



# barnabasprayer

BARNABAS FUND – AID AGENCY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

To help you  
pray for the  
persecuted  
Church

JULY/AUGUST  
2018

[barnabasfund.org](http://barnabasfund.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.**

## July

**SUNDAY 1** Dear Lord Jesus, we ask you to protect Christians who are worshipping in churches today, despite the possibility of violence. Whether they are meeting in secret, or they are gathering in a church which has already been threatened or attacked, we ask you to be with them, Lord. We pray that they may realise they are never alone, and that they will find hope and strength in You. So that, even though they are hard pressed, they are not crushed, even though they are perplexed, they are not in despair and even though they are persecuted, they are not abandoned. (2 Corinthians 4:8-9)

**MONDAY 2** Pastor Stephen was asleep at home with his wife and two daughters in Darfur, Sudan, when six masked Islamists burst in, during the early hours of 2 March. They asked why he had continued to preach about Jesus, after they had warned him several times to stop. Stephen had a

powerful evangelistic ministry and the day before had led 56 Muslims to Christ. Stephen's answer to the Islamists was simply to tell them about the Lord. The attackers tied up the family and chopped off their limbs until they died. Stephen, the last to die, sang "Hallelujah Hosanna" throughout it all. At their funeral, the powerful preaching caused another 214 people to give their lives to Christ. Praise God for the faithfulness of Stephen and his family and pray for all who have become Christians because of him, that they may glorify God by their lives and – if need be – their deaths.

**TUESDAY 3** Around 130 Sudanese converts from Islam used to sleep in the church of Pastor Stephen (see above). They were mostly women and children, thrown out by their Muslim husbands/fathers. The Islamists who murdered Pastor Stephen also burnt down his church building. Praise God none of the converts sleeping in it at the time were killed, but many were injured. Afterwards they had to sleep in the open, despite cold and heavy rain, which led to disease and several deaths amongst the children. Barnabas Fund has helped with their physical needs, including food and shelter. Pray that their faith may not fail at this time of trial. Pray too that their husbands become Christians.

**WEDNESDAY 4** Last year over 100 people were arrested in Eritrea for practising religions not officially recognised by the state, which include many Protestant denominations and Shia Islam. The persecution has continued this year. In March alone, 32 Christians were arrested in the capital,

Asmara. On 5 March a newly married couple, and ten visitors who had come for a traditional coffee ceremony to welcome the bride, were arrested. Most of them were released over the next 22 days, but the groom and two guests remained in detention. On 25 March another 20 Christians were arrested. Pray for Eritrean believers that they will stand firm.

**THURSDAY 5** Twen Theodros has been in prison in Eritrea for most of the last 13 years but has never been charged, tried or had access to a lawyer. She has endured terrible beatings and torture, sometimes even taking the punishment for another prisoner who was very sick. She has been held in a shipping container, in a prison so harsh that hundreds of inmates died from heat and sickness, and in a remote labour camp built specially for Christian prisoners. Last year she was moved to a prison camp nearer to Asmara, where her family lives, so now they can visit her. Praise God for Twen's faithfulness and that of the group of Christian women prisoners whom she leads. Pray for all Eritrean Christian prisoners that the Lord will sustain and strengthen each one, and glorify His Name through them.

**FRIDAY 6** The Allied Democratic Forces are an Islamist militant group, originating in Uganda, who have been active in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) since 2014. They have killed about 2,000 Christians and captured territory in the resource-rich Kivu province. They say that only when Islam is established as the main religion will there be peace in the DRC. This is in line with the

teachings of classical Islam, i.e. that Muslims must wage jihad against non-Muslims until they have taken control of their land and established Islamic rule there; only then can war cease. Pray that their plans will not succeed (Psalm 33:10).

**SATURDAY 7** The Christians were "slaughtered like goats" said a pastor from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, describing an attack in Beni, in the north-east of his country, in March, which left eleven people dead. Many Christians are fleeing from this and other areas of the DRC where the Islamist militants of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) attack without warning, seeking out the "infidels" [non-Muslims] to kill. Pray that Christians in the DRC will not give way to fear. Pray also that they will remain faithful to Christ, if necessary faithful unto death, when ADF militants try to force them to convert to Islam.

