



barnabasprayer

Barnabas Aid - bringing hope to suffering Christians

To help you
pray for suffering
Christians

July/August 2023

barnabasaid.org

Thank you for your prayers for our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ, which make such a difference to them. We sometimes have to change or omit their names for security reasons, and we have only limited space to share their stories. But the Lord knows the people and places we are praying about. Please do not feel limited by the specific prayer requests, but pray as you feel led. On each Sunday we have provided a set prayer; please feel free to use these in their current form, to adapt them as you prefer, or to use the information they contain to frame your own prayers.

July



Samim, right, welcomes his parents and brothers to Brazil. Samim was among the first group of 15 families flown to safety by Barnabas in June 2022

SATURDAY 1 “Thank you so much for helping us, for helping to save my family!” These were the words of Sayed, an Afghan Christian convert from Islam, as he arrived in Brazil with his wife and three children. Give thanks that Barnabas Aid has helped a total of 26 Christian families (118 individuals) to settle in Brazil. These converts had first fled from Afghanistan into one of the neighbouring Muslim-majority countries, where they remained at risk of harm. Resettlement took place in stages, with ten families arriving in June 2022, 15 families reaching safety in March 2023 and another family

touching down in Brazil as recently as May. Pray that they will be able to live out their new lives effectively for the Lord, being a blessing to others with their testimony of His grace and salvation in their new home.

SUNDAY 2 Lord God and Heavenly Father, we pray for the troubled land of Afghanistan. We know that poverty and hunger have left more than 28 million people needing urgent help. We ask that You provide for the needs of those who have nothing, especially our Christian brothers and sisters who also have to contend with the risk of being killed for their faith. If it is Your will, please keep safe those who seek first Your Kingdom in these lands. Give them grace to endure. In Jesus' mighty Name. (Matthew 6:33; 24:13)

MONDAY 3 In 2021 church leaders in India called for 3 July to be celebrated as Indian Christian Day (Yeshu Bhakti Divas). On this day India's Christians give thanks that the Gospel reached their land in the first century after Christ, and for the Christian contribution to the achievements of one of the world's most ancient civilisations and its largest democracy. Join with our brothers and sisters in giving

thanks, as well as praying that our Lord will continue to provide for Indian believers who are often among the most impoverished of Indian society.

TUESDAY 4 More than 50 people from the Christian-majority Kuki ethnic group were killed as extremists targeted Christians in the Indian state of Manipur in early May. Around 114 church buildings were destroyed across the state, while an estimated 67 Kuki villages were attacked. At the time of writing, thousands have been displaced from their homes. Ask the Lord, who is able to bring peace at times of hostility (Psalm 46:9), to ensure that peace continues in Manipur and the neighbouring states. Pray particularly for our brothers and sisters who have suffered so much, that they will know their Saviour's provision. Barnabas Aid has sent rice to feed the displaced Christians.

WEDNESDAY 5 Seven men from the Christian-majority Kuki (also known as Kuki-Chin) people of Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts were shot dead after being captured by an extremist Buddhist group who had launched an armed assault against their village in April. An eighth man – the clerk of a local primary school – was killed in the initial attack, while dozens of others were injured. The extremists falsely claimed that those who had been killed were members of a militia. Along with displaced Chin Christians from Myanmar, many hundreds of Bangladeshi Kuki-Chin have been forced to flee into the Indian state of Mizoram to escape violence that flared up in the closing months of 2022. Pray that the Lord, whose Name is a strong

tower and safe refuge (Proverbs 18:10), will protect and preserve His people.

THURSDAY 6 At least nine people were killed in the Christian-majority Chin State of Myanmar when Tatmadaw (Myanmar military) jets bombed a school. The school was not open at the time, but the headteacher and his wife were among the dead. Just over a week earlier, at least ten were killed and 20 injured in Tatmadaw airstrikes on civilian areas in Thantlang township, Chin State. Ask the Lord to wipe the tears from the eyes of the bereaved, and comfort the injured (Revelation 21:4). Pray for an end to the Tatmadaw's attacks on Christian communities.

FRIDAY 7 "Halia", an elderly Christian widow in a South-East Asian country, earns about 75 pence (\$0.93; €0.84) a week by weaving bamboo baskets. Our project partner described her as "one of the poorest believers we have ever seen in over 10 years working here". Give thanks that Barnabas Aid has funded the purchase of a rice mill and 260 tonnes of rice in order to provide discounted rice to Christians who are struggling, and a steady supply of free rice to those like Halia who live in desperate poverty.



