



barnabasprayer

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

To help you
pray for the
persecuted
Church

JANUARY/
FEBRUARY 2019

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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.

January

TUESDAY 1 At the start of a new year, pray to the Lord Jesus, who is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end, that He will have mercy on our troubled world, wracked by wars, hunger, injustice and natural disasters. Pray especially for Christians living under pressure and persecution, that they may look to the new year with hope and joy despite their suffering. Remember also Christians in Western countries where the secular humanist agenda is making rapid strides and Christians seeking to live a godly life in Christ are increasingly facing discrimination and harassment; ask that they will watch, pray and act with wisdom and courage in the coming year (Revelation 22:13).

WEDNESDAY 2 Fulani herdsmen targeted two Christian communities in Nigeria's Plateau State on 3 and 4 October 2018, killing at least 23 people and setting fire to houses and church

buildings. In the first attack, whose victims included a family of seven, the gunmen, dressed in black, shouted "Allahu Akbar" as they opened fire. Pray that the LORD will bring an end to the constant violence against Nigerian Christians "so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror" (Psalm 10:18).

THURSDAY 3 On 11 October a church building in Niamey, the capital of Niger, was ransacked, looted and set on fire, leaving it a charred shell. A church leader from Niger wrote to Barnabas Fund asking for prayer that the Lord will support the congregation (led by Pastor Eduard) and safeguard the churches of Niger. Christians in Niger are less than 1% of the population, which is mainly Muslim.



Viewing the damage at the church attacked in Niamey, Niger

FRIDAY 4 The Allied Democratic Forces is a violent Islamist group that has been operating in the north-east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for more than two decades and

repeatedly attacks Christians. In one attack, on 24 September, 14 civilians were killed and many families fled. The place attacked was in the middle of an outbreak of Ebola, and, because the violence scattered people far and wide, all efforts to trace and vaccinate those who had been in contact with known carriers of the disease had to be halted. Cry to our Father in heaven to deliver our Congolese brothers and sisters from evil.

SATURDAY 5 In October 2018 the Israeli government announced that they were revoking the group protection for asylum-seekers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Congolese, numbering just over 200, were given until today to leave Israel. At the same time Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu announced that the peace treaty between Eritrea and Ethiopia (July 2018) meant that Israel could accelerate its programme to expel almost 30,000 Eritrean asylum-seekers – whom he calls “infiltrators”. Both the Congolese and the Eritreans are mostly Christians, and will be in grave danger if sent home. The Eritreans did not flee their country because of war with Ethiopia but because of persecution by their own government, which remains in place. Pray that the Israeli government will be merciful to African Christians seeking safety and freedom. Thank the Lord for the loving welcome and practical care which many ordinary Israelis have given them.

SUNDAY 6 **Our Lord and Saviour, we remember today Your followers in Nepal and praise You for the tremendous Church growth there in**

recent years. Please equip Nepali Christians with wisdom and boldness, as You did Peter and John, to follow Your commands to be Your witnesses, to speak of what they have seen and heard of Your grace, power and love in their lives. May they listen to Your voice and obey Your commands, even though the new law which came into force in Nepal in September means that any public Christian activity is potentially illegal. We ask this in Your Name, Lord Jesus. (Acts 4:13, 18-20)

MONDAY 7 A Christian police officer in Nepal, Dilip, was arrested on 3 October for giving his testimony at a church conference. He was accused of propagating Christianity with the intention of converting people. Under Nepal’s new law (see above), it is illegal to attempt to convert a Hindu or Buddhist although the law is very vague about what such an “attempt” might involve. Pray that our brother Dilip will not suffer punishment and that other Christians in Nepal will not be made fearful by his arrest.

TUESDAY 8 Prayers have been wonderfully answered for Pakistani Christian mother Asia Bibi, who had been on death row since November 2010 after being convicted under the country’s notorious “blasphemy” law. On 31 October, the Supreme Court announced their decision to acquit her. The hearing itself had taken place on 8 October 2018, and on that day Asia had had a dream in which she saw all the doors of the prison opened. In her dream she worried that the prison superintendent would be furious if she saw the open doors. The dream made Asia certain that, despite so

many past disappointments, this time her appeal would succeed. Praise our gracious, loving, Almighty God!

WEDNESDAY 9 Aasia Bibi's Muslim lawyer, Saif Ul Malook, was amazed at how resilient his client remained during the long years in prison. "I have not seen such a strong woman in my life," he said. When he visited her on 10 October she told him about her dream (see above). "I have such a full faith in God," she said to him, "that I have a strong feeling that nobody can hurt me." Aware that he was at great risk of being assassinated because he was representing her in court, she told him not to worry, because Christ was watching over him so no harm would come to him either. Ask the Lord to protect this brave man, now living in another country, and that he will recognise the Lord Jesus at work in his life. Pray also for the three judges who acquitted Aasia Bibi; they will be in danger from zealous Muslims for the rest of their lives.