**SUNDAY 8** **Our Lord God, we lift up in prayer Christians held in detention in the Chinese province of Xinjiang, as they suffer forced medication and mental and physical torture in "re-education camps". We pray that you will preserve them firmly in their faith as they endure mental anguish and the hardship of overcrowded conditions. We pray that our brothers and sisters held in detention camps for their faith will be witnesses for You, to their fellow-detainees and their persecutors alike. O Lord protect Your persecuted people in China and let nothing separate them from You. In Your mercy, incline the hearts of the Communist government's**

**leadership to mercy and tolerance towards Christians. (Matthew 5:13-16; Romans 8:38-39)**

**MONDAY 9** On 14 March, a church-run kindergarten was shut down in Weihui, Henan province, China, allegedly for health and safety reasons although much worse run kindergartens nearby were not targeted. Later the same month, the church-run Beatitudes Kindergarten near Beijing was barricaded by public security guards in riot gear, preventing anyone from entering. Two months earlier the Beatitudes Elementary School had been evicted from their premises, when the authorities put pressure on their landlord. Pray that the authorities in China will recognise Christians as a positive, beneficial influence in society and cease harassing them.

**TUESDAY 10** The Communist government of China, which allows a certain number of Chinese Bibles to be printed and distributed to churches every year, has banned the online sale of Chinese Bibles. There is an urgent need for the Word of God in China, where the Church is growing rapidly but many new believers are vulnerable to false teaching. Some have commented that the government seems to recognise the power of the Bible or they would not want to restrict its circulation. Pray that the teachings of our Lord Jesus will be accessible to all our brothers and sisters in China, and that they will grow up in their salvation now that they have tasted that the Lord is good (1 Peter 2:2).

**WEDNESDAY 11** Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi

Arabia visited the UK in March, meeting with the Queen, Prime Minister and Archbishop of Canterbury. Afterwards, Lambeth Palace issued a statement saying that the Crown Prince had made a strong commitment to promote the flourishing of those of different faith traditions. Pray that these words will be translated into action. At the moment, there is no religious freedom in Saudi Arabia: non-Muslims are not allowed to show their faith in public in any way and there is a death sentence for converts from Islam.

**THURSDAY 12** There are around 600,000 Christians living in Kuwait (17% of the total population) but only a few hundred of them are Kuwaiti citizens. The rest are migrant workers, who are therefore far from home, working long hours and vulnerable to abuse, forced labour and deportation. Some are illiterate. They gather together to worship in many different languages including Amharic, English, French, Hindi, Malayalam, Nepali, Sinhala, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. Praise God that this Gulf state allows Christians to worship together and pray that each will find strength in the Lord to cope with the difficulties they face daily.

**FRIDAY 13** On 22 March a Nepali Hindu mother brought her 13-year-old daughter to visit their Christian neighbour Soniya, asking Soniya to pray for the girl, who was sick and all efforts to treat her illness had failed. Soniya and her sister shared the Gospel with the Hindu mother and daughter and then prayed for the girl, who was completely healed. Both

mother and daughter decided to follow Christ and threw out all the Hindu idols in their home. But when the woman's husband came home he was enraged. After trying to attack his wife with a knife, he filed a case against Soniya and her sister for breaking Nepal's anti-conversion laws. Soniya was arrested with her six-month-old baby and later released on bail. Pray for Soniya, her sister and all Christians in Nepal that they may have courage to continue to witness for the Lord Jesus.

**SATURDAY 14** Doctors and other staff at a hospital in Lahore, Pakistan, beat to death a Christian called Sunil. He and his two brothers had told a local news channel how hospital staff had discriminated against their pregnant sister, Kiran, not allowing her to see a doctor when she visited the hospital on 26 March. Pray for protection for Kiran, her baby, and her two surviving brothers, Johnson and Anil.

**SUNDAY 15** Lord Jesus, we lift up to You our Christian sisters in Pakistan, who are so vulnerable to discrimination and violence from the majority community. Please protect them from those who consider their lives worthless, not only because they are female but also because they love and follow You. We ask that You will comfort the bereaved family of Asma Yaqoob (25), who died in April, after a man poured petrol over her and set her on fire because she refused to convert to Islam and marry him. Bring Your peace and consolation also to the grieving relatives of Kainat Masih (17), murdered in May by the family she worked for as a maid, simply for not cleaning the house properly.