Widow "Halia" now receives a steady supply of Barnabas-funded rice

SATURDAY 8 Church building in Indonesia is subject to onerous requirements, including the requirement to get signatures from 60 neighbouring households – each of which must be non-Christian – before permission to construct a church building can be granted. Often Islamist groups engage in lobbying local authorities and communities to try to prevent churches from being built, despite the support for religious freedom voiced by central government. Pray for Christians in Indonesia, that they will be as wise as serpents and innocent as doves (Matthew 10:16) in navigating such difficulties.

SUNDAY 9 **Heavenly Father, we bring before you those Christians who have left the majority religion of a country to embrace the Gospel. We pray for these new members of Your family that they will grow in spiritual maturity. Please protect them from any attempts to force or coerce them into denying their Christian faith. Enable them to stand firm as they grow in their love for their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whose Name we pray. (1 Peter 2:2)**

MONDAY 10 Hundreds of believers are imprisoned in Eritrea, with 103 arrested at a meeting of Christian college students in the capital city of Asmara earlier this year. Prisoners in Eritrea are regularly subjected to beatings and torture, with church leaders often singled out for the worst forms of abuse. Pray earnestly that the Lord will strengthen those who suffer such brutal persecution, and, “Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those

who are ill-treated as if you yourselves were suffering” (Hebrews 13:3).

TUESDAY 11 A church in Ondo State, Nigeria, reopened on Easter Sunday, ten months after at least 40 worshippers were killed in an attack by gunmen. In a sermon to mark the reopening, Bishop Jude Arogundade called on the government to do more to prevent such assaults. “Almost on a daily basis we hear people being killed in their tens and hundreds,” he said. “Many people have even forgotten what happened in this church ten months ago, because many more [attacks] have happened without the world paying attention.” Give thanks to God for the reopening of the church. Pray urgently for His protection over Nigerian churches and Christians who are so vulnerable to attack.

WEDNESDAY 12 A new report has stated that more than 1,350 Christians were killed in northern and Middle Belt Nigeria from 1 February 2022 to 31 January 2023. The Kukah Centre – founded by Matthew Hassan Kukah, a senior church leader in Sokoto State – also concluded that this violence is the result of anti-Christian persecution by Islamist extremists. Ask the Lord to sustain His Church in Nigeria, and to bring an end to the campaign of persecution being waged against His people.

THURSDAY 13 At least 64 people in Christian-majority North Kivu province, Democratic Republic of the Congo, were slaughtered by Islamists in the space of just a few days. The Allied Democratic Forces, a jihadi group affiliated to Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh), first killed 45 people in the

village of Mukondi, and then a further 19 individuals four days later in the nearby village of Kirindera, where the terrorists also burned down a hospital. Pray for our brothers and sisters in North Kivu, and the neighbouring provinces, who live under the continual threat of violence.

FRIDAY 14 Ten million people in the Christian-majority Democratic Republic of the Congo are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, international aid agencies have warned. They said that an upsurge in violence since June 2022 has forced more than 600,000 people to flee their homes, exacerbating the country's food crisis. Hundreds of thousands of farmers across North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri – provinces targeted for attacks by armed gangs including the Allied Democratic Forces, a jihadi group affiliated to Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL and Daesh) – have been unable to plant for the next harvest as they have been driven from their lands. Ask the Lord to bring peace to this troubled African nation. Pray that farmers will be able to return to plant the crops needed to feed His people, asking that there will be “a sowing of peace” and that “the ground shall give its produce” (Zechariah 8:12, ESV).



Wuwih William Gemuh [Image credit: Wycliffe Bible Translators]

SATURDAY 15 Pray for the family, friends and colleagues of Wuwih William Gemuh after his death at the hands of extremists. The senior Bible translator in north-west Cameroon was kidnapped and later killed by gunmen after overseeing a languages workshop. Ask that Wuwih's wife and children will be greatly comforted as they mourn. Pray that his colleagues will receive courage and wisdom as they adjust to the void left by Wuwih, and for their protection from harm as they seek to make God's Word known in a dangerous environment.

