



# Prayer for the Persecuted Church for May 30, 2025

## 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! NOTE: Prisoner prayer list moved to the last page.

*from Voice of the Martyrs*

## Global Prayer Guide: SRI LANKA

### OVERVIEW:

The island nation of Sri Lanka, off the eastern coast of India, has never fully recovered from a civil war between Buddhist and Hindu factions that ended more than a decade ago. The government has put significant efforts into resettling those displaced during the conflict between the majority-Buddhist Sinhalese population and the Hindu Tamil separatists. There are strong churches in the country as well as parachurch organizations that provide Bible training, theological education and missions training. Churches in Sri Lanka are actively sending missionaries to other countries in South Asia.

### MAJOR RELIGION:

Reliable statistics are unavailable, but roughly 70 percent of Sri Lankans are Buddhist, 10 percent Hindu, 10 percent Muslim and 10 percent Christian. The north of the country is majority Hindu and the south majority Buddhist. Christians are a persecuted minority in both areas.

### PERSECUTOR:

Buddhists are the primary persecutors, sometimes led by Buddhist monks who openly stir up communities against the Christians who live among them. Hindus also oppose evangelism and conversion to Christianity.

## WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN SRI LANKA

Christians can openly gather and worship in Sri Lanka, but the government is now pressuring all churches to officially register. Local governments sometimes participate in attacks on pastors and churches. Despite the threats and attacks, Sri Lankan churches are strongly engaged in church-planting and missionary-sending activities.

### ACCESS TO BIBLES:

There is a Bible society in Sri Lanka, and Bibles are readily available except in the most difficult areas.

### VOM WORK:

VOM supports training for missionaries, pastors and church planters, and provides Bibles and resources in difficult areas.

### PRAYER REQUESTS:

- *Pray that Anuradha will share her faith boldly when brought before police for her Christian witness.*
- *Pray that a church will be firmly established in a village where Christmas Care Packs were distributed.*
- *Pray for Pastor Sam, who boldly proclaims the gospel in the face of aggression and opposition.*
- *Pray that Buddhists and Hindus who persecute Christians will repent and place their faith in Christ.*

- *Praise God that churches are engaged in church-planting and missionary-sending activities despite threats and attacks!*

*From International Christian Concern*

## Christian Pens Letter Detailing Abuse from Jail in Iran

05/23/2025 Iran — Hakop Gochumyan, an Armenian Christian arrested in Iran in 2023 for his Christian faith, recently sent a letter to Christian Solidarity Worldwide detailing abuses he's endured while imprisoned. In the letter, published on May 9, Gochumyan explained that Iranian authorities have "subjected [him] to psychological violence" and threatened to take his life and the lives of his family.

- *How to Pray: Pray for Hakop Gochumyan's immediate release from prison.*
- *Pray for more humane prison conditions across Iran.*
- *Pray for the gospel to spread throughout Iran's prisons.*

## ISWAP Kills 23 Christian Farmers, Abducts 18 in Borno

05/22/2025 Nigeria — Armed fighters from the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) killed 23 farmers and fishermen on May 15 in the village of Malam Karanti in Nigeria's Borno state. The victims, mostly bean farmers from Gwoza, had traveled to the area to work on land under insurgent control. Eighteen other people were abducted during the attack, and their whereabouts remain unknown.

- *How to Pray: Pray for the immediate return of those who were abducted.*
- *Pray for comfort for all those who lost loved ones.*
- *Pray for an end to violence at the hands of Islamists in Nigeria.*

## Odisha Christians Increasingly Denied Burial Rights

05/21/2025 India — Last week, villagers in Odisha opposed the burial of a deceased Christian, claiming a Christian funeral would defile the gods and the land of the village. Authorities were unable to convince villagers to allow the burial, and the body was taken to another location. Although Christian burials have long been denied in India, these denials are increasingly occurring as a method of persecuting Christians in Odisha.

- *How to Pray: Pray for Christians' safe access to burial rights in India.*
- *Pray for comfort for grieving families caught in these disputes.*
- *Pray for peace between religious groups in India.*

## Myanmar Junta Strikes School, Ratchets Up Propaganda

05/19/2025 Myanmar — An air strike last week has, yet again, shined a spotlight on the cruel tactics used by the military junta ruling Myanmar. The strike, which took place in Myanmar's Sagaing region, hit a school. Twenty students and two teachers were killed. Adding to the injustice, the strike occurred during a ceasefire announced due to the recent devastating earthquakes.

