



# barnabasprayer

**Barnabas Aid** - bringing hope to suffering Christians

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To help you  
pray for suffering  
Christians

**November/  
December 2023**

**[barnabasaid.org](https://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.

## November

**WEDNESDAY 1** Give thanks that believers from every part of the world are knit together as one body through our Lord Jesus Christ. Pray that any of the Lord's people who endure suffering and persecution will be an example and encouragement to those who live in safer parts of the world. May they be a powerful witness to all those around them. Ask that He will sustain them in their Christian faith, until the day when those from the east and those from the west "will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 8:11).

**THURSDAY 2** The Christian community in the Pakistani city of Jaranwala, Punjab, was devastated by anti-Christian riots on 16 August. Armed mobs, incited by local mosque leaders, attacked 27 church buildings, burning five. More than 100 houses belonging to Christians were ransacked, and many set on fire. Bibles and hymnbooks were also burned. The violence followed a spurious accusation of "blasphemy" against two Christian men. Lift up to the Lord these two men and their families, our brothers

and sisters in Jaranwala, and believers across Pakistan, asking that He will continue to keep them safe in this day of trouble (Psalm 27:5).



Christian victims of the violence pick up Barnabas-funded food, hygiene supplies and household equipment

**FRIDAY 3** "It appeared as if we'd all be killed like animals," said Martha, who thanks the Lord for protecting her family when Muslim extremists rampaged through the Christian area of Jaranwala in Pakistan in August. Twenty-seven churches as well as pastors' houses were ransacked, Bibles burned and the homes of more than 100 Christians attacked. Martha thanks Barnabas for providing more than 170 families with food and practical aid. "Barnabas stood side by

side with us ... and gave us hope.” Pray that Christian families will be enabled to rebuild their lives following their ordeal. Ask that Muslim and Christian communities will live together in peace.

**SATURDAY 4** More than ten new “blasphemy” cases have been registered with police in Pakistan in the weeks since anti-Christian riots swept through the city of Jaranwala, according to Barnabas Aid contacts. Most of these accusations were levelled against Christians. Our brothers and sisters in Pakistan are vulnerable to false accusations of “blasphemy”, as simply stating certain Christian beliefs can be construed as “blasphemy” by zealous Muslims. Accusations are often a result of animosity towards individual Christians or the Christian community in general. Pray that the Lord will protect His people from those who devise false accusations (Psalm 35:19-20).

**SUNDAY 5** Lord Jesus Christ, we bring before You the anguish that is often felt when we read of the suffering endured by our persecuted, marginalised and impoverished Christian family around the world. We also bring to You the suffering that we all experience to one degree or another. We recognise that nobody in this world is fully free from poverty, ill health or loneliness. Encourage us, we pray, even amidst “affliction ... bitterness and hardship”, that however greatly we are afflicted it is never as much as You suffered when You carried our sins. (Lamentations 3:1, 5; Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 27:46)

**MONDAY 6** “There are reports of mass killings, raping and torturing of people. A scene of war crimes is unfolding.” These were the words of Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, Primate of the Armenian Church of the UK and Ireland, in the days following an invasion of the Armenian Christian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh by Muslim-majority Azerbaijan on 19 September. At the time of writing more than 100,000 people – almost the entire Karabakh population – have fled into Armenia itself to escape the violence. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said this was because they fear “the danger of ethnic cleansing”. Pray for the suffering Christians of Nagorno-Karabakh, asking that the Lord will be their strength and shield (Psalm 28:7) throughout their traumatic experience.



Armenian Christian children among the thousands displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh [Image credit: Arman Tatoyan/UNCRC]

**TUESDAY 7** Prior to the Azerbaijani invasion of Nagorno-Karabakh, senior Christian leaders had already called on UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and US President Joe Biden to intervene urgently to prevent a new Armenian Genocide in Nagorno-Karabakh. Warnings of a new genocide also came from the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention in early

September. The Armenian Christian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh had been under a blockade by Azerbaijan since December 2022, causing widespread shortages of food, medicine and fuel. Pray that the invasion will cause the international community to take these warnings seriously as Christians in Armenia itself remain vulnerable to future attack.

