



barnabasprayer

BARNABAS AID - AID AGENCY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH
BRINGING HOPE TO SUFFERING CHRISTIANS

To help you
pray for the
persecuted Church

13 – 30
APRIL 2020

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Thank you for praying for the persecuted Church. For March and April 2020 we are providing suggested prayer points in two different ways.

From 1 March to 12 April (Easter Sunday) you can use the newly revised and updated 2020 edition of the *Praying for the Persecuted Church* booklet to guide you in your prayers for persecuted Christians around the world. The booklet, enclosed with this issue of *Barnabas Aid*, gives detailed information on 39 countries where Christians are facing pressure and persecution and prayer points highlighting their needs. On Page 53 of the booklet, a schedule is provided of how to use the booklet in your daily intercessions for countries where Christians are persecuted.

From 13 to 30 April, prayer points then continue in this issue of *Barnabas Prayer*. Please use *Barnabas Prayer* in conjunction with the *Praying for the Persecuted Church* booklet. You can follow our recommendations on page 53 of the booklet for dates from 1 March to 12 April (Easter Day), then switch to using this *Barnabas Prayer* to guide you in your prayers for the suffering Church from 13 April onwards.

If you don't have a *Praying for the Persecuted Church* booklet, or would like additional copies, please get in touch with your local Barnabas Fund office (see back page for contact details) or visit our website: barnabasaid.org/shop

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.

April

MONDAY 13 “Helpless before the terrorists, the people had only their eyes to cry.” These were the words of a Barnabas contact, as he tried to explain the terrible distress and utter destitution of Cameroonian Christians who had fled for their lives, leaving behind everything they owned, when Boko Haram militants attacked Zangola village on 2 December 2019. This was just one of a spate of similar attacks in Cameroon’s Far North in early December, which left seven

Christians dead and 21 kidnapped. Remembering that the psalmist said, “My tears have been my food day and night,” pray that our brothers and sisters in this part of Cameroon will be wonderfully enabled to hope in God and praise Him as their Saviour (Psalm 42:3,5).

TUESDAY 14 On 26 December 2019, Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) posted video footage of its militants beheading ten Christian men and shooting dead an eleventh. The killings are believed to have taken place on Christmas Day and the martyrs to have been abducted from Borno State. ISWAP claimed the Christian deaths were to avenge the killing of its leader and his spokesman in US military actions in Syria in October. Pray to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine for an end to the violence against Christians in Nigeria (Ephesians 3:20).

WEDNESDAY 15 Nigerian pastor Lawan Andimi was a target of Boko Haram for years. A convert from Islam himself, he led many other Muslims to Christ, including his father-in-law who was a famous *mallam* (Quranic scholar). Pastor Andimi survived



It is believed that the martyrdom of these eleven Nigerian Christians occurred on Christmas Day 2019

attempts on his life in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Finally, he was seized by Boko Haram on 2 January 2020. After demanding an impossibly large ransom, they killed him on 20 January. In a video released by Boko Haram on 5 January he urged loved ones to “thank God for everything” and affirmed that we are all in the hands of God whatever happens to us. He recognised that it could be God’s will that he did not see his family again (in this life). Pray that his inspirational message from captivity will encourage other Nigerian Christians facing violence and console his widow and seven children.

THURSDAY 16 Thirteen Nigerian Christian young men died (nine of them the breadwinners of their families) on 11 January when armed Fulanis attacked a Christian community in Mangu Local Government Area, Plateau State. Christians learned that the Fulanis had earlier vowed to seize all the cows of the Christians in the area, saying that no “infidel” (meaning “Christian”) has the right to own cattle. Pray for those who mourn, especially for the young widows and little children of the nine married men. Some of the remaining Christians fled, while others have stayed but dare not go to their farmland as militant Fulanis typically do a follow-up attack. Either way, they have lost their means of livelihood. Please pray that the Lord will provide for them.