- *How to Pray: Pray for peace for all those affected by this attack.*
- *Pray for the ceasefire to effectively curb the airstrikes.*
- *Pray for a safe and quick resolution to this conflict.*

## From Mission Eurasia's Prayer Initiative

*We are grateful for your prayers regarding our leadership development program for pastors and church leaders in the occupied territories of Ukraine.* This month marks two years since we began providing weekly sessions for them on various topics related

to church ministry, evangelism, personal development, and more. During this time, two leaders were ordained as deacons. One was selected as a deacon candidate, and the other one as a pastoral candidate. Please pray for all of these leaders as they tirelessly work to proclaim the gospel during the brutal, ongoing war in Ukraine.

*Please pray for Lyubov, a long-time friend of Mission Eurasia and cardiologist, who is now bedridden after a stroke.* Lyubov, 80 years old, was still seeing patients in her home until just recently. Over the years, many prominent people in Ukraine and hundreds of Christians, pastors, and ministry leaders have received help and healing through her care. Today, she is walking through a difficult season, and we ask you to pray that she would have relief from her suffering.

*Please pray that young people in the Central Asian country of Kyrgyzstan would have the opportunity to enroll in theological education so they can serve in future ministry roles in the church.* Currently, Kyrgyzstan's law on religion prohibits individuals from serving in leadership roles without appropriate theological education.

*Please pray for the new Ukrainian churches in Poland that have been started after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine began.* Pray as they develop leaders and seek to reach the lost in the place that the Lord has planted them.

## Open Doors Canada Prayer Calendar

### Sunday 1 | Bangladesh

The first week of June, Muslims in Bangladesh will observe Eid al-Adha, one of their two main Islamic festivals. During this time, many MBBs face pressure from families and neighbours to participate in Islamic rituals. Secret believers face even greater challenges since revealing their faith would likely lead to rejection, isolation, or danger for them and their families.

- *Let us pray for MBBs to remain strong in their faith.*

### Monday 2 | Sri Lanka

In March 2025, two foreign pastors were taken into police custody for ministering at a prayer meeting after complaints that they had breached visa conditions. The pastors were deported after questioning.

- *Pray that local pastors and leaders will not be discouraged by these incidents and that this situation will not be exploited further to restrict churches' activities.*

### Tuesday 3 | Vietnam

Our field partners will conduct training sessions and activities in various areas across Vietnam in June.

- *Pray that through these trainings and activities, participants will continue to grow in their faith and remain strong despite hardships.*

### Wednesday 4 | Iran

Mina Khajav is serving her 6-year sentence at Evin prison since January 2024. Her 'crime': "Acting against national security by promoting Zionist Christianity."

- *Pray for Mina.*

### Thursday 5 | Central Asia

- *Pray for Christians in Central Asia who pursue Jesus, growing in their understanding of their call and mission amidst the Muslim-majority population.*

## Barnabas Aid UK Prayer Diary

### FRIDAY 30

At least 15 residents of three Christian villages in Ebonyi State, south-eastern Nigeria, were killed by suspected Fulani Islamists in early February. It was reported initially that ten people died in the early-morning attacks; however, the bodies of five more villagers were recovered later in the bush. At the time of writing, at least two members of the community were missing.

- *Pray that the Lord will wipe away the tears of this community and provide for the needs of bereaved families.*
- *Ask Him to protect His people from such attacks throughout Nigeria.*

## **SATURDAY 31**

“As we sat together, with grief still evident in her eyes, she began to sing. It was a song of worship, of thanksgiving. And it came from a place so raw, so filled with faith, that I felt it to my core.” These were the words of Christian rapper and storyteller Joshua Luke Smith, when he met Nambam, a Nigerian believer whose husband was killed by Islamists. “In that moment, I understood that like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Nambam was not alone in the fire... God was with her, sustaining her, and refining her faith.” Praise God for His faithfulness to Nambam, and to all His people. Pray that we too will be strengthened by the witness of our persecuted brothers and sisters to the goodness and grace of our Father in Heaven to hear the rest of this encounter and many more, visit [barnabasaid.org/faitH-in-the-fire](http://barnabasaid.org/faitH-in-the-fire).

## **SUNDAY 1**

- *Lord Jesus, we praise You for Your glorious ascension into heaven, where You are now seated at the right hand of God the Father.*
- *We thank You that You continue to intercede for us and ask that Your Body on Earth will be the most receptive and effective channel for Your prayers, so that Your kingdom will advance.*
- *Thank You for the promise that because You are now in glory with the Father, we will do even greater works, whatever opposition and persecution appears. Give us grace to work for Your honor, for we ask in Your glorious Name. (1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 10:12; John 14:12)*

## **MONDAY 2**

“The study and environment at my school is wonderful,” says Samsoon. He is one of many children from impoverished Christian families in Pakistan who are receiving a Christian education at a Christian school thanks to Barnabas Aid’s Living Streams sponsorship program. The education these children receive gives them greater opportunity of getting a decent job and to break free of the cycle of poverty and illiteracy that has trapped their parents and grandparents.

