



30
years of serving
the suffering Church

barnabasprayer

Barnabas Aid - bringing hope to suffering Christians

To help you
pray for suffering
Christians

May/June 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.

May

MONDAY 1 Isaac Achi, a church minister in Niger State, Nigeria, was burned to death by suspected Islamists who set fire to his home. His colleague, Collins Omeh, was shot in the back as he escaped the blaze and later taken to hospital – pray for his continued recovery. In 2011 Reverend Achi survived a Boko Haram church bombing that killed as many as 45. During his ministry he has also been abducted and shot in the jaw. Give thanks for Reverend Achi's life of faithful endurance and pray for God's hand of protection on His people in Nigeria.

TUESDAY 2 It was hoped that Nigeria's presidential elections on 25 February would bring change, leading in time to a reduction in Islamist violence. However, the Christian-Muslim divide in Nigerian society deepened during the campaign, and the country remains mired in controversy. Anti-Christian attacks have continued to claim many lives since the election. Pray for the new president Bola Tinubu, a Muslim, who will take office at the end of this month, that he and others in authority will govern with wisdom. Above all, pray for the Lord's strength to sustain the

faith of Nigerian believers during these trying times.

WEDNESDAY 3 When disaster struck Christian-majority Malawi in the form of Cyclone Freddy, Barnabas Aid was able to respond within days. The cyclone wreaked havoc, destroying or damaging more than 40,000 homes in Malawi and displacing an estimated 180,000 people. These and many others found themselves desperately short of food. Thanks to the generous response of our supporters, we were able to fund the delivery of 15 tonnes of ePap (around 350,000 servings) to Christians in Malawi from South Africa. Give thanks that the Lord has enabled this swift response, and pray for all people affected in Malawi and other countries as they continue to recover.

THURSDAY 4 In the Far North of Cameroon, which borders Boko Haram's base in north-eastern Nigeria, rural Christian communities are regularly subjected to Islamist violence. There were at least six attacks on churches in the region in early 2023, with three Christians confirmed dead. The terrorists also looted and burned houses, causing many to flee. Pray that the Lord will comfort the bereaved,

provide for those who have been forced from their homes, and bring peace to His people in Cameroon.

FRIDAY 5 “God is great and wonderful!” exclaimed a pastor when he saw Barnabas-funded grain waiting to be handed out to Christians who lost everything when floods engulfed their homes in Chad and neighbouring Cameroon. At the time of writing, we were finalising the distribution of aid to more than 7,000 families (around 34,000 individuals) in the countries. Many of these families were already suffering because of repeated attacks on their communities by extremists. Pray for our displaced brothers and sisters, especially those who have been doubly traumatised, first by violence, then floods. Ask that the joy of the LORD will continue to be their strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

SATURDAY 6 The West African country of Ghana has thus far been relatively free of the Islamist violence that has surged across other countries in the region, including neighbouring Burkina Faso. However, Ghanaian officials fear the extension of jihadi activity into the north of the country, where areas such as Bawku already suffer ethnic conflict and criminal activity. “If we do not stop what is happening in Bawku now,” said defence minister Dominic Nitiwul, “we risk the situation where Ghana can be thrown under terrorist attacks.” Pray that Christian communities in northern Ghana will be protected from all forms of violence.

SUNDAY 7 Sovereign Lord, we lift up to you Christians working to train church leaders in places of

persecution. We ask for wisdom and guidance for them as they prepare others to strengthen suffering Christians. We give thanks for those in Sudan who have completed their training and been recognised as pastors and deacons, praying that they will be a source of encouragement to the country’s small Christian community, which has endured so much persecution in previous decades. We ask this in the Name of our Saviour who overcame the world. (John 16:33)



This mother and child were among the Syrian Christians who received aid from Barnabas following the February 2023 earthquake

MONDAY 8 “Everything is gone, the church is collapsed, my house is gone, we don’t have anything.” These were the words of a pastor in Antakya (Antioch) in Turkey in the hours following the devastating Turkey-Syria earthquake that struck in early February. Give thanks that help swiftly arrived as Barnabas Aid was able to

fund rented accommodation for the pastor, his family and another family from his congregation whose home was also destroyed. We have also provided food, clothes, blankets, tents, health kits and other aid to many Christians affected by the disaster. Give praise to God, who provided for the poor (Psalm 68:4, 10).