FRIDAY 17 The small West African country of The Gambia is 85-90% Muslim. In the last three years the state has favoured Islam over

Christianity in many ways, including building 60 mosques but no churches, paying Islamic scholars but not Christian scholars, and preferential treatment of Islam on the public TV station. Not a single Christian has been nominated to the National Assembly. In the last two decades, Christian schools have suffered much interference, such as forcing them to have Quranic teachers and to introduce the wearing of the *hijab*. Government scholarships favour Muslim young people and neglect Christian young people. All this the Christians “have borne without much noise” but now are determined to speak out for their rights. As anti-Christian discrimination and marginalisation increase, pray that our brothers and sisters will be shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves (Matthew 10:16).

SATURDAY 18 A Constitutional Review Process has begun in The Gambia. The first draft of the proposed new constitution has caused much concern amongst the country’s Christian minority (9%), for example omitting to specify that it is a secular state. This is of vital importance, given that a former president had declared the country to be an Islamic state and since then the issue of whether it is an Islamic republic or a secular republic has gone to and fro, with various official name changes. Christians are also very concerned that the draft constitution considerably strengthens the position of sharia. Pray that their voice will be heeded and that the new constitution will be fair, not enshrining in law the *de facto* discrimination that Christians already face.

SUNDAY 19 O risen Christ, we ask for Your resurrection power to be poured out on Your faithful followers in North Korea. We praise You for their courage and perseverance in the hardest and harshest of situations for Christian believers in the whole world. Help us to learn from their example. Give us grace to cling to You and not to waver, no matter what we may have to endure and suffer. May we cheerfully deny ourselves, willingly take up whatever kind of cross is given to us, and follow You with faith, hope and love, to the glory of Your Name. (Matthew 16:24)

MONDAY 20 Authorities in five of China's provinces warned the unofficial Protestant "housechurches" in December not to hold public gatherings to celebrate Christmas. This was followed on 1 February 2020 by the implementation of new "Administrative Measures for Religious Groups" which mean that every aspect of daily activities of religious groups must now be approved by the government. Article 17 demands that "religious organizations must spread the principles and policies of the Chinese Communist Party." Pray that Christians in China will not lose heart and remain steadfast in their faith under increasing pressure from the authorities, knowing they are being renewed day by day (2 Corinthians 4:16).

TUESDAY 21 Praise God for answered prayer as more than 50 church buildings have been reopened in Shan State, Myanmar (Burma) by the United Wa State Army which controls the Wa Special Region,

bordering China. Local church leaders had pleaded for prayer when the China-backed, communist-influenced separatist group closed more than 100 churches in 2018, demolishing some. At least 200 Christian leaders and workers were detained for a while. A Bible school was also shut down and 41 students forced into hard labour as military porters. Pray that the few Christian properties still closed will be reopened.



Rohingya Christian families fled their homes, taking refuge at administrative offices in the camp, when their community was violently attacked by Rohingya Muslim extremists

WEDNESDAY 22 Late January saw a huge upsurge of violence against the Rohingya Christians who live as a tiny minority within a community of about three-quarters of a million Rohingya Muslim refugees who fled ill-treatment in Myanmar and now live in camps in Bangladesh. At least eight Christians had to be hospitalised and many of their homes and a church building were damaged. "Oh Lord, please forgive our persecutors!" posted the Rohingya

church on Facebook, and quoted Acts 7:54-60. Pray that the large moderate majority of Rohingya Muslims will reject the violence of the small extremist group that is responsible for the attacks. Ask that the Bangladeshi authorities will exert themselves to protect these very vulnerable Christians.

THURSDAY 23 Tomorrow is the first day of the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan. During this period, Muslims are often more committed in their religious practices, which they believe will earn them more merit if done in Ramadan than if done in other months. For extremists this can mean they are more active in attacking non-Muslims, which they think is pleasing to Allah. Ask the Lord to protect Christians and other vulnerable minorities in Muslim-majority countries over the next 30 days.