**MONDAY 16** On 21 April the Chief Justice of Pakistan announced that a new date had been set for the Supreme Court to hear Asia Bibi's appeal. But at the time of writing (late May) no date had been announced. Asia, a Christian, was sentenced to death in 2010 under Pakistan's notorious "blasphemy laws" after a dispute with her Muslim co-workers. Zealous Muslims in Pakistan often react violently to any suggestion that someone who has been accused of "defiling the name" of Muhammad should be allowed to live. Pray that God will provide a way out, so that His innocent daughter may be safely freed, without a violent reaction from Islamists.

**TUESDAY 17** Two Christians died and four were seriously injured on Sunday 15 April when motorcyclists opened fire on worshippers leaving a church service in Quetta, Pakistan. Four Christians had already been killed in a similar shooting elsewhere in Quetta on 2 April (Easter Monday) in a Christian area of the city, when a rickshaw was ambushed by armed men on two motorcycles. Nine Christians were killed in a church attack just before Christmas. Quetta Christians are now trying to leave their home town. Pray that the Lord will be their shield and their defender, and that they will not be afraid.

**WEDNESDAY 18** "I accepted Jesus as my Saviour a year ago. I want to be baptised. Please introduce me to someone you trust so I can get baptised and meet other believers. I am the only believer in my family, but sometimes I try to steer the



conversation towards Jesus.” This message came from Afghanistan to a ministry which reaches out with the Gospel in Afghan languages. Pray that this new follower of Christ may grow in faith and knowledge, and for all other isolated converts and secret believers around the world. Praise God that He knows each one by name.

**THURSDAY 19** In May, US President Donald Trump announced his country’s withdrawal from the nuclear deal with Iran and later his intention of greatly increasing sanctions against the country. The whole population is likely to face severe hardship if this policy is maintained, and the harassment of Christians will probably increase. Pray that our brothers and sisters, many of them converts from Islam, will not waver in their faith and that their bold and loving response to persecution will draw others to know the Lord Jesus Christ for themselves.

**FRIDAY 20** Twenty-four new converts to Christianity in Vietnam are being pressured to renounce their Christian faith. First the local authorities threatened to expel them from their village in the north-western highlands, and then a mob, led by the village chief, attacked them. Four of the Christians were hospitalised. According to the Vietnam Committee on Human Rights, conditions for Christians have worsened since the implementation in January of a new Law on Belief and Religion, and violence against them has increased. Pray that the 24, who are from the Hmong ethnic group, will know the presence, strength and peace of their Lord and Saviour as they suffer for His Name.

**SATURDAY 21** “Our house was burned down, our cows were killed, I had to flee and lost everything I owned,” said an 80-year-old Christian widow in Myanmar (Burma), recalling the second time her village was attacked. Displaced since 2012, she is from the Kachin ethnic group, who are being repeatedly attacked by the Myanmar armed forces, even in the camps for displaced people. “I still have faith in God,” she said, “but sometimes it is very difficult to see our people suffering. I am an old lady, but I pray that God will take care of my children, my grandchildren and our Kachin people. I pray for their future. Can you please pray for me too?”



“Can you please pray for me too?”

**SUNDAY 22** We thank You, heavenly Father, for delivering 2,000 Kachin Christians from their captivity in the jungle of Myanmar (Burma). We praise you for the compassion of local elephant owners who helped so many to safety. Especially be near to and bless the sick and injured, as well as the babies born in the jungle, as they recover from their ordeal. We ask that Your hand will be upon the government of Myanmar to restrain them from evil and that the persecution of the Christian and Muslim ethnic minorities

## **in Myanmar will end. May Christians be recognised and valued as a channel of blessing to that land.**

**MONDAY 23** Christians in Malaysia are overjoyed at the surprise results of their country's election on 9 May and praise God for the dramatic answer to prayer. The party which had been in power for 61 years lost to an opposition coalition called Pakatan Harapan (PH). Pray that the new government will live up to its manifesto and relax the restrictions on Christians and other non-Muslim minorities. The leaders of PH were formerly in other political parties and active in promoting Islamisation.