SUNDAY 16 **Almighty God, we pray for the increased availability of Bibles in all languages. Please protect translators in their work, especially those in regions hostile to the Gospel. We pray that more Christians with limited access to Scriptures will have the joy of reading and listening to Your Word in their native tongue, for we ask in the Name of the Living Word, our Lord Jesus Christ. (John 1:14)**

MONDAY 17 “People are so happy,” said our partner in Ethiopia as 27,000 Bibles in Oromo, the language spoken by around a third of the population, were distributed. Part-funded by Barnabas, the new Bibles are helping to meet a huge hunger for God's Word among the growing Oromo Christian community of over 20 million. No more than a million Oromo Bibles have ever been printed. Give thanks that Barnabas supporters have helped to quench the thirst for the Scriptures in Oromo. Pray that the Bibles will encourage and strengthen believers at a time when their country is wracked by drought and war.

TUESDAY 18 Six Christians in Muslim-majority Libya who were arrested separately earlier this year are at risk of being sentenced to death as apostates for having converted from Islam. One of the six is a 22-year-old woman who released a video explaining her conversion to Christianity at the age of 15. A seventh Muslim-background believer is thought to be still on death row after being sentenced to death for apostasy in September 2022. Pray that our brothers and sisters who are walking through the darkest valley will fear no evil, knowing that the LORD is with them (Psalm 23:4). Ask that, if it is the Lord's will, His people will be spared from martyrdom.

WEDNESDAY 19 Give thanks that the government of Egypt has licensed a further 216 churches and church-affiliated buildings. This is the 26th and second-largest batch of approvals made since the government committee overseeing the process began work in 2017. Licences have now been granted to 2,815 of the 3,730 churches that applied for registration under a 2016 law that abolished Ottoman-era restrictions on church building. Praise God for the increased freedom given to His people in Egypt, and ask that this will continue.

THURSDAY 20 Shouts of “thank you” exclaimed in Arabic filled the air as 400 poor Christian children in Jordan received winter jackets paid for by donations of Barnabas supporters. A number were the children of Muslim-background Christian refugees who fled persecution and conflict in their homeland, others were from impoverished Jordanian families. The jackets “were a true blessing”, said our project partner, and protected the

children from the winter's cold and rain. Praise God for the thanks of these children who have so little. Pray for God's protection over all children in Jordan, especially those who have fled persecution because of their love for Him.

FRIDAY 21 Praise God that an Iranian Christian couple imprisoned for allegedly endangering national security through their membership of a “house church” have been acquitted and released from prison. Homayoun Zhavah, 64, and his wife Sara Ahmadi, 45, began serving sentences of two and eight years, respectively, at the notorious Evin Prison in August 2022. However, an appeal court in Tehran ruled on 9 May that the couple's Christian activities, including their church membership, “are not considered as acts against the country's security”. Give thanks for the release of Homayoun – who suffers from Parkinson's disease – and Sara. Pray that this significant ruling will lead to the release of other believers who have been convicted of endangering Iran's national security by living as faithful Christians.



Christian converts Sara, left, and Homayoun [Image credit: Article 18]

SATURDAY 22 Give thanks that Malihe Nazari, a 50-year-old Iranian Christian

convert whose son has been suffering from leukaemia for five years, has been released from Evin Prison in the Iranian capital Tehran. In August 2022 Malihe began a six-year sentence for allegedly disrupting national security by helping to operate a “house church”. Pray that Malihe’s release will be permanent, and that she will not be recalled to serve the remainder of her sentence. Ask the Lord to help her and her son as she cares for him, reminding both that You care for them (1 Peter 5:7).

SUNDAY 23 Lord God and Heavenly Father, we give You thanks for increased openness in Saudi Arabia. We rejoice at the amazing fact that some church services were held earlier this year with the permission of the Saudi authorities. Please encourage our brothers and sisters there, many of them migrant workers, who are normally so restricted that they cannot show their faith publicly. We pray especially for converts who must live as secret believers or face death for apostasy. Father, please continue to soften the hearts of Saudi officials, so that Christians will have greater freedom, for we ask it in our Saviour’s Name.

MONDAY 24 North Korea is believed to be suffering from food shortages, caused by natural disasters such as floods and droughts, inefficient agricultural techniques and lack of technology, and continuing international sanctions. Only the Lord knows how many Christians live in North Korea, but it is clear that our brothers and sisters share in the poverty, destitution and repression that are the common lot of North Korean

citizens, as well as knowing that they will almost certainly face imprisonment, torture and perhaps death if their faith is discovered. Those believers that are in prison are known to face harsher treatment than other inmates. Pray for all those suffering in North Korea, and especially our Christian family.

