

Lent Prayer - Victims of Violence

Project(s): 00-345

Country/Region: Nigeria, Iraq, Egypt, Middle East and North Africa, Africa

“He will ... save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight.” (Psalm 72: 13-15)

Dozens of Christian men, women and children fell victim to horrific and targeted violence as they gathered to celebrate Christmas 2010 and New Year 2011 in Egypt, Iraq and Nigeria. Explosions at Christmas celebrations in Jos, Nigeria, killed 32 people on 24 December. Coordinated bombings at Christian homes in Baghdad, Iraq, killed two people and injured 14 on 30 December, and on 1 January 2011 explosives were detonated outside a church in Alexandria, Egypt, killing at least 21 Christians.

On 31 October, a bloody siege at a church in Baghdad left more than 50 people dead. Following the attack Al-Qaeda said that Christians everywhere were “legitimate targets” and extended their threat to “all Christian centres, organisations and institutions, leaders and followers”. Iraqi Christians were left to wrestle with the terrible decision of whether to flee their homeland or stay and risk being killed.

Where Christianity is the minority faith, Christians can face grave danger from extremists in the majority faith communities. This ranges from destruction of their homes and church buildings, to physical violence, imprisonment, murder or judicial execution. In the Indian state of Karnataka one senior church leader said that Christians are living in a “climate of fear, persecution and harassment”, after four attacks by Hindu extremists in one day in 2010.

Christians may also experience unjust arrest and detention. In Iran armed special security officers arrested 25 Christians, including pastors, leaders and converts to Christianity, in the early hours of 26 December. Following intense interrogation some were released, after signing statements that they would no longer participate in Christian activities. The others remain in prison without charge. Barnabas Fund helps victims and their families, providing support for wives and children if the breadwinner is in prison, safe refuges, medical care, training or small business start-up costs to enable them to rebuild their lives, and many other needs.

Pray for strength and comfort in the Lord Jesus for all those who have been left bereaved or injured following anti-Christian violence. Pray that they will have grace to forgive their enemies (Matthew 5:44). Pray for calm in the countries where extremists use violence against the Christian minority. Pray too that the authorities will act to protect their Christians citizens and pursue justice for those who were killed or injured. Praise God that Barnabas Fund can bring hope and comfort to victims of anti-Christian violence themselves or whose family members have been affected.

Barnabas Fund projects include

- Victims of Violence Fund (Ref. 00-345) [Donate](#)

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A Christian in Chad stands in front of the ruins of his home following anti-Christian violence