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Lent Prayer - Burma (Myanmar)

Project(s): 75-763, 75-821

Country/Region: Myanmar, Burma, South and East Asia

Nearly two dozen worshippers – mostly women and elderly people – had gathered for a Sunday morning service on 16 October 2011 when the Burmese army attacked their church in Kachin State, Burma (Myanmar). The soldiers seized control of the church in Namsan Yang village, Waimaw township, and when a minister tried to talk to the soldiers, he was hit on the head with a rifl e butt. The troops torched the whole northern part of the village and destroyed two church buildings.

Christian children in Burma from an orphanage supported by Barnabas Fund make their way to school

In one township severe restrictions have been imposed on Christian activities, including reading the Bible, conducting a Bible study and holding Sunday school, while in another village the Burmese army uprooted a large cross from a hilltop where villagers had planned eventually to construct a church; the soldiers used the Christian symbol as a stand for their weapons.

The army launched its offensive in Kachin State, which is over 90 per cent Christian, in June 2011. Soldiers have raped, tortured and killed civilians, used forced labour, set homes alight and plundered villages. “We are afraid the Burmese soldiers will be attacking our village at any time. We had to leave everything behind. We don’t know when it will be safe to go back,” said one villager from central Kachin.

Most Christians in Burma are members of non-Burman ethnic minorities; they are frequently targeted by the ruling military junta, partly for their ethnicity and partly for their faith. The army raid their jungle villages, destroying churches and houses and killing those who do not manage to escape in time. Many children are orphaned in this anti-Christian violence. The junta also makes use of Buddhism, the majority faith, as a weapon against Christians. In Chin state, Buddhist monks are sent into towns and villages to control them, and they report any disobedience to the army.

Lift to the Lord our brothers and sisters in Burma, who have endured so much harassment and violence because of their faithfulness to the Lord Jesus. Give thanks for their courage, and pray that they will continue to rejoice in the Lord despite their trials (Habakkuk 3:18). Pray for Christians in Kachin State, that they will fi nd comfort in Christ at this diffi cult time and pray for the children who have lost one or both parents in anti-Christian violence; pray that they may receive love, support and protection. Thank the Lord for those who distribute aid to the families who have been forced to fl ee their homes.

Barnabas Fund projects include:

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