**TUESDAY 24** Before their surprise election victory in Malaysia, the Pakatan Harapan (PH) coalition promised to recognise the status of the two East Malaysian states, Sabah and Sarawak, as set out in the Malaysia Agreement of 1963 when these two territories on the island of Borneo agreed to join with Malaya to become Malaysia. West Malaysia was predominantly Muslim, but in East Malaysia Christianity was strong. East Malaysians feel that, over the last 55 years, they have been controlled and partially Islamised by West Malaysia, contrary to what they believed had been agreed for them in 1963. PH promised that within 100 days of being elected there would be a Special Cabinet Committee set up to enforce the 1963 agreement. This 100-day period finishes on 17 August. Pray that the Committee will indeed be established and will restore full religious liberty to East Malaysia.

**WEDNESDAY 25** Sabah in East Malaysia has a Christian heritage, but nowadays has a majority-Muslim population, due to many Muslims settling here in recent years. The Sabah state government has promised to help non-Muslim communities develop places of worship. The Sabah Chief Minister, a Muslim, reaffirmed this in late May saying, "I give my assurance we will help build more churches." Pray that this welcome pledge will result in concrete action. Sabah Christians living in the interior are mainly very poor and there is a major shortage of church buildings.

**THURSDAY 26** On 3 March, the Chief Minister of Sarawak, East Malaysia, announced that he would amend the state laws so that converts from Islam would not be left in limbo. His announcement followed a ruling by the federal Malaysian High Court that four Sarawak citizens who had left Islam to become Christians could not have their change of religion officially recognised, unless they got permission from a sharia court. But going to a sharia court might result in them being prosecuted for apostasy from Islam. "Give me six months to do this," said Chief Minister Johari, who is himself a Muslim. This allotted time period expires in early September. Pray that the necessary amendment to the Sarawak Syariah Court Ordinance 2001 will indeed be made. Sarawak is the only Malaysian state where there are more Christians than Muslims.

**FRIDAY 27** Brunei is set to roll out the second stage of implementing sharia (Islamic law) after the Islamic Religious Council and Sultan Hassanal

Bolkiah signed off the measure on 10 March. The phased introduction of sharia was announced in 2014. It appears that international criticism caused a delay in initiating the second stage, but it is now going ahead. Pray that the Lord will intervene and that this law, which treats non-Muslims as inferior to and of less worth than Muslims, will not be fully implemented. About 10% of the population of Brunei are Christians.

**SATURDAY 28** A new law comes into force in Nepal in September 2018 and will make it a crime for anyone to try to convert a follower of Hinduism or Buddhism to another faith; this will be punishable with five years in prison and a fine of 50,000 rupees (£345; \$480; €390). Pray for the protection of church leaders in Nepal, who are likely to be the prime targets of the new law, and who also receive death threats from various extremists. Pray for the protection of Christian activists working for religious liberty. Some political leaders, including the Maoist Party chairman Prachanda, promised Christian leaders that he would take up the issue of religious liberty in parliament and work for the necessary amendments to the constitution.

**SUNDAY 29** **We praise You, Lord Jesus, that almost all adults in Nepal have heard the Gospel, and that Hindus often seek out churches and ask for prayer when they are sick or have other problems, many coming to faith in You because of this. We pray for Nepali teenagers, who do not listen to the radio or read tracts as their parents did, and are therefore growing up unaware of the Good News that You**

**died for their sins and rose again. Give wisdom to church leaders seeking to find ways to tell teenagers the good news, via their teenage Christian friends or modern technology. We bring to you also the small groups of adult Hindus and Buddhists who are hard to reach because of terrain or language; may hear and believe. (Romans 10:13-15)**

**MONDAY 30** The majority of citizens of the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan are the Drukpa, the royal Bhutanese, who consider themselves to be “sons of the soil”. The Drukpas look down on the Nepali-speaking minority and consider them of little value so they do not mind if they convert from Buddhism to Christianity. If a Drukpa does the same thing, however, he or she is likely to be severely persecuted. Praise God there are Christians amongst both the Drukpa-speaking people and the Nepali-speaking people. Pray that all will grow in their faith, and that greater religious freedom will come to Bhutan.