**WEDNESDAY 8** Praise the Lord that more than 700 Christians affected by the collapse of the Kakhovka Dam in Ukraine have been helped with Barnabas-funded aid, including drinking water, bread, clothes, sleeping bags and toiletries. The dam, in the Kherson region of conflict-affected Ukraine, collapsed on 6 June 2023. Surging waters hit hundreds of towns and villages in the region, destroying homes and displacing thousands of people. Give thanks to God for enabling this swift response. Pray that those affected by the flooding will receive guidance and courage to be able to rebuild their lives (Psalm 71:20-21).

**THURSDAY 9** Give thanks that a Christian charity worker and her daughter who were abducted in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on 27 July were released, safe and unharmed, 13 days later. Alix Dorsainvil – a nurse from New Hampshire, United States – is a staff member at a Haitian Christian humanitarian organisation. She and her daughter were taken from the organisation's headquarters. In a statement the charity announced, "It is with a heart of gratitude and immense joy that we at El Roi Haiti confirm the safe release," adding, "Today we are praising God for answered prayer!"

Rejoice with our brothers and sisters as they rejoice (Romans 12:15).

**FRIDAY 10** A Christian taxi driver in Minas Gerais State, Brazil, was attacked by her passengers for playing a Christian song as she was driving. Mariana Domingues Fidelis, 27, asked two passengers to get out of her taxi after they began swearing at and threatening her. After leaving the taxi the couple began punching Mariana and pulling her hair. A parking attendant nearby intervened, and the couple were arrested. Pray for Mariana, asking that she will recover from her injuries and the shock of her experience. Ask that the Lord will strengthen believers in regions of the world where hostility towards Christians is increasing.

**SATURDAY 11** Christian young people in the West are unlikely to meet with the kind of pressures and persecution that are faced by those in many other parts of the world. Nevertheless, many who have recently started college or university may have found greater hostility and opposition to their Christian beliefs than they were expecting. Ask that these young people will be given a heart of wisdom (Proverbs 2:10) in knowing how they should respond if this is their experience. Pray that they will be sustained by their fellowship with Christ and with their Christian brothers and sisters.

**SUNDAY 12** Lord God and Heavenly Father, we give thanks we are not consumed, because Your compassions never fail. Nevertheless, we pray that You will help us to examine ourselves when

**we suffer, humbling ourselves and confessing our sin and our rebellion before You. We ask this grace also for our persecuted brothers and sisters, that they will remain humble before You even as they endure the hatred of this world. Thank You in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ that if we confess our sins, then You are faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (Lamentations 3:22; 1 John 1:9)**

**MONDAY 13** The appalling scale of anti-Christian violence in sub-Saharan Africa is laid out in a new Barnabas Aid report. The report shows that over the past 20 years tens of thousands of believers have been slaughtered by Islamist extremists, with Nigeria the worst affected, followed by Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Pray that African governments, helped by the international community, will be able to respond to the terrorist threat and protect vulnerable Christian communities. Ask that our African brothers and sisters will be comforted knowing that the Lord is a strong tower and a place of refuge for His people (Proverbs 18:10).

To read more about anti-Christian violence in sub-Saharan Africa and our petition calling for action to protect vulnerable Christian communities, please visit [barnabasaid.org/resources/africa-petition](https://barnabasaid.org/resources/africa-petition)

**TUESDAY 14** Twenty-one people were killed in two Christian villages in Plateau State, Nigeria, in the early hours

of 9 August. Large numbers of Fulani Islamist extremists first attacked Batin village, killing 17. The gunmen went on to murder another four people in nearby Rayogot community. Twelve of the dead were internally displaced people who had fled to the area to escape previous extremist violence. Local Christians say they had warned security services that the latest attacks were planned but claim the authorities failed to take action. Ask the Lord to comfort the bereaved with the assurance that their loved ones are “at home with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). Pray for an end to the persistent anti-Christian violence that afflicts Middle Belt Nigeria.