TUESDAY 9 Christians in Nagorno-Karabakh – a Christian-majority Armenian region within Azerbaijan – have been suffering from shortages of food and medicine for, at the time of writing, more than three months. The cause is an Azerbaijani blockade of the Lachin Corridor, the only transport link between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia itself. Pray that the Lord will bring an end to the blockade and provide for His people, as He brought to an end the Aramean siege of Samaria (2 Kings 7). Praise God that Barnabas has been able to get food aid into Nagorno-Karabakh despite the blockade.

WEDNESDAY 10 Give thanks for increased recognition on the world stage of the Armenian, Assyrian, Greek and Syriac Genocide of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The Senate of Mexico backed recognition of the Armenian Genocide in February 2023, with senators urging the government to make that recognition official. At the same time, France, which already recognises the Armenian Genocide, voted to recognise separately the Assyrian Genocide. Between 1893 and 1923 around 3.75 million Christians of various ethnic groups perished in the Ottoman Empire.

Pray that greater recognition of this crime against humanity will help to prevent it from happening again.

THURSDAY 11 Five Iranian Christian families, mostly converts from Islam, face deportation from Turkey to Iran, where they will almost certainly suffer severe persecution. Seventeen believers held in Turkish “removal centres” have reported abuses including unsanitary conditions, adulterated food and denial of medicine. The men are held separately from their wives and children, and allowed contact with them only once a week. Ask the Lord to bring a swift resolution to their trials, release from confinement and a safe place where the families can settle and practise their faith.

FRIDAY 12 The first new church building ever to be constructed in modern Turkey is, at the time of writing, nearing completion. Permission for the building in Istanbul was given by the Turkish government in 2015, and the church’s foundation stone was laid in 2020 in a ceremony attended by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The building, due to open later this year, is the first purpose-built church in the history of the Turkish Republic, which was founded in 1922. Give thanks for the new building, and pray that it will be a blessing to Turkey’s historic Christian community.

SATURDAY 13 With a general election scheduled to take place tomorrow, pray for the nation of Turkey. In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in February and serious

financial troubles, this is expected to be a closely fought and critical campaign. More than 50,000 people in Turkey died in the earthquake and the efforts to repair and rebuild are central to this race. Pray for free and fair elections, and that Christians will be treated fairly in any new laws created. In particular, if there is a change of government, ask the Lord that there will be a peaceful transfer of power.

SUNDAY 14 Lord God and Heavenly Father, we pray for pastors and church ministers working in contexts of severe destitution or persecution, who must encourage and strengthen Your people even as they themselves share in poverty and suffering. As our Lord who hears the cry of the afflicted, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, please encourage and strengthen the under-shepherds of Your Son's flock that their faith may not fail and that they will strengthen their brethren, for we ask it in Christ's holy and precious name. (Psalm 10:17-18; Luke 22:32)

MONDAY 15 Egyptian Church leaders sent their thanks to the authorities in Saudi Arabia following a rare opportunity to hold a worship service in the strictly Islamic kingdom. The service was attended by Egyptian and Eritrean Christians who live and work in Saudi Arabia. Ask the Lord that this event will mark an official softening of attitudes towards expatriate Christians, who remain forbidden to make public display of their faith. Pray also for Saudi Christian converts, who according to Saudi law are liable

to the death penalty as apostates from Islam.

TUESDAY 16 The government of Egypt has licensed a further 73 churches and church-affiliated buildings. It is the 25th batch of approvals made since the government committee overseeing the process began work in 2017. The latest decision, made in January 2023, brings the number of churches granted licences to 2,599 out of the 3,730 that applied for registration after a Law for Building and Restoring Churches swept away Ottoman-era restrictions on church buildings in 2016. Give thanks for the granting of licences and for the support shown by the Egyptian government towards the Christian community.

WEDNESDAY 17 Give thanks for the release of six Egyptian Christian men who were held captive in neighbouring Libya. The men – construction workers, all from the same family in Egypt's Sohag Governorate – were held for over a week at an unofficial detention centre, not controlled by the Libyan authorities. They had travelled to the country in search of work. Praise the Lord that all six were released, safe and unharmed, and able to return to their homes.