**TUESDAY 31** On 14 May the bodies of 21 Christians martyred in Sirte, Libya, in February 2015 were airlifted to Egypt, the homeland of 20 of them. They had been beheaded by Islamic State militants, who selected them from amongst other migrant workers because they were Christians who refused to convert to Islam. The bodies were recovered towards the end of last year, after Sirte had been re-taken from Islamic State’s control. “They’re Christ’s beloved ... we are happy and proud of them. We thank God for His continuous love,” said the mother of one, “We were greatly pained but God



comforted us.” Praise God for the faith of the bereaved families, that they can thank God in such circumstances.



Matthew Aryga from Ghana and two of the 20 Egyptian Christians, moments before being beheaded in February 2015. Barnabas Fund continues to help their families

## August

**WEDNESDAY 1** For generations it has been so hard for Egyptian Christians to get proper permits to build or repair churches that many faithful believers have had no option but to worship illegally in unlicensed buildings. Now, under President al-Sisi, unlicensed church buildings are being rapidly legalised. Praise God for this, and pray that the Muslim majority may follow their president’s example in whole-heartedly affirming the right of Christians to have places of worship. Fifty-three churches were legalised in March, on condition the buildings were found to be structurally sound, and 166 churches and affiliated buildings in April.

**THURSDAY 2** An unlicensed church building in Kumeira, south of Luxor, Egypt, was attacked by Muslim

villagers on 1 April after inspectors came to check the structure, to prepare for completion of the legalisation process. The rioters also stoned Christian homes and stopped a train carrying sugarcane to the factories. Eight Muslim rioters were arrested, but so were seven Christians who had not left their homes throughout the violence. All 15 were charged with disrupting the peace, blocking the railway, and terrorising the villagers. After some days in detention, the Christians – in order to gain their freedom – agreed to a so-called “reconciliation”, signing to say that the two parties were reconciled and that they, the Christians, waived all their legal rights. Such agreements frequently follow anti-Christian violence in rural areas of Egypt and, just as in Kumeira, they are unjust and humiliating to the Christian victims.

**FRIDAY 3** Egyptian Christian leaders have written to the Ministry of the Interior to ask the authorities to reinstate Advice and Guidance sessions for Christians seeking to convert to Islam. Pray that their request will be granted. These informal meetings between the Christian and a church minister, held under the auspices of the security authority, were intended to ensure that the Christian was converting of their own free will. The meetings were banned by the government in 2004. The context of this request was the increasing number of Christian women and girls being kidnapped and forcibly converted to Islam. For example, on 8 April Hanaa Saad Fawzi and her daughter Muhrail disappeared. Hanaa managed to phone her husband to tell

him they were being held and that she had been forced to sign a blank piece of paper. Pray that she and Muhrail can escape back to their family.

**SATURDAY 4** Praise God for answered prayer regarding 110 church properties in and around Mardin, which had been seized by the Turkish government last year. After much negotiation and the passing of a new bill by the Turkish Parliament, title deeds for 55 of the properties were returned on 22 May 2018. Pray for the speedy return of the rest as well as many properties which were seized in the twentieth century.

**SUNDAY 5** **Loving heavenly Father, we pray today for Iraqi Christians, especially those who fled from Mosul and the Plains of Nineveh, perhaps 200,000 of them, as Islamic State advanced in 2014. Although they have lost everything and the future is so uncertain, please keep their minds in perfect peace as they trust in You. Comfort them in their distress, as the light of Christ in Mosul seems to have been all but extinguished. We grieve with them that a major cathedral has been desecrated and smashed up. Please send your angels to guard the 10 Christian families who have dared to return to the city, which remains so hostile to Your people even though the militants have gone. (Isaiah 26:3)**

**MONDAY 6** “The true Church that is faithful to her Lord and Saviour has to be a persecuted one,” said a senior church leader from Syria, and he quoted John 15:20. “I come from a Church ... which faced many tribulations and genocides throughout the centuries,” he said, “Today we

continue to suffer persecution at the hands of terrorist groups such as ISIS, Al-Nusra and others, who are targeting Christian congregations and have completely destroyed many of our churches and other institutions.” Pray that Syrian Christians may gain hope and comfort from the knowledge that Jesus Himself was persecuted and foretold their own persecution.