- *Give thanks also for the schools’ Christian teachers who, through their dedication, help strengthen the Church in Pakistan by ensuring a generation of youngsters grows up well educated and strong in the Lord.*

## **TUESDAY 3**

“This was something, out of my reach but thank you for believing in me and giving me an opportunity to make my dream a reality.” These words from Tania, a Computer Science student at Forman Christian College in Lahore, Pakistan, express her gratitude for Barnabas support to enable her to pursue her studies. Tania is one of 85 Christian students from impoverished backgrounds to benefit from a Barnabas-funded scholarship.

- *Praise the Lord for the opportunity provided for these young believers, and ask Him to bless their studies to empower them to serve Him faithfully in the fields He has chosen for them in the years ahead (Jeremiah 29:11).*

Samsoon is thankful to Barnabas Aid supporters for enabling him to go to school.

## **WEDNESDAY 4**

Pray for the release of Pakistani Christian Farhan Javed, who has been arrested for “blasphemy” despite having a mental illness which impedes him from fully understanding what this means. He was detained in January after it was alleged he had made derogatory



remarks against Islam to a farmer in Sahiwal. Farhan's family now fear for his life, as "blasphemy" allegations often provoke violence from Islamist extremists.

- *Ask the Lord to watch over Farhan and his family, protecting them from violence.*
- *Pray that God will comfort Farhan during his imprisonment, and that he will be released soon.*

## **THURSDAY 5**

- *Praise God for the acquittal of Christian Pakistani brothers Kalu and Tabish after their arrest on charges of "blasphemy". They had been arrested in August 2024 after an accusation that they had desecrated the Quran – a charge which carries a life sentence. They were acquitted in January, when a judge ruled that there was no evidence against them.*
- *Give thanks for the acquittal and release of Kalu and Tabish, and ask God to watch over them and protect them from the mob violence which often follows "blasphemy" allegations.*

### ***From Global Christian Relief***

## **Death threats and murder: What familial persecution looks like for Christians in India**

***January 3, 2025 by Brian O. in Persecuted Christians in India***

Suman and her brother, Bima—both Christians in India—converted from Hinduism after they attended church and experienced a miraculous healing. But once they proclaimed Jesus as Lord and Savior, they encountered severe persecution from their Hindu relatives. Below, we'll examine how familial persecution in India often has devastating consequences for believers.

## **When faith becomes a crime: The cost of India's Hindu extremism**

The midday sun beats down on the sprawling village in India, its rays peeking around the corners of weathered buildings. I wait in a large shelter with an opening on both sides and dirt floors under my feet.

The air is thick with the lingering scent of curry from the morning's breakfast. When Suman enters—her small frame standing at barely five feet tall—there's a flicker of hesitation, quickly replaced by a resolute calm. We sit together in a quiet corner, and with her soft yet steady voice, she begins to share her story.

As new Christians in India, Suman and Bima witness a miraculous healing

"We had a lot of problems in our family," Suman says, her fingers intertwining in her lap. Her path to the Christian faith began not with a spiritual epiphany but with her brother's illness—a tangible, pressing need that defied conventional solutions. After trying everything within their Hindu community, it was her sister named Bindu who first suggested they turn to Jesus ... a proposition that, in their predominantly Hindu village, carried the weight of potential attacks, beatings and ostracism.

"As soon as we went to the church and gave it to the Lord, it didn't even take a week," Suman recalls, her eyes brightening. "Everything was fine in one or two days." God miraculously healed her brother, and while this transformation brought resilience to their new faith, it also delivered more risk in their predominantly-Hindu village.

## **The risks of conversion for Christians in India who leave Hinduism**

After that moment, Suman's immediate family gave their lives to Christ, but soon, the Hindu village that had been her whole world turned against her. Even her husband's family, once a source of support, became a wellspring of rejection.

In the face of familial persecution, Suman is unwavering in her faith. "No matter how many troubles I face, I found life in Jesus," she says, her voice gaining strength. "My

life has changed. I wouldn't think of turning back." Her courage is palpable, challenging not just her persecutors but anyone who has ever stood at the crossroads of comfort and conviction.

### **A faith-based attack with devastating consequences**

However, Suman's story begins to take a devastating turn as she recounts the terrifying events of June 24, 2024. It was on that day that Hindu extremists from her extended family attacked. Suman wasn't present in the fields that day, but the memory of that phone call from her brother, Bima, still haunts her. "Suman, something terrible has happened," Bima said, his voice crackling over the line. "Our sister has been beaten up and killed."

Later, Suman found out that it was her Hindu uncle and cousins who hid near the fields, waiting to attack her Christian family members. Most of her family escaped, but her sister Bindu fell, and her uncle caught her and killed her—as a message to the family that their Christian faith was no longer welcome in the predominantly-Hindu village. That they were no longer welcome on the land either.