THURSDAY 18 Suffering Christians around the world draw comfort from the knowledge that the risen Lord Jesus Christ has ascended, and that now in heaven He continues His high priestly work of intercession on behalf of His people (Acts 1:9; Hebrews 4:14, 7:25). Remembering that He has “offered for all time one sacrifice for

sins” and is now seated at the right hand of the Father, believers in every land are confident that their “sins and lawless acts” are forgiven (Hebrews 10:12,17-18). Pray that we too will ascend in heart and mind, reflecting on these glorious spiritual truths.



St Aphrem's School in Bethlehem has provided education for Christian children for 20 years

FRIDAY 19 For 20 years St Aphrem's School in Bethlehem has been committed to providing Christian children with a Christian education in a safe and secure environment in a city where Christians are a despised minority. The school, built largely with Barnabas funds and supported through your generous donations, opened on 12 September 2003 with 15 children.

Today it has 650 pupils, many of whom are from Christian families too poor to pay realistic fees. Give thanks to the Lord for His guidance and protection over the school during the many earthly challenges it has faced. Pray that the school will continue to maintain Biblical values among young people for many years and many generations to come.

SATURDAY 20 Give thanks for the release on 20 March 2023 of Jeff Woodke, a Christian aid worker originally from the United States, who was abducted by Islamists from his home in northern Niger in October 2016. Woodke had lived and worked in Niger since 1992. "I thank God first of all," said Woodke following his release. Ask the Lord to be with our brother as he adjusts to being once again free, helping him to recover from the trauma of what he has experienced. Continue to pray for other Christians held by jihadists in the West African Sahel region.

SUNDAY 21 Lord Jesus, we bring before You faithful Christians in Iran who are persecuted simply for their devotion to You, for gathering to worship You and learn from Your Word. We pray especially that You sustain those imprisoned for following You and enable them to know a freedom in their spirit and a conviction that Your Word is never in chains. We intercede for those in internal exile within Iran, far from the fellowship of Your people. We pray that they will experience the comfort of the Holy Spirit and deep confidence in His counsel wherever You lead them. (2 Timothy 2:9; John 14:16)

MONDAY 22 A female Christian security officer at an airport in Karachi, Pakistan, was threatened by a male Muslim colleague with a “blasphemy” allegation after she admonished him for allowing an acquaintance’s vehicle through security without the required pass. The Muslim man threatened to register a “blasphemy” case against her (potentially leading to a death sentence in the courts), adding that he would “call preachers ... I am mad and will cut [you] up”. Praise God that our sister courageously refused to back down, and for widespread condemnation of the colleague’s actions from many in the Muslim community. Pray that our sister and her family will be protected from those who “aim cruel words like deadly arrows” (Psalm 64:3).

TUESDAY 23 Concerns were raised after the National Assembly of Pakistan passed an amendment to the country’s “blasphemy” law that increased the punishment for insulting the companions, wives or family members of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, from three years to ten years’ imprisonment. Those convicted will also receive a fine of one million rupees (\$6,560). There is already a mandatory death sentence for “defiling the name” of Muhammad. Ask the Lord, who loves justice (Psalm 99:4), to protect Christians and other non-Muslims in Pakistan, who are especially vulnerable to false accusations of “blasphemy”.

WEDNESDAY 24 Life remains a struggle for all people in Afghanistan, especially Christians, following the withdrawal of coalition forces in August 2021 and the subsequent

resurgence of the Taliban. Two-thirds of the population are in need of humanitarian aid, and the looming threats of famine and civil disorder only add to the gravity of the situation. Under the additional threat of being killed as apostates from Islam, many Christians have fled and those who remain are in constant danger. Pray for the protection of secret believers in Afghanistan, as well as for those now in neighbouring countries. Give thanks for those helped by Barnabas to settle in Brazil, asking that the Lord will help them to restart their lives.

THURSDAY 25 Islamists in Bangladesh are suspected of carrying out several attacks against religious minorities, including Hindus and Ahmadiyyas, so far in 2023. In one incident, two followers of Ahmadiyya – a Muslim sect regarded as heretical by both Shia and Sunni Islam – were killed. These attacks underline the growth of Islamist ideology in Bangladesh, a Muslim-majority country. Pray for all those at risk of jihadi violence, and especially our Christian brothers and sisters who are among those vulnerable to attack by extremists.