**TUESDAY 7** This prayer request came to Barnabas Fund from the Central African Republic, where violence continues between the Muslim Seleka militants and the anti-Balaka militants (who claim to be Christian, although condemned by Church leaders), and UN troops are failing in their task of peacekeeping. “Please pray for the Lord to touch people’s hearts. The corruption eating away at the entire country and the evil in people’s hearts presents us with a great challenge in the current situation... Only God can help the poor, defenceless population. May He give wisdom to His children...”

**WEDNESDAY 8** Pray for the grieving families of six people who were killed by armed militants during a church leaders’ retreat in Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic (CAR), on Tuesday 1 May. “Apparently well informed of a programme taking place at the church ... they surrounded the building and went in while the service was being held, throwing grenades and firing at participants,” wrote a local source to Barnabas Fund. Although international media take little notice of what is going on in CAR, our Heavenly Father knows. (Matthew 6:8)

**THURSDAY 9** On 24 April, “herdsmen” attacked a church in Benue State, Nigeria, killing 17 people including two church ministers. They also burnt about 50 houses and forced out the whole community. Pray that the Prince of Peace will bring an end to the continuing violence against Nigerian Christians, both from ethnic Fulani herdsmen and from the jihadi militant group, Boko Haram. Ask our heavenly Father to provide for those who have lost everything and that the Holy Spirit will comfort those who mourn.

**FRIDAY 10** “As Christians we are not to take revenge, but continue to focus on Christ who was also killed in order to secure salvation for all mankind.” A senior Nigerian church leader urged Christians not to fight back in response to repeated attacks on churches and killing of Christians in Benue state. Pray that Nigerian Christians will have grace to forgive the enemies who injure and kill them, destroy their property, force them from their homes. As our Lord commands, pray for their attackers too (Matthew 5:44).

**SATURDAY 11** “Some people want to exterminate Christianity in Nigeria. As these killings go unhindered we feel that the government has a hidden agenda to wipe out Christianity.” These were the words of Bishop JG Masin, of the Christian Association of Nigeria. “Christians are being targeted and killed in Adamawa, Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa and other states – because of our faith,” said Bishop Masin. He ridiculed the official explanation that the killers were herdsmen looking for land to graze their livestock. “Do cattle rearers look for grass with AK

47? ... Does a church look like grazing land?” Pray with our Nigerian brothers and sisters that their government will protect them against Muslims seeking to kill them.



Barnabas supports Christian victims of violence in Nigeria

**SUNDAY 12** Heavenly Father, we pray for South Sudan where millions of people are facing severe hunger, even famine in places. We thank You for helping Christians stay strong in their faith during long years of conflict and hardship. Be with Your children in their desperate need, and protect and provide for families forced to flee. May they find refuge and strength in You. We ask that church leaders will be effective peace-makers in South Sudan, and that rains will fall at the right time for crops to grow. (Ps 46:1)

**MONDAY 13** Chad adopted a controversial new constitution on 30 April. One of the areas of disagreement was how government ministers should be sworn in. Some church leaders were opposed to taking an oath of any kind and therefore the main official formula adopted was the one proposed by the High Council of Islamic Affairs of Chad, using the phrase “in the name of Allah”. On 11 May when government ministers were sworn in, two Christian

ministers refused to follow the new formula. One lost her portfolio as a result, being replaced by a Muslim. Pray for wisdom for all Christians in Chad as they respond to the new situation in their country.

**TUESDAY 14** President Idriss Déby of Chad came to power in a coup in 1990. The latest Chadian constitution will allow him potentially to continue as president until 2033. As a Muslim, he rules over a Muslim-majority population with a substantial Christian minority and some who follow African traditional religions. The Chadian army is considered the most effective in West Africa for dealing with Boko Haram, the jihadi militant group originating in Nigeria which is apparently seeking to eliminate Christians from the territory it controls. But in the Central African Republic, Chadian troops are regarded as favouring the Seleka Muslim militants. Pray to our almighty Lord God, who raises up and brings down leaders as He wills, that He may use President Déby for His purposes (Isaiah 45:13).