**WEDNESDAY 15** Jihadists in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) claimed in early July the killing of 17 Christians in separate attacks. In the first, fighters from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) – which is affiliated to Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh) – massacred 13 Christians in the Beni area of North Kivu Province. Four more Christians were killed in subsequent attacks in Ituri Province. Ask the Lord to bring an end to this ongoing violence in north-eastern DRC. Pray that He will continue to be a refuge for His people, delivering them from all who pursue them (Psalm 7:1).

**THURSDAY 16** In a shocking incident in northern Mozambique in early July, a Christian was abducted and beheaded by jihadists affiliated to Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh). The Christian was one of two fishermen abducted by the extremists – the other man was allowed to go free because he was a Muslim. While Islamists in Mozambique have said clearly that they will kill

moderate Muslims who do not join the Islamist cause, this incident underlines the particular threat faced by Africa's Christians. Pray that the Lord will restrain the hand of the extremists, bringing about peace for all people in troubled northern Mozambique, especially our brothers and sisters.



Nigerian Christian women receive Barnabas-funded sleeping mats and blankets

**FRIDAY 17** “God, you see and hear the cries of your people,” said a Nigerian Christian as he sang and danced in joy, praising God for the arrival of Barnabas-funded aid for six Christian-majority villages in Kaduna State that have endured incessant attacks by Islamist terrorists. Kaduna State endures high levels of jihadi violence. At least 23 pastors have been murdered and more than 200 churches forced to shut across the state in the last four years. Pray for God’s protection over His people and His Church in Nigeria. Ask that Christians remain steadfast in their faith, in spite of the ever-present threat of violence against them.

**SATURDAY 18** Thousands of people were forced to flee from their homes as fighting intensified in the Sudanese state of South Kordofan. South Kordofan is home to many Christians, most of whom live in the Nuba Mountains region in the north of the state. Observers have predicted that the state might lapse into a full-scale civil war as conflict continues to rage across the entire country. Lift up to the Lord His people in South Kordofan and throughout Sudan, as well as those who have fled for safety in neighbouring countries. Pray that there will be peace for all the people of Sudan.

**SUNDAY 19** Heavenly Father, we intercede for Your church in Eritrea and call upon You to fortify our brothers and sisters amid much persecution. We particularly bring before You those imprisoned under harsh conditions for their love and devotion for You. Please enable them to endure, and bring about their release from captivity. We thank You that the Word of God is never in chains and that Your truth can reach the darkest corners of society. We pray for a mighty strengthening of Your people across Eritrea, for we ask in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Timothy 2:9)

**MONDAY 20** Thousands of people were displaced from their homes by devastating flooding that struck parts of Oromia, Ethiopia, during the June-September rainy season. Ethiopia and some neighbouring countries have suffered drought for several years, leaving the ground so parched that it

could not soak up the sudden rainfall. There are around 20 million Oromo Christians. Pray for our brothers and sisters, and all those affected, asking that they will receive the help that they need. Ask the Lord, who “supplies the earth with rain” (Psalm 147:8), to bring an end to both flooding and drought in the Horn of Africa.

**TUESDAY 21** More than 30 heavily armed Islamists set fire to a church building and at least ten houses in Lamu West on Kenya’s coast on 21 August. Members of al-Shabaab struck Salama village, looting homes and stealing goats. The gang went on to ambush and kill a lorry driver and his co-driver nearby. Salama village was also attacked in June by suspected militants who killed five people and razed six homes. Ask for comfort for villagers who lost their church and homes in the attack, and ask that they receive the strength to rebuild. Pray for the bereaved, and ask that attacks by al-Shabaab will cease.

**WEDNESDAY 22** Potentially hundreds of lives were saved as Ugandan police foiled an Islamic State (IS – also known as ISIS, ISIL, Daesh) bomb plot that targeted a church in the national capital of Kampala on Sunday 3 September. A jihadi bomber was arrested as he was about to enter the church with an improvised explosive device. Five more suspected IS fighters were arrested in the days that followed, and five other bombs discovered in Kampala. Praise the Lord for protecting the lives of His people from their opponents (Psalm 64:1). Pray that any other planned attacks will be thwarted.