TUESDAY 25 The authorities in China have in recent years tightened control over religious groups, with increased efforts to close down unofficial house churches that refuse to comply with the government’s rule, and greater intervention in the running of the official Protestant church, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. Such efforts stem from a desire to Sinicise – that is, make Chinese – all expressions of religion within Chinese society in order to maintain social harmony. Pray that Christians in China, and especially church leaders, will be given great wisdom in navigating this cultural and political context, living in peace and harmony with their neighbours (Romans 12:18) while holding firmly to the Word of life (Philippians 2:16).

WEDNESDAY 26 China’s largest website for Christian worship music announced in early 2023 that it would no longer be operating. A notice on the website read, “Due to force majeure, all services on this website will be closed from now on.” The phrase “force majeure” – an unforeseen event that causes a change of action or direction – was interpreted as a veiled reference to China’s Administrative Measures for Internet Religious Information Services, which came into operation in March 2022. Praise God for those churches and Christian websites that have gained the

necessary licence under these measures to continue operating online. Pray that the Lord will continue to sustain His Church in China, knowing that He can do so even as restrictions increase.

THURSDAY 27 A Pakistani Christian, Kashif Masih, was shot and killed in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on 1 April. The shooting was claimed by Islamic State Khorasan Province (a group active in Afghanistan and Central Asia, as well as Pakistan). Two other men in the Peshawar area – a Hindu and a Sikh – were killed in separate incidents that week. The three attacks are believed to be part of an Islamist assault on religious minorities. Pray that the Lord will comfort all who mourn, especially Kashif’s widow and three children. Ask that minority religious communities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will receive better protection, and pray especially for the safety of our Christian brothers and sisters.

FRIDAY 28 A church in Pakistan’s capital Islamabad was subjected to a terrifying attack by a mob of around 40 extremists during a Sunday evening service. The church was pelted with bricks and shots were fired, leaving bullet marks on the church walls – thankfully nobody was hurt. Pray for around 60 Christian families who live in this area of Islamabad, calling out for the Lord’s protection. Give thanks for the swift response of the authorities who quickly made arrests and increased security around the church.

SATURDAY 29 Two Christians are among several people in Pakistan who were accused of “blasphemy” in separate incidents in April and May.

Musarrat Bibi, an assistant at a school in the Pakpattan District of Punjab, and her Muslim colleague were arrested and charged with “blasphemy” after it emerged that waste paper they were burning contained Arabic verses from the Quran. Both Musarrat and her colleague are illiterate. In the same district Khurram Yousaf, a Christian wedding photographer, was accused of “blasphemy” along with a Muslim newlywed couple after he was asked to take their pictures at an Islamic shrine. Pray for the safety of all those accused, especially our sister and brother as Christians are especially vulnerable to such allegations.

SUNDAY 30 Lord Jesus, we give thanks for those among Your people whom You have gifted as healers of our bodies. We pray that You will anoint and guide Christian doctors, nurses and other clinicians around the world who administer healing skilfully and compassionately in Your Name. We ask that You will grant energy and resilience especially for those who work in lands of persecution and serve their suffering brothers and sisters, sacrificially imitating the physician of our souls, in whose Name we pray. (Psalm 103:3; Mark 2:17)

MONDAY 31 A 21-year-old Islamist terrorist from Brighton, UK, has confessed to planning to kill a Christian open-air preacher. Edward Little admitted that he had arranged to purchase a gun with which he intended to shoot the preacher and others at Speakers’ Corner in Hyde Park, London, in September 2022. Give thanks that Little was arrested

on his way to buy the firearm and that the planned jihadi attack never took place. Pray that this stark reminder that believers in the Western world are not immune to violent persecution will cause us to depend all the more upon our Lord.

August

TUESDAY 1 At the time of writing, presidential and legislative elections are due to be held in Zimbabwe in early August, though the precise date has yet to be confirmed. Once regarded as the bread basket of southern Africa, this Christian-majority nation has endured desperate hunger, with an estimated 60% of the population believed to be in “acute food insecurity”. Whoever takes power in this month’s elections, pray that they will receive discernment and knowledge (Proverbs 28:2) from God in ruling well and working to meet the urgent needs of the Zimbabwean people.