**WEDNESDAY 15** Nigeria's vice-president, Yemi Osinbajo, a Christian, has urged Nigerian Christians to pray for fellow-believers who have government positions. "If you look through the Scriptures, whether it was Joseph, Daniel or Esther, every person who made an impact in governance ... was supported by the prayers of the people of God ... We are in a period of history when God wants to do something; that is why some of us [Christians] are in government. The opportunity must not be lost. Your prayers to God will make that difference." Add your own prayers

too. Nigeria has a mainly Christian South and a mainly Muslim North. Christians suffer many violent attacks in certain states.

**THURSDAY 16** Christians in the UK are heartened by government guidelines issued in May which make clear that Christians should be allowed to wear a cross or other symbol of their faith in the workplace, so long as it does not interfere with their ability to do their job. This is very welcome because of the long-running case of Nadia Eweida, a British Airways employee, who was not allowed to wear a small cross around her neck, while colleagues were allowed to wear symbols of other religions. Eventually in 2013 the European Court of Human Rights ruled in Nadia's favour. Legal experts said that the new guidance will not come into effect until at least 2019 and could be reversed after Brexit. Pray that the rights of Christians will be affirmed wholeheartedly, alongside those of other religions.

**FRIDAY 17** A committee set up by the Australian government to review religious freedom in Australia submitted their report to the government in late May. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said that he was "absolutely committed to ensuring freedom of religion is protected in Australia" and that the government would respond to the review "in due course". Despite existing safeguards in federal law and constitution, religious freedom is in practice being eroded in Australia, and Barnabas Fund is running a petition calling for better protection to be put

in place. Pray that the Australian government will do this without delay.

**SATURDAY 18** As Christians in many Western countries find themselves increasingly despised by society at large and their freedom of conscience and freedom of speech being gradually eroded, pray that their faith may grow to meet the new challenges. Pray that Western church leaders will be bold and not compromise for the sake of an easy life. Ask also that Barnabas Fund's **Our Religious Freedom** campaign will be effective in safeguarding freedoms in the UK, Australia and New Zealand. [OurReligiousFreedom.org](http://OurReligiousFreedom.org)

**SUNDAY 19** Lord God, we seek Your blessing on all Cuban Christians who are facing discrimination from the communist government. We especially ask you to protect Christian children from those who are preventing them from attending Christian schools and even denying them food in government schools. We pray for parents like Pastor Ramon and his wife Ayda who were prosecuted for giving their child a Christian education at home. Please strengthen Pastor Ramon, now banned from leading his church and forced to work checking the local water supply for disease. Bless his witness and help his ministry to continue. Sovereign Lord, we pray that You will overrule in Cuba to soften the hearts of those in government.

**MONDAY 20** Kim Jong-un, the Supreme Leader of North Korea, has amazed the world in recent months by reaching out to South Korea and to the USA, as well as by making preliminary moves to reduce his

nuclear arsenal. In May he released three American missionaries who had been incarcerated in North Korea. Such things were unthinkable this time last year. Pray that he will now set free the many North Korean Christians held in labour camps because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (At the time of writing it is not clear whether or not he will meet with President Trump.)

**TUESDAY 21** Four men armed with guns, knives and Molotov cocktails attempted to storm a church building in Grozny, capital of Chechnya, during a service on Saturday 19 May. When the worshippers – elderly women and one man – heard shots outside and chants of “Allahu Akbar [God is great]”, they rushed to close and bolt the doors, but in vain. At least two Christians and two police officers as well as the attackers were killed. Pray for the injured and bereaved and that the Lord Jesus will change the hearts of those who think they are doing right by killing His faithful followers.

**WEDNESDAY 22** Thank you for praying about Russia's vague but draconian Religion Law, introduced two years ago and used mainly against Protestant Christians. A recent ruling by Russia's Constitutional Court has added some clarity to the term “missionary activity”, under which so many prosecutions have been made. The Court said that missionary activity involves disseminating information “among persons who are not participants (members, followers)”. This semi-definition should at least mean that Christians are no longer fined for simply advertising church



events or putting posts on social media. Pray that the harassment of believers in Russia will cease.

**THURSDAY 23** Dilobarkhon Sultanova met a woman at her church in Kazakhstan, who later asked to meet her in a nearby café so that Dilobarkhon could show her how to download a Bible app on to her mobile phone. Minutes after Dilobarkhon had done so, she was arrested by the police for “illegal missionary activity”. Praise God that Dilobarkhon was acquitted in court on 13 March, because there was proof that the woman who asked for the Bible app had attended church. Pray that Kazakh believers will continue to share the Gospel boldly.