**THURSDAY 23** “Your support and prayers make us feel healed and our tears are wiped away,” said Alganyira, a survivor of a massacre at a Christian boarding school in Kasese District, Uganda, in which 42 believers – mostly pupils – were killed by Islamists. Barnabas met the medical bills of survivors and provided counselling for them and the bereaved. We also supported members of the traumatised community, including providing food for 700 vulnerable households. Pray that God, who makes wars cease, will bring peace to this community and help it rebuild (Psalm 46:9-11). Ask that they remain strong during these difficult times.

**FRIDAY 24** Four hundred Cameroonian Christians – mostly women and children – thanked God for “this testimony of love” after Barnabas provided clean water at a refugee camp in Chad. They had escaped Islamist violence in their homeland, but began falling ill with stomach upsets on arriving at the camp because its water supply was dirty. Two Barnabas-funded boreholes drilled on church land just outside the camp provided clean water and the refugees are no longer becoming ill. Space on the land was also set aside for the refugees to worship. Praise the Lord for the project’s success and give thanks to Him for His loving kindness (Psalm 103:1-4).

**SATURDAY 25** Cameroonian pastor Godwill Nkese has found his ministry opposed by followers of African Traditional Religion, who see Christianity as nothing more than “the white man’s tradition” and a form of

Western colonialism. “There are times I have been verbally assaulted and driven away,” says Pastor Godwill. He is one of more than 800 Global South ministry leaders from more than 30 countries receiving ministry training with Barnabas Aid’s The Shepherd’s Academy. Pray that the Lord will protect him and other believers from any harm. Ask that the Holy Spirit will use the training given through TSA to equip these church leaders further for their Christian ministry.

**SUNDAY 26** Sovereign Lord, we pray for the tiny Christian minority in Saudi Arabia. We thank You for reforms recently introduced that have softened some of the harshest laws in the birthplace of Islam. We ask You to encourage and build up our Saudi brothers and sisters, almost all converts from Islam who are secret believers. We ask that they will receive Divine wisdom to know how to build on the foundation of their faith, which is our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose mighty Name we pray. (1 Corinthians 3:10)

**MONDAY 27** More than 4,000 people have died (with, at the time of writing, another 8,540 still unaccounted for) in devastating floods that struck Libya in September. The floods have also displaced more than 43,000 people. Muslim-majority Libya has experienced chaos and civil war since the overthrow of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. The small Christian community consists mainly of migrant workers and refugees, but there is a small number of indigenous Muslim-

background believers. Pray for the ongoing relief effort in Libya as it recovers from this terrible disaster.



An Egyptian Christian woman receives Barnabas-funded sewing training

**TUESDAY 28** Many poor and marginalised Christian women and young men struggle to find work in rural areas of Egypt. Christian women are especially vulnerable, particularly if they are widowed. Barnabas is helping our brothers and sisters to become self-sufficient by helping them to set up in business. “Mary”, one of 51 Christian women whom we helped to start a sewing enterprise, can now pay her daughter’s school fees. “I feel that I have ... provided them a secure future,” she said. Give thanks to God for the opportunities He is opening for Mary and other believers. Pray that we can help many more Christians to become independent financially.

**WEDNESDAY 29** “The support we are receiving from Barnabas is a great answer to prayer, and our ministry is revived,” said Pastor Ahmed from Algeria. Barnabas is helping to meet the living costs of Pastor Ahmed and other



ministers whose churches have been shut down by the Algerian authorities, leaving them without incomes to support their families. Our provision means pastors are relieved of the worry of feeding their families and can focus on ministering to their hard-pressed church members through home groups and visits. Give thanks for the Lord's provision. Ask that Algerian Christians take strength in the joy of the Lord (Nehemiah 8:10).