WEDNESDAY 2 More than 11,700 Christians living in poor and hunger-afflicted areas of Zimbabwe were reached through our latest ePap rollout. Our food.gives project delivered 48,000 kg of the nutritious porridge to 131 churches in April 2023 – providing more than one million servings. Our distribution partners said the relief and joy of the congregations receiving the ePap was overwhelming. Give thanks to God that the ePap arrived safely at each church, and pray that He will continue to meet the needs of His people. Ask that the long drought affecting Zimbabwe and other African countries will be broken soon.

THURSDAY 3 At least 133 Christians were killed in March and April 2023 as anti-Christian violence raged across northern and Middle Belt Nigeria – the total figure could be even higher. Among the dead were 33 killed in a night-time attack in the Zangon Kataf Local Government Area of Kaduna State on 15 April. Many of the victims were asleep and died when the attackers set fire to more than 40 homes. Nine others had been killed just three days earlier in the Christian-majority Atyap Kingdom, also in Zangon Kataf. Pray for all who mourn and ask that they will be assured that their loved ones have received the Crown of Life (James 1:12). Ask that the men of violence will have a life-changing encounter with the Prince of Peace.

FRIDAY 4 Pastor John Joseph Hayab, chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria in Kaduna State, called on the government to do more to stop the killing and kidnapping of Christians. He spoke following the killing of Pastor Musa Mairimi, shot dead when gunmen stormed into his home in Kajuru Local Government Area, abducting Pastor Mairimi’s wife. Pastor Hayab added that 100 people abducted in Kaduna remained in captivity more than six months after they were seized. Pray for those mourning the loss of Pastor Mairimi, for the safety and release of Mrs Mairimi, and for an end to the killing and abduction of Christians in Kaduna.

SATURDAY 5 An estimated 130 people were killed as Fulani Muslim extremists launched attacks on Christian-majority villages in Plateau State, Nigeria, between 16 and 23 May. The terrorists burned hundreds of homes, displacing

thousands of residents. Less than a week earlier, in neighbouring Nasarawa State, a pastor was among 38 victims of a similar Fulani extremist attack. Archbishop Benjamin Kwashi called on the authorities to act, asking, “Can they not see the tears and sufferings of the homeless, the orphans and those who survive? Shall we continue as a people for slaughter at will of killers?” Give thanks for the faithful endurance of Nigeria’s Christians, asking that the Lord will act to protect His people and restrain the wicked, even if earthly authorities cannot.

SUNDAY 6 **Our Father, we give You thanks for the wonderful transfiguration of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, upon the mountain before His chosen witnesses. We are grateful that even at this moment of being glorified before Peter, John, James, Moses and Elijah, our Lord was speaking of His death in Jerusalem on behalf of sinners. Thank You that one day we and all His people will see Him glorified, and alive forever and ever. We pray that meditating upon these truths will strengthen us, and our suffering brothers and sisters around the world, for we ask in our Saviour’s precious and holy Name. (Matthew 17:1-3; Luke 9:28-31; Revelation 1:18)**

MONDAY 7 Christians are among the religious groups in Vietnam who face increased hostility, with several reports over the last 18 months of local authorities disrupting worship services or pressuring Christian converts to give up their faith. Christians in Vietnam are around 7% of the

population. More than half of these are from ethnic minorities, such as the Montagnard and Hmong people. While Vietnam’s constitution allows religious freedom, in practice religion is treated with suspicion, especially Christianity, which is perceived as “Western”. Pray that the Lord’s people in Vietnam will endure, even if opposition and persecution increase.

TUESDAY 8 Three people were killed and six wounded as the Tatmadaw (Myanmar military) attacked several villages in Myanmar’s predominantly Christian Kayah State on 23 March. Thousands of Kayah State residents fled their homes in the weeks leading up to those attacks, including 700 who sought refuge in two church buildings. Ask that the Lord will bring peace to the bereaved, heal those injured and enable those dispersed to return to their homes safely. Continue to pray for an end to such attacks on Christian communities in Myanmar.