FRIDAY 26 The economic situation of Sri Lanka has deteriorated rapidly, and last year led to mass protests that resulted in the president fleeing the country and resigning. As a result of this economic crisis, the country has had to request a loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF loan conditions, referred to as austerity measures, are likely to be particularly difficult for the country’s poorest citizens, among whom are many Christians. Remember in your

prayers all suffering in Sri Lanka and especially our impoverished brothers and sisters, asking that the LORD will deliver them from their troubles (Psalm 34:17).

SATURDAY 27 Give thanks that Antoine Macaire Christian Noah, a church minister originally from Cameroon, was able to escape from his abductors in Haiti after ten days in captivity. At the time of writing, three believers, kidnapped from a church in Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince, are still being held. Pray that they too will regain their freedom, and for all God's people in Haiti, many of whom are directly affected by ongoing violence, asking that peace and security will return.

SUNDAY 28 **Lord God and Heavenly Father, we give thanks that the Lord Jesus Christ, having ascended to Your right hand, did not leave His people without a helper, but sent the Holy Spirit to be their comforter and guide. Thank You that the Spirit continues to minister to the Church, including sustaining and preserving those who suffer for their Christian faith. We pray that He will equip us for suffering, as well as for greater acts of service, for we ask it in Christ's Name. (John 14:16-17,26)**

MONDAY 29 "Thank you to Barnabas Aid. You have always been there for us," said a Nigerian church leader in gratitude for the latest consignment of aid given by Barnabas to victims of attacks against Christians by Islamist militants in the Middle Belt. We provided food and practical aid for

villagers after Fulani extremists looted and razed homes in five communities in Kagoro chiefdom, Kaduna State. Ask the Lord to draw close to our brothers and sisters displaced in these latest attacks. Pray that these attacks will cease. Ask that, by God's grace, Christians may set an example of true forgiveness, as they forgive their persecutors (Matthew 6:14).

TUESDAY 30 At least 10 residents of a community in the Christian-majority Atyap Chiefdom of Kaduna State were killed on 14 March. The attack was carried out by suspected Fulani extremists as Islamist violence against Christians persists across northern and Middle Belt Nigeria. Several others were wounded in the armed attack and required hospital treatment. Ask that the Lord will comfort those bereaved and heal those wounded in the Atyap community. Pray that our God will bring an end to the evil being perpetrated against our brothers and sisters.

WEDNESDAY 31 "There are not many of us, but we are very courageous because we are working with God," said a Mauritanian Christian recently. Courage is certainly needed as this is a country where conversion from Islam is potentially punishable by execution according to the law of the land. Ask the Lord Jesus to protect His people, and to guide them in all that they do. A high divorce rate causes much suffering and anguish in Mauritania and some Mauritanian Christians are eager to try to help those affected. Pray that they may be effective peacemakers and also

bring comfort and hope to those who have been rejected and abused.

June

THURSDAY 1 Join with us in giving thanks for the 30 years for which the Lord has allowed Barnabas to serve His Church around the world. In that time Barnabas Aid – originally known as Barnabas Fund – has brought practical help and spiritual encouragement to millions of suffering and persecuted believers. We know from His word that these trials will continue until Christ returns. Pray therefore that God will continue to equip us for service for as long as we are useful to Him, for except the LORD build we labour in vain (Psalm 127:1).

FRIDAY 2 Praise God for the work of food.gives which, by His grace, has achieved immeasurably more than we imagined at its launch in June 2021 (Ephesians 3:20). The food.gives programme has delivered your donations of food and other practical aid to millions of Christians in need. It has strengthened our ability to respond swiftly to global crises, such as this year's Cyclone Freddy in Malawi and the Turkey-Syria earthquake. We are also expanding into food production, with our new food hydration machine hugely increasing our ability to sustain our hungry brothers and sisters. Thank the Lord for His many blessings and pray that food.gives will continue to grow.

SATURDAY 3 “Now, with the knowledge gained from studying with OCRPL, I feel equipped to engage Muslims from a position of understanding.” These are

the words of Lucas Nyaware, a church leader from Kenya, who is currently working to complete his master's programme through the Oxford Centre for Religion and Public Life (OCRPL). OCRPL – part of Barnabas Academia – is working to equip the leaders of the Church for their high calling, including in meeting the challenge of Islam in their nations. Pray for God's blessing on this work to strengthen the global Church.