FRIDAY 24 Roar Fløttum is a Christian street preacher in Norway. One day four Muslim men asked him to come with them to pray for an injured friend they claimed to have. They pushed Roar down a flight of stairs, beat his head, took his bank cards and tried to force him to recite Arabic words – probably the Islamic creed – demanding at knifepoint that he “convert to Islam or die”. Roar is determined to continue his evangelistic and healing ministry on the streets of Trondheim. Pray that the Lord will use him in a mighty way. Pray also that many of Norwegian’s Muslim population (estimated at 5.7% in 2016) will have a personal encounter with Christ.

SATURDAY 25 When Egyptian President al-Sisi, a Muslim, attended a Christmas church service in Cairo, he said, “If we love God, we must love each other.” Thank the Prince of Peace for President al-Sisi’s unwavering support and affirmation of Egypt’s Christian minority. Pray that his attitude will become the norm amongst Egyptian Muslims. Praise God too for another 90 churches and church-affiliated buildings being granted licences on 31 December.



Barnabas helps support vulnerable Egyptian Christian women

SUNDAY 26 O Lord Jesus, we praise and thank you for the growth of Your Church in Nepal. Please strengthen the faith of our Nepalese brothers and sisters, so vulnerable to being arrested and punished, just for speaking of their love for You. As they face the current legal situation in Nepal, fill them with the wisdom from above that Your Word promises to all believers who ask. May the trials they face produce perseverance and maturity, especially for the many who

have only recently made the decision to follow You. (James 1:3-5)

MONDAY 27 The United Christian Forum (UCF), a nationwide Indian organisation, recorded 17 incidents of harassment affecting 69 Christians, in the first 19 days of 2020. The incidents occurred in nine Indian states, and were mostly mob threats and intimidation, but also included one physical assault, one incident of damage to church property, and the arrest of one pastor. All were reported to the UCF Helpline, meaning that there are likely to have been more anti-Christian incidents during this short period, some not being reported to UCF. Remembering that our heavenly Father sees and knows it all, pray for His protection of His people in India, where the Church is growing fast, but so is persecution and oppression.

TUESDAY 28 “Almost every Sunday a police squad interrupts our services ... Sometimes, local authorities dress up like civilians and knock on our door, asking to be let in so they can ‘pray’. If we don’t let them in, they film us turning them away and then use the footage against us. And if we do let them in, then they take pictures inside the church to identify ways that we are violating the ‘Yarovaya Law’. We have had to pay several fines for ‘illegal missionary activity’.” This is the experience of a pastor of a Protestant congregation of about 50 people in Moscow. The Russian 2016 legislation known as the “Yarovaya Law” gives harsh penalties for vague offences and allows the authorities sweeping surveillance powers. Ask that the Holy Spirit will give Russian

Christians the right words to say in every situation (Luke 12:11-12).

WEDNESDAY 29 “Apart from God we are on our own,” wrote a church leader in north-east Kenya to Barnabas Fund, after more Christian schoolteachers in Garissa county were attacked by Al Shabaab terrorists on 13 January. Caleb (28), Titus (29) and Samwel (29) died. Joshua (30) was wounded and Robert (53) escaped, climbed a tree, and was not spotted by the gunmen. “We mourn in grief for our departed brothers ...” said the message, “We contemplate what future may be ours. May God make us more aware of His presence with us.” Pray that Christians in north-east Kenya may feel Christ’s peace that passes understanding, and know themselves to be in His loving hands, whether they live or die.

THURSDAY 30 Earlier in January, Al Shabaab, intending to kill Christian teachers, had accidentally shot dead four Muslim children who were staying in teachers’ accommodation at their boarding school. On realising their mistake, the terrorists went in to bandage other Muslim pupils they had wounded. Pray that the Lord will take from the terrorists’ hearts their great hatred of Christians. Recalling Isaiah 35, Kenyan Christians in the area requested of Barnabas Fund: “Please pray with us: Strengthen the weary hands: make firm the feeble knees. Say to the anxious: Be strong, fear not, your God is coming with judgment: coming with judgment to save you. The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

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