically focuses initially on the country’s Muslim population, India’s largest religious minority population at 14%, before targeting Christians, which make up the second-largest religious minority population at about 2.3% of the population, according to official estimates. Many believe the Christian population is much higher than the government’s stated estimates.

In an example of this pattern, Hindu mobs have targeted Muslim communities in mass uprisings that killed hundreds. Riots that

occurred decades ago, like the 2002 uprising in Gujarat when Modi was chief minister of the state, typically didn't attack Christians. Today, however, these types of mass uprisings target Christians as well, with Christians in areas like Chhattisgarh and Manipur now the victims of regional violence.

How effectively an electorally reduced Modi will be able to continue his nationalist persecution of Christians remains to be seen, but conditions remain grim for religious minority communities across India.

From Barnabas Aid

Christian Convert Released After Nearly Five Years in Iranian Prison

October 1, 2024

An Iranian Christian convert from Islam has been released from a 10-year prison term after a Tehran appeal court decided to reduce his sentence.

Mehdi Akbari, known as Yasser, was released on Sunday, September 29, after his sentence was reduced to four years and five months. Yasser had already served four years and nine months.

Yasser was sentenced in November 2020 along with three other Christians under the same charge of "acting against national security by forming a house church."

Yasser Akbari was originally given a 10-year sentence in 2020. [Image credit: Article 18]

During his imprisonment Yasser, who was a single parent, learned of the death of his only son, 18-year-old Amir Ali. Yasser was informed too late to attend the funeral of Amir Ali, who died in December 2021 from underlying health issues in a care facility where he had lived during his father's incarceration.

Yasser was met outside prison on the afternoon of September 29 by his family and friend and fellow Christian convert, Mehdi Rokhparvar, one of the three believers with whom he was initially sentenced. Mehdi was himself released from prison in February, 2023.

Yasser's release comes five days after that of pastor Anooshavan Avedian, another Iranian Christian who had been serving a 10-year sentence, who was acquitted by the same court of appeal (Branch 21) on September 24.

During his time in prison, Yasser made five applications for a retrial. He was rejected four times, but his fifth application in April, 2024, was accepted, a decision that led to the reduction in his term and subsequent release.

- *Give thanks for Yasser's release. Pray that he will recover from the ordeal experienced and know God's guidance as he adjusts to life outside prison again.*
- *Pray that other Christians imprisoned in Iran on charges of threatening national security will also be set free.*

Lebanon: Christians in Crisis

October 4, 2024

"This crisis is one of the heaviest we have experienced so far." This is the assessment of a Barnabas Aid project partner in Lebanon as Christians there are plunged into a dire humanitarian disaster.

Thousands are displaced. They have been forced to flee their villages in the south to seek a small measure of safety further north. Among them are many women, children and other vulnerable people.

But many others – including church leaders – have stayed behind in the conflict zone. They are determined to stop their homes, their churches, their historic Christian lands from falling into the hands of Islamists.

War has come to Lebanon

Almost a year since the brutal Islamist atrocity that ignited the Middle East, the plight of our Christian brothers and sisters continues to worsen. In just the past few days the ongoing conflict has spilled over into Lebanon like never before. Christians (around a third of the population) are among the many Lebanese people who do not support

the Hezbollah terrorist group. “We consider them the oppressors,” said our project partner.

Our brothers and sisters here have endured poverty for many years. Since the Port of Beirut explosion in 2020 the Lebanese economy has collapsed. Food and medicine have become almost unaffordable. Political and social institutions are in disarray.

Now war has come to Lebanon.

Christians relying on Christians

“We can rely only on Christians,” said another Barnabas Aid contact in the country.

Camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in some areas of the north are run by Hezbollah. There are fears that any aid distributed through local government will not reach Christians.

A house in a southern Lebanese Christian village. Many have fled the conflict, but others remain to try to protect their historic lands

Most have sought refuge in the Christian-majority areas of the Mount Lebanon region. One church is already hosting 40-50 IDPs. Today they are preparing to receive around 100 more.

Those who have remained in the south can expect no humanitarian assistance from institutions controlled by Hezbollah. “There is so much shelling all around them,” says our project partner. Some fear it is too dangerous for them to make the arduous journey north.

In a religiously divided country, displaced Christians must look to their own brothers and sisters for support.

Only the Lord knows how long this situation will continue, but it is likely that those who have fled will be unable to return home for many months.

Residents in Christian villages in the south are already facing desperate shortages.

Those who have fled to northern Lebanon are relying on their Christian brothers and sisters for aid.

Barnabas Aid is in contact with trusted project partners in Lebanon who we will work

with to fund the supply of humanitarian aid. There are many willing volunteers, says our partner – they just need the funds.

Right now there is an urgent need for food, medicine and hygiene items. As winter closes in and temperatures fall, blankets, warm clothes and fuel will be of vital importance.

At Least Ten Christians Killed by Islamists in D. R. Congo

October 8, 2024

Both incidents were announced on the social media channels of Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP, also known as the Allied Democratic Forces).

“The soldiers of the Caliphate attacked the Christian village of Bandolo in the Lubero region,” stated one of the social media posts, “and slaughtered five Christians, praise be to God.”

The other described Islamist fighters attacking a position of the DRC military near the village of Medidi, then killing three Christians in the village as well as burning homes and shops.

On the same Sunday another Christian was captured and killed by ISCAP in the neighboring province of Ituri.

Four days later, also in Ituri, the Islamists announced that they had ambushed “Christians who were riding motorcycles”, killing one and injuring two others.

ISCAP has been responsible for dozens of deaths in just the last two months. It is estimated that they have killed more than 5,500 Christians in north-eastern DRC since 2017.

- *Continue to pray for peace in the troubled north-east of DRC, and that Christians will know respite from the violence being waged against them.*