WEDNESDAY 9 Residents of Mae Ka Nae village in Myanmar’s Christian-majority Karen State were forced to flee from their homes after Tatmadaw (Myanmar military) attacks that began on 11 April. On the first day of the attack, a 500 lb. (227 kg) bomb was used to destroy the village church. Soldiers subsequently occupied Mae Ka Nae, burning down 12 houses that had survived the bombardment. Pray for the villagers, including the pastor of the church, who have been left homeless.

THURSDAY 10 The impoverished Santal Christian community of Bangladesh is among those suffering from a global economic downturn. This year the

Santal community – who are mostly farmers – lost around 30% of rice yields. The loss came largely as a result of inflationary pressures making irrigation of rice fields unaffordable for many Santal farmers. To lose nearly a third of the rice crop is a devastating blow in a region of the world where rice is the staple food. Intercede for our brothers and sisters, and all those in Bangladesh suffering hunger and poverty, asking that the Lord will open His hands and provide much-needed food (Psalm 145:15-16).

FRIDAY 11 The gift of hay from Barnabas was an answer to prayer for Kuban, a poor Kyrgyz Christian. The price of forage had risen by 100% and Kuban had nothing to feed his cattle. Other Christian converts living in impoverished rural areas were struggling too because of higher prices for food and coal. Barnabas sent a grant to provide food, coal or hay for 298 poor Christian families (around 700 people). “This help was a blessing from the Lord,” said grateful Nazira, a Christian grandmother. Pray that God will continue to provide for the needs of His people in Kyrgyzstan, and ask that our brothers and sisters will be greatly encouraged by support from believers in other countries.

SATURDAY 12 “Through this course, I gained a lot of clarity and guidance in my ministry among my neighbours.” These were the words of a pastor in South Asia who recently completed a short course run by The Shepherd’s Academy (TSA). TSA is a branch of Barnabas Academia, and works to provide learning opportunities to grassroots Church leaders across the

Global South who have had little or no opportunity for training. Pray for the 418 TSA students across 16 countries, that their study will make them more useful in their service to the Lord. Ask that our Father will continue to bless the work of Barnabas Academia.

SUNDAY 13 Heavenly Father, we remember those called to leadership of Your church in lands of poverty and persecution. We intercede for these faithful pastors and evangelists, asking that they will be helped to exercise their God-given gifts in the cause of Your Kingdom. We ask that You will grant them perseverance in times of trial. Empower them to handle Your Word accurately so that Your people grow in faith. We ask this in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Timothy 2:15)

MONDAY 14 African church leaders called for prayer as violence engulfed Sudan earlier this year. At the time of writing, more than 600 people have been killed in armed clashes between the Sudanese military and a rival paramilitary group. “We pray for peace to be restored in Sudan, for the safety and protection of all its citizens, and for the conflicting parties to pursue peaceful solutions to the ongoing crisis,” read a statement from the Association of Evangelicals in Africa. “We also pray for comfort and healing for those who have lost loved ones and for the injured to receive the medical care they need.” Christians are a small and vulnerable minority in Sudan (estimated at 3% of the population), and have often suffered persecution. Join with our brothers and sisters in praying for peace and healing.

TUESDAY 15 Churchgoers are among those to suffer from the ongoing violence in Sudan, with several worshippers injured in an attack on a church service in the city of Omdurman on Sunday 14 May. Until 2019 Christians in Sudan had suffered decades of Islamist rule. Many have now joined those fleeing the country, escaping across the border into Egypt or South Sudan, often leaving behind most of their possessions. Pray for these Christian refugees, asking that the Lord will continue to provide for them, as He provided for His people in the wilderness (Exodus 16:4, 35).

WEDNESDAY 16 At least 17 people were killed in Islamist attacks in southern Chad in early May as anti-Christian violence continued in the central African nation. Fulani Muslim extremists launched several armed assaults on Christian communities in the Logone Oriental (Eastern) region. Among the dead were a pastor, Doumro Tadingao Gaston, and 12 other worshippers who were attending a prayer meeting in the village of Don. Around 20 villages in the region were burned down, with several thousand people displaced by the violence. Pray that the Lord will comfort His mourning and traumatised people. Ask that He will restrain the hand of extremists across western and central Africa, and bring peace.

THURSDAY 17 Jihadi group Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) has claimed more territory in northern Mali, according to a report published by the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism in April. ISGS fighters have captured two towns near the city of Ménaka in north-eastern Mali – near the border with Niger

– with observers fearing that they will take control of the city itself. The safety of Christians, a tiny minority in northern Mali, is particularly threatened by Islamic State occupation. Pray that our brothers and sisters will find safety and refuge in the LORD, the Most High (Psalm 91:9).