**THURSDAY 30** Praise God for enabling Barnabas Aid to respond swiftly to the Morocco earthquake, which struck on 8 September, killing around 3,000 people and displacing thousands more. Within days we sent funding for blankets, food, medicine and tents, which were distributed to those most in need by a local ministry team. "Your dedication and commitment to people who are affected by the earthquake is evident," said a Moroccan pastor. "Please keep us in your prayers."

## December

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**FRIDAY 1** Rice prices are reaching record highs globally as part of the ongoing global food crisis that is affecting the world's poorest, among whom are many Christians. The crisis is caused by, among other things, extreme weather events such as floods and droughts, and conflicts that disrupt agriculture and food distribution. Give thanks that since Barnabas Aid's food.gives project was launched in June 2021, we have sent more than 71 million servings of food to hungry and impoverished Christians. Pray for the continued success of food.gives, for

the work of all those working to alleviate hunger and malnutrition, and ultimately for an end to the global shortage of food.

**SATURDAY 2** A theological seminary in Beijing, which is linked to China's Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) – the official Protestant church in China – inaugurated an exhibition centre dedicated to the Sinicisation of Christianity on 22 September. The centre aims to showcase the history of developing Christianity in the Chinese context. Such contextualisation can be a useful process, ensuring that the Gospel is preached and lived out in a manner appropriate to a particular time and place. However, it can also be a means by which the truth of Christianity is obscured or distorted. Ask the Lord, who gives generously, to give wisdom to Chinese church leaders as they shepherd His flock (James 1:5).

**SUNDAY 3** Lord Jesus, we give thanks for the faithfulness of Christians in North Korea despite intense suffering and persecution. We stand with those in labour camps and prisons and especially those singled out for the harshest punishments because of their faith in You. We pray that Your transforming presence and the comfort of Your Spirit will instil hope where there seems to be no hope of human help. We praise You that You are the light shining in the darkness that cannot be overpowered. We ask that You will cause Your church to shine brilliantly despite the secrecy they have to exercise, for we ask in Your precious Name. (John 1:5)

**MONDAY 4** A court in Sumatra, Indonesia, has imprisoned a Muslim man after he broke up a church service and claimed it should not be going ahead. Prosecutors had originally sought the maximum four-year sentence for the man, but the court handed down a much-reduced sentence of around three months (including time already served) on the grounds that he had undergone a peace process with the congregation he had harmed. Give thanks that the authorities took this anti-Christian action seriously. Praise God for the witness of His people who, like their Saviour, when reviled did not revile in return (1 Peter 2:23, ESV).

**TUESDAY 5** Three deacons from a church in Mindat Township, Chin State, Myanmar, are believed to have been tortured to death by the Buddhist extremist Myanmar military (Tatmadaw). Chai Kay, Hon Chway and Hon Kay were arrested on 16 July along with the pastor of the church, Htang Kay On. After being tortured and left for dead in a nearby ditch, Pastor Htang was able to escape and receive treatment. However, the three deacons have not been seen or heard from since their arrest. Pray that if these three men are still alive they will be released, and that if not their families and friends will be comforted by knowing that they are with the Lord. Ask that Pastor Htang will recover from his ordeal.

**WEDNESDAY 6** The Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) has been accused of committing war crimes by deliberately attacking churches, hospitals and schools where displaced people are sheltering. The Human Rights Organisation of Christian-majority Chin State claims that 95 religious buildings, mostly churches, have been hit by shelling in the region

since the military seized power in a coup in February 2021. Five hospitals and clinics and four schools have also been destroyed, it said. In August two men were arrested and killed by soldiers and around 100 people forced from their homes in Christian-majority Kachin State. Ask for an end to violence in Myanmar, so that all people can live in peace. Pray especially for the Lord's protection over His people.

**THURSDAY 7** Mountain areas of Myanmar's Christian-majority Karen State can suffer from freezing temperatures at this time of year. The desperate cold can pose a serious risk for families displaced from their homes by the ongoing violence, with many thousands of Karen Christians living in makeshift shelters in the jungle. As well as the danger of freezing to death, the change of season can also bring flu, bronchitis, malaria and dysentery. Pray for the work of Barnabas Aid partners and all aid agencies working to give practical support to displaced and vulnerable people in Myanmar.