Remembering those martyred for their faith

Later, we sat down with Bima, Suman and Bindu's brother, who was present during the attack and provided a harrowing firsthand account. "We were sowing rice in the farms," he recalls, his voice trembling slightly. "My uncle and cousins came out and said that they would kill us. I ran away from there. My mother ran away from there. Bindu and my wife were running away from there, but Bindu fell. They captured Bindu, and they killed her."

As Bima recounts these painful memories, his love and admiration for his sister Bindu shine through. "She was a teacher," he says, pride in his voice. "She used to go to school and teach the village kids to pray to God." Bindu worked at a childcare center, where she taught and shared her faith. "She was taking care of all our family," Bima adds. "She was never afraid of the village people; she always came in front and talked to people." Bima's voice softens as he recalls his sister's influence on others. "When she shared the Word of God with others, so many people

came to Christ through her life."

Suman and Bima find strength amid adversity through their Christian faith

Suman's reaction reveals the complex interplay of shock, grief, and helplessness. "I couldn't cry," she remembers, her gaze distant. "I felt terrible. And I thought, 'What should I do now?' I can't do anything." The paralysis of trauma was evident. Her sister was gone.

After that day, the rest of the family left their home, fearing for their lives. Suman, Bima and their remaining Christian family members are now displaced from their home.

The loss of a place to call home, their community, and loved ones would be enough to shake anyone's faith. Yet, when asked what gives her strength, Suman quotes Matthew 7:7: "Ask, and it shall be given to you."

"I have faith. Even then, I don't lose my courage," Suman shares. Because of their faith, they have lost their home, their land and their possessions, but Suman and her family are still trusting God to provide for them—remembering his power to do the miraculous. "We are never hungry. God will open the way for us from somewhere," she shares.

Bima echoes this unwavering faith. When asked if these trials have weakened his belief, he responds firmly, "It has increased. My faith is strong." He draws strength from a biblical promise in Matthew 10:17-22: "In the Bible, it says that they will take you to prison ... and they will kill you, but your faith will save you."

### **Suman finds hope for the future**

Before we part, I ask Suman how she wants Christians in the West to pray for her. Her requests are simple yet profound: "Pray that we will be able to return home. Pray for the things in my village to calm down. And pray that we would live in harmony." In these words lies a vision of reconciliation that extends far beyond her circumstances, touching on our collective longing for peace between Hindus and Christians across India.

As I watch Suman walk away, her small frame receding into the vastness of the village, I'm reminded of her words, "My life has changed. I wouldn't think of turning back." Those

words represent the power of simple faith to overcome—even in the face of incredible loss.

Bima's parting words resonate with the same unwavering faith: "If I live, I live for God. If I die, I die for God."

- *We invite our readers to say a prayer for Suman, Bima, and other believers in India who are facing familial persecution and attacks rooted in Hindu nationalism.*
- *God, thank You for the incredible faith of Suman and Bima. Comfort them, oh Lord, as they grieve the untimely death of their martyred sister, Bindu. And provide for their every need during their displacement. In due time, we pray that You will answer Suman's prayer—that she may return home to peace, tranquility, and restoration with her relatives. Amen.*

## Pray for imprisoned or kidnapped Christians

CHRISTIANS IN PRISON: This list is only a sample: CAMBODIA: Theary Seng; CHINA: Wan Changchun, Lian Xue Liang, Lian Chang Nian, Fu Juan, Li Jie, Hang Xiaodong, Yan Hwa, Goa Zhisheng, Wang Yi; Hao Zhiwei, Zhang Shaojie, Li Juncai, Lian Xu Liang; ERITREA: Mussia Ezas, Dr. Kifly Gebremeskel, Kidane Weldou, Haile Nayzgi; INDIA: Sarju Prasad, Pastor Sawan; IRAN: See list at end of prayer sheet; 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.

**Imprisoned Christians in Iran from last week:** Amirali Minaei, Nasser Navard Gol-Tapeh, Nerges Nasri, Somayeh Rajabi, Joseph Shahbazian, Ghazal Marzban, Javad Amini, Tumaj Aryankia, Mehdi (Yasser) Akbari; Jahangir Alikhani, Hamed Malamiri, Gholam Eshaghi, Mozhdeh (Mojdeh) Fallahi, Nasrollah Mousavi, Bijan Gholizadeh, Hamid Afzali, Iman Salehi, Zohrab Shahbazi, Yasin Mousavi, Esmail Narimanpour, Farrokh Kakai, Abdolrsa (Matthias) Ali-Haghejad, Mina Khajavi Ghomi, Lalh Sa'ari.