Dr Ken Elliott [Image credit: Vision Christian Media]

FRIDAY 18 Praise the Lord for the release of a missionary doctor from Australia, who has been held by a Burkina Faso jihadi group affiliated to al Qaeda since January 2016. Dr Ken Elliott, 88, was freed in May, more than seven years after he was abducted. Dr Elliott, who has lived in Burkina Faso since 1972, is known as the “Doctor of the Poor” for providing free medical care to patients at his clinic in Djibo, a town near the country’s borders with Niger and Mali. A statement from his family read, “We wish to express our thanks to God and all who have continued to pray for us.” Join with the Elliott family in giving thanks. Pray that Dr Elliot will recover from his ordeal, and ask the Lord to bring peace to this troubled region of West Africa.

SATURDAY 19 “I am so grateful to those who helped us to have this programme,” said 16-year-old Anne. She was among 300 Christian children displaced by the jihadi insurgency in Burkina Faso who benefitted from attending an emergency Christian school part-funded by Barnabas. Lessons led by Christian teachers for 12 weeks in a safe setting enabled children to catch up on their learning that has been disrupted by conflict. Some, like Anne, were refused permission to join other schools because of their Christian faith. Thanks to the teaching Anne received, she was able to sit her high school exams. Lift up Anne and her schoolmates to the Lord, and ask for His protection over them.

SUNDAY 20 Heavenly Father, we lift before You impoverished Christians around the world striving to earn a living and provide for their families in contexts where they regularly experience discrimination. Please grant them perseverance to maximise their skills and creativity, and wisdom to manage Your resources profitably for Your Kingdom. Enable Christian children to develop these qualities throughout their schooling with eyes fixed on You whatever opposition they encounter. We pray that You will bless and prosper those who walk in obedience to You in any new employment ventures they undertake, for we ask in Jesus’ Name. (Psalm 128:1-2)

MONDAY 21 Give thanks to the Lord that Barnabas has freed another 100 Christian families from the yoke of debt and bonded labour in Pakistan’s brick kilns. It brings to 1,575 the number

of impoverished brick-kiln families whose loans – taken out at times of crisis – have been paid by gifts from our supporters since 2017. Naveed is just one believer who had to take a loan from his employer to meet his wife’s medical bills, and his two young sons had to labour alongside him to help meet the interest payments. Now Barnabas has paid the debt and the boys go to school. “We are extremely happy and thank our Lord Jesus Christ for paying off our loan through Barnabas,” said Naveed. “Now we are getting full wages after making bricks – no more deductions.” Pray that, with the Lord’s provision, we can release many more families.



Naveed, left, and his family are among 1,575 Christian families whose emergency loans have been paid off by Barnabas

TUESDAY 22 “God answered my prayers,” said Ramson, a poor Pakistani Christian farm labourer. Ramson, his wife Anbo, and their daughter Aneeta lost their family home in the devastating floods that afflicted Pakistan a year ago. Now, thanks to your generous donations, they are among the Christian families to receive a new home in a Barnabas-funded building project. “My whole family is happy and thanks Barnabas Aid for their wonderful effort, which led us towards a happier life,”

added Ramson. Join with our brother in giving thanks to God. Ask that the Lord will continue to bless this work on behalf of our suffering Christian family.

WEDNESDAY 23 Tasmania has become the latest Australian state to recognise formally the Armenian, Assyrian, Syriac and Greek Genocide of 1893-1923. The killing of around 3.75 million Christians in the Ottoman Empire is also recognised as genocide by New South Wales and South Australia. In a motion passed on 11 May, the Tasmanian House of Assembly condemned what it termed “the first genocide of the 20th century”. “Today’s recognition is not simply about remembering the Armenian Genocide,” said Michael Kolokossian, Executive Director of the Armenian National Committee, “but preventing genocides from happening again.” Pray that increased recognition of this crime against humanity will indeed help prevent similar atrocities from occurring again.