**FRIDAY 8** A man and a woman in the city of Janakpur, Nepal, were attacked on the morning of 5 September for preaching Christianity. A group of extremists smeared black soot on the man's face and handed both Christians to the police. The incident came as church leaders in Nepal reported attacks on at least seven church buildings in August and September. Ask that attacks on Christians will come to an end. Pray that the two arrested Christians will not face charges despite the vague wording of a law banning "hurting religious sentiment", which makes any sharing of belief potentially illegal.



A Christian man (with black soot on his face) and woman arrested in Nepal [Image credit: Khabarhub]

**SATURDAY 9** A Barnabas-supported training ministry in Nepal strengthens believers in their faith and prepares Christians to serve their local church in a country where believers often face hostility. Courses provide discipleship and leadership development through self-study and group discussion led by trained tutors. Rupilal says one of the courses “changed my thinking” and made him realise the importance of Bible study, prayer and service. Now he leads his village church discipling others. Praise God that Nepalese believers are being strengthened in their love for our Sovereign Lord (Habakkuk 3:19). Pray that through them more people will hear God’s Word.

**SUNDAY 10** Almighty God, we lift up to You our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan. We ask You to provide for their physical and spiritual needs as they endure severe poverty along with the rest of the country. We pray for Your protection for

Christians who, as converts from Islam, must keep their faith hidden under threat of execution as apostates. Please empower them to live gracious, compassionate and righteous lives, reminding them that “the righteous will never be shaken; they will be remembered forever”. (Psalm 112:6)

**MONDAY 11** Afghanistan’s Taliban government detained 18 charity workers (17 Afghans and one US citizen) for allegedly preaching Christianity in early September. The workers were arrested from the office of Swiss charity International Assistance Mission (IAM) in Ghor Province, central Afghanistan. IAM, which has done humanitarian work in Afghanistan since 1966, is a Christian charity but provides aid to people of all religions. Pray that all the staff members will be released unharmed and that the authorities will be convinced of the vital contribution Christians are making to help Afghan people.

**TUESDAY 12** Lift up in prayer Pastor Zulfiqar Gill, who was dragged out of a church service he was leading in Peshawar, Pakistan, by extremists who beat him with the butts of their rifles. Pastor Zulfiqar was left with injuries to his head and eye. The attackers also fired several shots inside the church building. Thankfully there were no fatalities and police intervened to arrest the gunmen. Give thanks for this intervention, and for condemnation of the violence from Pakistan’s Muslim League. Pray that the Lord will bring peace in Pakistan.



A TSA tutor prepares to lead an online class

**WEDNESDAY 13** “I give all glory and honour to my God for this privilege of learning.” These were the words of “Anisha”, a South Asian Christian missionary and one of more than 800 ministry leaders from more than 30 countries studying with Barnabas Aid’s The Shepherd’s Academy (TSA). The aim of TSA (which is the undergraduate section of our Oxford Centre for Religion and Public Life) is to empower these leaders with the necessary tools to lead their communities and churches faithfully and effectively, emulating the Good Shepherd in their contexts. Pray that the Lord will continue to use TSA to strengthen His Church in Christian-minority and other Global South contexts.

**THURSDAY 14** Sujata is four and attends one of seven Barnabas-funded Christian pre-schools in Bangladesh that provide free education to Christian children from impoverished communities. Most of the children’s parents are low-paid day labourers ostracised by their Muslim neighbours. Pupils learn English, maths and Bangla

as well as Bible stories and Christian values. Sujata tells her parents what she’s learned from the Bible when she gets home. “They love to hear these stories,” she says. Give thanks for the Christian teaching of these pre-schools that is benefitting families of believers. Pray that the children continue to grow in the joy of the Lord.

**FRIDAY 15** Violence again flared up in the restive north-eastern Indian state of Manipur in late September. Hundreds of people have been killed in clashes that began in May this year, most of them from the Christian-majority Kuki ethnic group. Pray that the Lord will protect His people from harm, and restore peace for all the citizens of Manipur.