SUNDAY 4 Almighty and Everlasting God, we bring You thanks that You have taught Your people to know You as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thank You that we can worship one God in Trinity, and the Trinity in unity. We acknowledge that You are three times holy, and praise You that in sovereign grace You make Your people holy. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, including Your persecuted and suffering children around the world, because we ask in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

MONDAY 5 Intercede for Christians in Algeciras, southern Spain, after a church officer was killed and a minister seriously injured in a vicious terrorist attack on two churches. An alleged Muslim extremist was responsible for what the National Court of Spain said could “be classified as a directed jihadi attack”. Ask the Lord to comfort members of both congregations and the wider community, and pray for His protection wherever churches are vulnerable to extremist violence.

TUESDAY 6 Praise God for the release of Pastor Alimujiang Yimiti (Alim) after 15 years of imprisonment in China. Alim, a Christian convert from the Muslim-majority Uyghur people, was accused of anti-state activities and sentenced following two secret trials. He was imprisoned in Xinjiang No. 3 prison, where inmates are reported to be made to wear headphones playing communist propaganda all day every day, which they must memorise and repeat. Pray that Pastor Alim will recover from his lengthy imprisonment, and that, along with his wife and two sons, he will be able to practise his faith in peace.

WEDNESDAY 7 The persecution of Christians in North Korea shows no sign of abating. Officially identified as belonging to the “hostile” class, they are perceived as enemies of the state and subject to discrimination, punishment and in some cases, execution. Christians continuously live with the tension of wanting to make their Lord known and having to keep their faith secret, even from family members, to avoid arrest. Pray that our brothers and sisters will know God’s protection as they gather in secret, and for His strength to uphold those suffering death, torture and abuse in the country’s labour camps.

THURSDAY 8 “We could not allow the thought of comfort, only necessity,” said the pastor of a poor rural congregation in Uzbekistan. It was often so cold inside their dilapidated church building in winter that they had to resort to worshipping in cars with the heaters on. Thanks to a refurbishment part-funded by Barnabas, the congregation

now has heating in their building. Another Uzbek church meeting in a poorly constructed building has also received funding to help with rebuilding. Pray for faithful believers as they seek to build God’s Kingdom. Give thanks that the Uzbek authorities are becoming more tolerant towards the small Christian community and that church registrations are slowly increasing.



Sunita Munawar in hospital following an acid attack [Image credit: Pakistan Christian Post]

FRIDAY 9 “May the Lord bless everyone who has done this work and donated,” said the pastor of a church in Kyrgyzstan, adding, “Our Lord is great.” Thanks to the gifts of supporters, Barnabas funded a year’s course of medication for the pastor and 25 other Christians serving the regional Church suffering from Covid-related and other illnesses. None of the recipients could afford the treatment prescribed by doctors. The majority of the group are converts from Islam who

endure persecution from their Muslim neighbours. Give thanks to God, who is healing those who cried out to Him (Psalm 107:19-20).

SATURDAY 10 Sunita Munawar, a 19-year-old Pakistani Christian woman, suffered dreadful injuries to her face, hands and ankle in a shocking acid attack. The attack was perpetrated by a Muslim man, Kamran Allah Bux, as Sunita was getting off a bus in Karachi. He admitted that he threw acid at Sunita for rejecting his proposal that she convert to Islam and marry him. Pray that Sunita will experience spiritual, emotional and physical healing and that justice will be administered to act as a deterrent against harassment of Christian girls and women in Pakistan.

SUNDAY 11 Heavenly Father, we rejoice that Barnabas-funded aid has become a "light of hope" for 2,000 Christian families struggling to survive following unprecedented flooding in Pakistan. As well as giving thanks that You have graciously attended to their practical needs, we are grateful that You have strengthened them in their faith. Please continue to be with them as they rebuild their lives, meeting all their needs according to the riches of Your glory in Christ Jesus, in whose Name we pray. (Philippians 4:19)

MONDAY 12 Praise God that His Word is being heard by more people around the world, including Christian converts from the Muslim-majority Flame* speakers of West Africa. An

increasing number of Flame people have chosen to follow Christ, and are now being blessed by a new translation of the New Testament in their own language, available both in writing and as radio broadcasts. Pray that these new believers will grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

**Name of people group and language changed for security reasons*

TUESDAY 13 Five people were killed as the Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) bombed a church at Lay Wah village, in Christian-majority Karen State. Among the dead were two church leaders, along with a young boy, thought to be three years old, and his mother. In a separate incident shortly afterwards, Tatmadaw soldiers set fire to a church building and torched homes in the Christian-majority Chan Thar area of Sagaing Region. Ask that the Lord will continue to sustain and provide for His children, and that violence against Christians will end.