THURSDAY 24 A blockade of the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh that began in December 2022 shows, at the time of writing, no sign of being ended. Nagorno-Karabakh is a region populated by Armenian Christians, but which lies within the territory of Muslim-majority Azerbaijan. The ongoing blockade of the Lachin Corridor – the only land route between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia – has left the population of around 120,000 desperately short of food, medicine and fuel. Give thanks that Barnabas has been able to send around 180 tonnes of food and other aid into the region. Pray for the success of our continued efforts to meet the desperate needs of our

brothers and sisters, and pray that the blockade will be brought to an end.

FRIDAY 25 Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was elected for another term of office in a hard-fought contest that required two rounds of voting in May. Erdoğan has a track record of promoting Islamist policies, and Christians in Muslim-majority Turkey often face harassment and persecution from extremists within society. Pray that Erdoğan will govern wisely at a time when Turkey faces a deepening economic crisis while rebuilding after the terrible earthquake that struck in February. Ask also that he will enact policies that will allow our brothers and sisters to live “peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

SATURDAY 26 “We are so grateful for the supporters for their act of love and solidarity, which made us feel that we are not a forgotten people.” These were the words of a Syrian Christian among an estimated two million people in Syria affected by the catastrophic earthquake that struck in February 2023. Thanks to your generous giving, we were able to provide food, health kits, blankets and tents for Christians in Syria and in Turkey, which was also devastated. Continue to pray for all those who remain in need, especially our brothers and sisters.

SUNDAY 27 **Sovereign Lord, we pray for Your people and all those have been rendered homeless by extreme weather events. We pray for Your comfort for Christians suffering the effects of floods in Chad, Cameroon and Pakistan, for those in southern Africa affected by Cyclone Freddy**

and others whose lives have been devastated by Cyclone Mocha in Bangladesh and Myanmar. We pray that You will direct the channelling of aid to all those in need, for we ask in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

MONDAY 28 A worshipper was killed and a pastor kidnapped along with three members of his congregation during an attack on a church in Benue State, Nigeria, in the early hours of Palm Sunday. Five people were also wounded by suspected Fulani Muslim extremists who stormed into the church while a prayer vigil was taking place. Seven others were abducted when returning home from a Sunday service, also in Benue, two weeks later. Pray that our Saviour will be close to the bereaved and to the families of the Christians kidnapped during the attacks. Ask that the wounded will be healed and the captives released.

TUESDAY 29 Forty worshippers were seized by gunmen from Bege Baptist Church in Kaduna State, Nigeria, on Sunday 7 May. Fifteen people quickly escaped, and 11 others were freed in the days that followed. The terrorists “abandoned or freed those they found difficult to manage because of health problems, fatigue or their age”, said Pastor John Joseph Hayab, head of the Kaduna branch of the Christian Association of Nigeria. Among those abandoned were a woman and her baby who were left for dead by the Islamists, but who managed to reach their home village. Give thanks for those who are now free, and pray that the 14 who, at the time of writing, are still being held will be released safe and unharmed.

WEDNESDAY 30 Cry out to the Lord on behalf of a Christian girl in Kaduna State, Nigeria, who was abducted by Muslims on 5 April and, at the time of writing, is still being held captive. Esther Duniya was staying with her aunt when she was kidnapped and taken to a nearby village where she was forcibly converted to Islam. Both the Muslim village head and district head refused to return Esther to her family, instead threatening her aunt and her parents, while local police have refused to act. It is feared Esther will be forced to marry a Muslim man. Pray for God’s protection over Esther and her family at this time, asking that she will be released safe and unharmed. Ask that our God will continue to sustain her in her faith, remembering that none can snatch the Lord’s people out of His hands (John 10:28-9).

THURSDAY 31 Praise God that two more of the 276 “Chibok girls” abducted by Boko Haram Islamist terrorists in April 2014 were rescued by the Nigerian military on 21 April 2023. Hauwa Maltha and Esther Marcus, both 26, were each forced to marry Boko Haram fighters three times during their captivity. Hauwa has four children – she was eight months pregnant with the fourth at the time she was found, and he has since been safely delivered. Esther had a one-year old baby with her when she was found. Give thanks for the rescue of Hauwa and Esther. Pray that both of these young women will recover from their lengthy and traumatic ordeal, asking also for the Lord’s blessing upon their young children. Pray also for around 100 “Chibok girls” who still have not returned home.

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Company registered in England number 04029536

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Published by Barnabas Aid 1934 Old Gallows Road Suite
350 Vienna, VA 22182, USA

Front Cover: Christian in South-East Asia receives
her daily rice funded by Barnabas