**SATURDAY 16** The Sri Lankan Ministry of Religion has announced plans to make compulsory the registration of places of worship. At present it is not a requirement for churches, mosques or temples to be registered with the Sri Lankan government, although sometimes extremists and local officials use a lack of registration as a pretext to harass churches. The ministry also plans to introduce laws combating speech judged to be hurtful or offensive to other religions. Pray that these new laws, if enacted, will not become a means of increasing anti-Christian persecution.

**SUNDAY 17** Lord God, the righteous Judge of all the world, we pray today for Christians facing hostile questioning by earthly authorities, whether in law courts or under torture, and for those who expect to experience this in

the future. Please keep them from all worry about what to say. May the Holy Spirit give them the right words, and may our brothers and sisters have the assurance that it is He who is speaking. May their witness and testimony work powerfully in the hearts of their accusers and all who hear. We ask in the Name of the Christ. (Mark 13:11)

**MONDAY 18** In June 2023 the government of Uganda passed new legislation that permits Islamic banking, and on 8 September the Bank of Uganda granted the first Islamic banking licence. Christians are concerned that the move has opened a door that will allow further elements of sharia (Islamic law) to be incorporated into the legal system of Uganda, which is a secular Christian-majority state. Pray that church leaders will be given wisdom in how to respond to these developments.

**TUESDAY 19** Voters go to the polls in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) tomorrow, as the country holds elections for the post of president and its 500-seat National Assembly, as well as for regional and local government. Christian-majority DRC is a deeply troubled land. Vast mineral deposits have led to even greater hardship, as mines are places of danger, disease, hardship and violence. Around 1,800 civilians were killed in 2022 alone by armed groups in the north-eastern provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu. Pray that the Lord will enable whoever gains power in tomorrow's elections to take steps to improve the lives of all people in the DRC.



Nigerian church minister Na'aman Danlami was burned to death [Image credit: The Pillar]

**WEDNESDAY 20** A church minister in southern Kaduna State, Nigeria, was burned to death on 7 September by Fulani Islamist extremists. The assailants were attempting to abduct Na'aman Danlami and others from the rectory of a church in Kafanchan when they set fire to his car. The fire spread to the house. Three other men were able to escape, but Na'aman died in the blaze. "The assault lasted more than an hour, but there was no reaction or support from the military forces," said Julius Kundi, a senior church leader. Pray for the bereaved family and friends of Na'aman, asking that they will be comforted by the Lord's unfailing love (Psalm 119:76). Ask that security forces will be awakened to the need to protect Christians.

**THURSDAY 21** Pray for the bereaved family, friends and congregation of Pastor Jeremiah Mayau, who was shot and killed while working on his farm in Kaduna State, Nigeria. "It is very painful that gunmen move freely in broad daylight to execute their evil act and get away with it," said Reverend John Joseph Hayab, chair of the Kaduna branch of the Christian Association of Nigeria. Ask that the Lord's people in Nigeria will continue to

trust in Him through all of their trials, difficulties and suffering.

**FRIDAY 22** Abductions of pastors and church ministers are a regular occurrence in northern and Middle Belt Nigeria. Pastor Usman Umaru was kidnapped from his church in the Jos East Local Government Area (LGA) of Plateau State on 13 September, along with two other members of the congregation. A month earlier, two church ministers – Paul Sanogo and a seminarian named Melchior – were taken from Paikoro LGA in Niger State. Pray for these three men and many other pastors – not known to us, but known to the Lord – who have been abducted in Nigeria. Ask the Lord to free them and to heal them from physical and mental harm.

**SATURDAY 23** Praise the Lord that abducted Nigerian church minister Obioma Okide was freed after being held for four days by his kidnappers. The minister was taken on Sunday 17 September as he was on his way to lead a church service in the Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State. A church statement thanked God for His protection and believers for their prayers. Join with our Nigerian brothers and sisters in giving thanks, as well as continuing to pray for other pastors and church ministers who remain in captivity.