WEDNESDAY 14 The military authorities in Chin State, Myanmar, have placed restrictions on Christians meeting for worship. According to a recent announcement, churches must seek permission from the authorities seven days in advance of holding a worship service or any other gathering, while the names of those planning to attend must also be submitted. Chin State is a majority Christian area within Buddhist-majority Myanmar, and the military authorities represent a Burmese Buddhist nationalist ideology. Ask the Lord to sustain His children in Chin

State and across Myanmar. Pray that this new requirement will not become a tool of further persecution.



Christian children at a Myanmar camp for internally displaced persons

THURSDAY 15 Hundreds of thousands of Christians are among an estimated 1.4 million people displaced since the military coup in Myanmar in February 2021. In 2022 Barnabas provided aid for around 3,500 Christian families, supplying staples such as rice, noodles, dried food, salt and cooking oil, as well as medical supplies, tarpaulins and roofing material to those in need. Pray that God will continue to protect our local project partners as they face danger in seeking to reach those displaced, and that our brothers and sisters will be greatly encouraged as support reaches them.

FRIDAY 16 “Jai”, a young Christian woman in Laos, often has to go without food so that her child and her elderly mother can eat. Christians are usually among the poorest people in Laos, and suffer greatly from rising food prices – food inflation reached a record 49% in early 2023. Give thanks that Barnabas has funded the purchase of a rice mill and 260 tonnes of rice that can be stored for more than 12 months. With this our project partner can provide

discounted rice to believers who are struggling, and a steady supply of free rice to those in desperate poverty like our sister Jai, who will now receive 20kg of rice each month for her and her family.

SATURDAY 17 Fifteen Christian families have been driven out of their home village in rural north-western Laos by their neighbours. The families were expelled for their decision to follow Christ. At the time of writing, the authorities had been unable to reach an agreement with villagers for the families to return to their homes. There have been at least two similar incidents in Laos in recent years, in which Christians have been forced from their homes. Pray for a solution that will allow our brothers and sisters to have settled homes where they can worship in peace. Ask that local and national authorities will enforce a national law protecting the rights of the Christian minority.

SUNDAY 18 **Father God, we pray for those among our Christian family who have been forced from their homes by persecution or disaster. Military bombardment has displaced thousands in Myanmar, while Christian families have been chased from their villages in Laos and Vietnam. Islamist violence has destroyed the homes of Christians in Nigeria and neighbouring West African countries. Natural disasters have left many of Your children homeless, including in Malawi, Pakistan, Syria and Turkey. Thank You that You can empathise with their suffering, for on earth Your Son had no place to lay His head. We ask**

in His Name that You will continue to provide for our displaced and homeless brothers and sisters. (Matthew 8:20)

MONDAY 19 “We are still trying to get permits to build our church, but the process takes a long time. Does it mean that we can’t worship in the meantime?” These were the words of an Indonesian Christian after a mob of extremists tried to break up a church service in a large rented house in North Sumatra. A video shows one of the attackers declaring, “We object to you worshipping here.” “I don’t know why, suddenly, we were prohibited to carry out services,” said the Christian, adding, “It really hurt us a lot.” Pray that the Lord, who cares for His children (1 Peter 5:7), will make a way for them to worship in peace and security.

TUESDAY 20 Christians in Indonesia often encounter obstacles from local government when applying for permits to construct church buildings. It was therefore encouraging that the president of the world’s largest Muslim-majority nation reminded local authorities of their obligations to uphold religious freedom. Addressing heads of provinces and districts President Joko Widodo said that Christians and other non-Muslims “have the same rights in terms of freedom of religion and worship”. Give thanks for President Joko’s commitment to freedom of worship and pray that his message will be acted upon at local level, enabling Christians to live out their faith freely.

WEDNESDAY 21 The violence which has afflicted Libya in recent years has caused many expatriate Christians

from the USA, Europe, India and Pakistan to leave the country. But there are Christians from various countries of sub-Saharan Africa still in Libya and attending church when they can. At the same time, many Libyan citizens are losing interest in Islam. A survey showed that 36% of Libyans in the age range 18-29 are non-religious. Some Libyans are turning to Christ. Pray for them as they grow in the faith, mainly through online discipleship and online church services.