**FRIDAY 24** Reports from western Kazakhstan say that the authorities have demanded that registered churches provide the details of all children (i.e. under 18) who attend Christian meetings: full names, ages, ID numbers and places of study. It is illegal for the authorities to require this information and, at the time of writing, the churches have refused to provide it. In several countries



A church in Kazakhstan

around the world, authorities have recently switched the focus of their anti-Christian persecution to children of Christian families. Pray that these youngsters may be mature beyond their years to deal with the pressures they are facing. Pray also for wisdom for their parents and church leaders, as they respond to the new situations.

**SATURDAY 25** Thank you for your prayers for Christians in Uzbekistan. The religious liberty situation has recently improved a little for evangelical Christians and a lot for Muslims. President Mirziyoyev is promoting Islam, by opening new Islamic institutions, starting a Quran-reading competition, and encouraging Muslims from other countries to come on pilgrimage to Uzbekistan. Teenagers will again be allowed to visit mosques. Christians have found a slight easing of the restrictions they used to face, and the Committee for Religious Affairs is making it easier for Christian congregations to register their buildings (so they can function legally) and to construct new church buildings (which greatly facilitate ministry in a hostile context). Pray that God will have His hand over Uzbekistan, guiding the decisions of those in power even though they do not know Him.

**SUNDAY 26** O Lord God, we pray for Christians in Algeria, eight months after their government began to intensify persecution against them. We ask that the many churches that have been forcibly closed in Arab parts of the country will be re-opened and the church building projects which have been halted can be resumed. We pray that pressure on landlords

**to stop them renting premises to Christians will be relaxed. Be close to our brothers and sisters, especially those who have been taken to court for their evangelistic activities, and given prison sentence or fines. Please bring good out of this situation and deliver Your people from evil. We ask in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**MONDAY 27** Despite the government crackdown on Algerian Christians, Slimane Bouhafs was released from prison on 1 April 2018. He had been imprisoned for blasphemy because of a Facebook post saying “Jesus overcomes the lies of Islam.” His original five-year sentence was reduced to less than two. He had been attacked by fellow prisoners after he defended his Christian beliefs, following a prison sermon in which the imam incited hatred towards Christians. Praise God for this answer to prayer.

**TUESDAY 28** The Christian presence in Tunisia, the country of early Church fathers like Augustine and Tertullian, disappeared for centuries under Islamic rule. But now there is a new church emerging of converts from Islam, who are known to exist in nine of the country’s 24 governorates. But every so often, a family is discovered who have been believers for years but isolated and unaware there were any other Tunisian Christians. So only the Lord knows the true number of His followers there. Pray that all may be encouraged and grow in Him, especially those who are isolated and have no contact with other Christians.

**WEDNESDAY 29** Mauritanian Christians have been timid in the past, but now

they find people are more open to the Gospel and this is giving them confidence. Most Christians are in the capital, but there has recently been outreach to ethnic groups in the interior of this vast country and some people have become Christians. Pray for a move of God’s Spirit in Mauritania, to bring many to the joy and peace of knowing their sins forgiven and fellowship with Him through the crucified and risen Lord Jesus.

**THURSDAY 30** The Church in Morocco focuses on evangelism. This is despite the fact that Article 220 of the Penal Code lays down a prison sentence for “shaking the faith of a Muslim”. On the plus side, the constitution guarantees freedom of religion and identity cards do not record a person’s faith. Christians share the Gospel one-to-one and on media and social media. Give thanks for our courageous brothers and sisters and pray the Holy Spirit will guide them to those who are truly seeking God.

**FRIDAY 31** Thank our heavenly Father that it is reasonably easy to get Christian books and materials in Morocco. The New Testament has been translated into Moroccan Arabic. Believers ask for prayer that the Old Testament can be completed (target date 2021) and for translation projects in various local languages (related to Berber). Moroccan Christians are producing worship music (including their own new compositions) which builds up believers and is also a way of reaching out to others, especially the young. Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide and inspire our brothers and sisters as they write and perform the songs.

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