**SUNDAY 24** **Lord God and Heavenly Father, we are mindful that this time of celebration is often a time of fear for our brothers and sisters around the world, who are at increased risk of attack. We pray that You will protect Your people from any violence as they meet for worship on this Lord's Day or gather to**

**celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ tomorrow, because we ask it in His Name (Psalm 140:1).**

**MONDAY 25** “Joy to the world! The Lord is come.” Give thanks that the eternal Son of God humbled himself to become a human being, coming “in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering” (Romans 8:3). Having humbled Himself in this way, He then humbled Himself to endure death on a cross, dying for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures (Philippians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3). Pray that these wonderful truths will be a particular blessing to our suffering and persecuted Church family, and that they will be reminded that the Lord God has Himself entered into their suffering and hardship.

**TUESDAY 26** “We thank the Lord for His graces bestowed upon us and remain in gratitude to Barnabas Aid for their unconditional love and care for our school and all its members.” These were the words of Miss Amal Behnam, director of St Aphrem’s Christian school in Bethlehem, which is supported with funding from Barnabas. Barnabas supports more than 13,000 needy Christian children in 140 Christian schools in nine countries. Pray for the continued success of St Aphrem’s in Bethlehem and all of these schools in training Christian children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6).

**WEDNESDAY 27** More than 30 church leaders attended a conference in Erbil, Iraq, with international human rights experts investigating the crimes of Islamic State (IS – also known as ISIS, ISIL, Daesh) against Christians and

others in that country. Christian Ritscher, who is leading the investigation, told the church leaders, “Your togetherness and your resilience are inspirational, not just to the Christian community in Iraq, but also to us.” Mr Ritscher added that the investigation had uncovered further evidence of IS crimes, “including the destruction of Christian cultural heritage in Mosul and the Nineveh Plains, where IS perpetrators targeted churches, monasteries, cemeteries, manuscripts, Christian symbols and artwork”. Give thanks that these anti-Christian crimes are being acknowledged. Pray for healing for traumatised believers, and other victims of IS.

**THURSDAY 28** At the time of writing, at least ten of the 69 Christians arrested in Iran in June and July are still being held. Those who have been released say they were forced to sign commitments not to undertake any Christian activities, or ordered to undergo Islamic re-education classes. Almost all of those arrested are Farsi (Persian)-speaking converts from Islam. Ask the Lord to sustain those now kept from meeting with other Christians, forced to attend Islamic classes, or who remain in prison, asking that He will not leave them in the power of their opponents or let them be condemned (Psalm 37:33).

**FRIDAY 29** Iranian-Armenian pastor Anooshavan Avedian, 61, reported to prison in Tehran, Iran, on 18 September to begin a 10-year sentence for engaging in “propaganda contrary to and disturbing to the holy religion of Islam”. Anooshavan was sentenced in 2022 but did not receive the official summons to start serving his sentence until this month. At the conclusion of his prison term, Anooshavan faces a further 10

years’ “deprivation of social rights”. Ask that Pastor Anooshavan will experience God’s sustaining power as he begins this long sentence.



Pastor Joseph Shahbazian outside Evin Prison after his release [Image credit: Article 18]

**SATURDAY 30** Praise the Lord for the release of Iranian-Armenian pastor Joseph Shahbazian from Tehran’s Evin Prison. Pastor Joseph was pardoned and released on 13 September after serving 13 months of his sentence. The sentence, originally ten years, had been reduced to two in May 2023. Ask that Pastor Joseph, who suffered ill health during his imprisonment, will receive the medical care that he needs. Pray that the day will come when there will be no punishment for practising Christianity in Iran.

**SUNDAY 31** Lord God and Heavenly Father, thank You for providing the resources and guiding Barnabas in completing hundreds of life-changing and life-saving projects throughout 2023. Thank You for the gift of food and water, medical supplies, Bibles, Christian education, and so much else for our suffering and persecuted family. Please continue to direct the ministry of Barnabas – and other ministries – in serving the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose Name we pray.



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