THURSDAY 22 The most widely spoken dialect in Morocco is Darija (Moroccan Arabic). The New Testament in Darija was published in 2012 and now in 2023, after various delays, it is expected that the whole Bible will be published. Pray that nothing will hinder the distribution of the Bible to eager Moroccan Christians, so that they can read God’s Word in the language of their heart. Pray that the Word will strengthen them and encourage them to stand firm despite the many pressures and difficulties they face.

FRIDAY 23 At the time of writing, 41 church buildings in Algeria have been closed by the authorities, leaving only 13 still open. Even some church buildings constructed before Algeria became an independent nation in 1962 are thought to be at risk of closure. The Christians continue to meet discreetly in small groups in homes and baptisms take place either in homes or (especially now in the summer when the weather is warm) in rivers. Pray for wisdom, strength and protection for pastors as they visit homes to pray, teach and encourage small groups, and

ask that the Christians will grow in their faith.

SATURDAY 24 According to some estimates there are now 160,000 indigenous Christians in Algeria. Since 2018 there has been much pressure on them from the authorities. At the time of writing, a few Christians are in prison while several others are under investigation. But persecution is bringing the believers closer to the Lord. One group of congregations has committed to continual prayer and fasting, with the congregations taking turns to pray and fast for a day, and all of them doing so on Saturdays. Add your prayers to theirs that the Lord's Kingdom will come and His will be done in Algeria.

SUNDAY 25 **Lord God and Heavenly Father, we lift before You our brothers and sisters in Eritrea, suffering repression and persecution for their faith in Your Son. Draw near to those in prison, strengthening them even as they face torture and abuse, just as our Saviour was with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the blazing furnace. Strengthen those who live with the constant reality that they too may be thrown into prison, as Daniel was strengthened despite the threat of the lion's pit. We ask these things in our Saviour's precious Name. (Daniel 3:25; 6:10)**

MONDAY 26 The Church in Muslim-majority Sudan is no longer harassed by the authorities. Christian cultural centres and libraries that had been forcibly closed for many years have been reopened. A law banning conversion

has been lifted. But Christians still face strong opposition from sections of Sudanese society. Some Christians are very bold in their public witness and some Muslims object vociferously and call down curses on the Christians. Pray for the protection of our brothers and sisters as they preach and distribute the Scriptures. Sudanese Christians also ask for prayer for unity and to be delivered from the spies who infiltrate some congregations.

TUESDAY 27 Mozambique is faced with a growing Islamist insurgency in the north of the country. Believers are regularly targeted by Islamic State Mozambique (ISM), who announce on social media the killing of Christians. In one recent attack, the jihadi group issued a statement reporting that "the soldiers of the Caliphate ... captured five Christians and slaughtered them, praise be to God". Pray for the safety of all those who are vulnerable to violence and disaster in northern Mozambique, particularly our brothers and sisters.

WEDNESDAY 28 Islamists are suspected of killing 15 people in simultaneous attacks on three villages in Ituri province, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The Christian-majority DRC continues to be wracked with violence, particularly in the north-east where various armed groups and Muslim extremists fight for control of territory. Thousands of civilians have been killed and hundreds of thousands displaced from their homes. Pray for peace and security in this troubled region, and especially that the LORD will continue to provide for His people despite violence and Islamist extremism (Psalm 23:5).

THURSDAY 29 Christians in northern and Middle Belt Nigeria remain under persistent threat of being abducted by Islamist extremists. In a recent incident, 25 people were kidnapped while attending a Sunday service at a church in the northern state of Katsina. The minister, Pastor Haruna, was shot in the hand and taken to hospital. Ask the Lord to comfort His Nigerian children, who have suffered so greatly for so long. Pray that the abducted worshippers will be released without harm, and that Pastor Haruna will make a full recovery.

FRIDAY 30 Pastor Musa Hyok and his two sons were killed as Islamist gunmen attacked a Christian community in Plateau State, part of Nigeria's beleaguered Middle Belt. Thankfully Pastor Musa's wife escaped the violence without physical harm, but she and the wider Christian community still suffer the trauma of the attack. Pray that the Lord will grant them a peace that passes understanding (Philippians 4:7), and that even amidst grief and sorrow they will find rest in the promises of the Almighty that all who belong to Christ will gain eternal life (John 3:15).



Burial service for Pastor Musa and his two sons



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