THURSDAY 10 Pray that Aasia Bibi and her family may be able to settle down in a safe, new location and re-start their lives. Pray that there will be no backlash of violence against the Christian community in Pakistan because of her acquittal. Lift up to the Lord also the many people (Christians and others) who are still in prison in Pakistan for false accusations of "blasphemy" just as Aasia Bibi was, some of them sentenced to death. Pray that they will be acquitted and released. Pray also that Pakistan's "blasphemy" law will be amended so that it can no longer be misused to settle personal grudges.

FRIDAY 11 Muslims in Pakistan typically hold Muhammad in such esteem that it amounts to veneration, almost worship. That is why they react with great ferocity to any hint of disrespect to him and many believe it is right to kill anyone accused of such disrespect, which they call "blasphemy". The political party Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (Here-I-Am Movement Pakistan) is particularly focused on blasphemy, and called out large crowds of Muslims on to the streets to protest against Aasia Bibi's acquittal. The word "Labaik" carries the meaning "I am ready to obey your orders, O Allah", showing their religious devotion as Muslims. Pray that the Lord Jesus will reveal Himself to them, so that their love, energy and zeal can be channelled to serving Him.

SATURDAY 12 At the time of writing Sri Lanka is in crisis. The president has appointed a new Prime Minister called Mahinda Rajapaksa but the old prime minister is refusing to step down. Rajapaksa, a former president of Sri Lanka, remains a controversial figure in a country where the scars from the long civil war (1983-2009) have yet to heal and Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism has been a major driver of conflicts and current tensions. During his regime, state-sponsored restrictions and attacks on churches and mosques raised concerns for religious freedom. A UN report found credible allegations of war crimes committed by the Rajapaksa government during the final stages of the fighting, when tens of thousands of civilians were killed. Join Sri Lankan Christians in praying for all in authority in Sri Lanka that its people,

whatever their religion or ethnic group, may be able to live quiet and peaceable lives (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

SUNDAY 13 O LORD, You hear the desire of the afflicted, You encourage them, and You listen to their cry. We pray today for Christians in Bangladesh – poor, vulnerable and despised but faithful to You. May they know Your provision for their needs and Your protection from those who seek to harm them. May they experience Your presence and Your power in their lives. As they boldly share the Gospel, please add to their number those who are being saved, and enable them to grow in knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, in whose Name we pray. (Psalm 10:17)

MONDAY 14 Pray for all those who suffered in the terrible earthquake and tsunami which struck Sulawesi, Indonesia on 28 September 2018. After these disasters, the soil in many places liquefied and buildings sank into the ground. Pray that the Christian



Wilson, a Bible School student in Palu, Sulawesi, stands in front of the remains of his home, in which his father died. Barnabas Fund is providing a new house for Wilson and for many other Indonesian Christians

minority in Sulawesi may be a blessing to the whole community, as the long slow process of recovery continues. Ask that our brothers and sisters will rejoice in the Lord, keep themselves from worrying as they make their requests to God and thank Him, and know the peace of God which passes all understanding, even in the midst of bereavement and destruction (Philippians 4:4-7).

TUESDAY 15 On 27 September the city administration in Jambi, on the Indonesian island of Sumatra, shut down three churches, claiming they did not have a permit to meet. Some church members burst into tears when they saw what had happened. Church leaders were told they must either relocate to several kilometres away or merge the three congregations (all different denominations) into one. An official stated that 70 churches in Jambi are without permits. Pray that the authorities will back down and allow the Christians to continue meeting in the city.

WEDNESDAY 16 In October the Polish government vetoed the adoption of an annual report on the application of the European Union's "Charter of Fundamental Rights". Poland's objection was because the report did not mention the need to protect Christians and Jews from discrimination although it did mention the need to protect immigrants, women and LGBT people. As Christians in Europe become, like Jews, a minority who are all too often despised, pray that the Polish government's action may help to halt the decline in religious liberty in Europe.

THURSDAY 17 Yet another Christian doctor has been murdered in Egypt. Dr Episkharoun, a 65-year-old urologist, was stabbed to death in his clinic in Assiut. The police say that his murderer, Mr Muhammad (aged 24), had a mental illness, but many Egyptian Christians have expressed their doubts about this on social media. In other similar cases, there has been a clear Islamist motive behind the murders. Pray the LORD Almighty will protect His people in Egypt.

FRIDAY 18 Two buses of Egyptian Christians returning from a visit to a holy site were ambushed on 2 November. Seven Christians died and 19 were injured. Later Islamic State in Egypt claimed responsibility for the attack. Ask that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, will bring peace and consolation to the bereaved. Six of the seven people killed were from the same extended family. Pray that their loved ones will be strengthened by the knowledge that those who died were martyrs for Christ.

SATURDAY 19 The attack on 2 November in the desert of Egypt's Minya province (see above) came six months after a similar terrorist attack in much the same place in which 28 Christians died. "This violence is a tax we pay just for being Christians," said Kamel Hanna, a Christian building contractor, as he lamented the way the authorities seem unable to prevent Christians being killed. Kamel's niece and nephew were among those injured in the November attack. Pray that the Egyptian authorities, at all levels and across the country, will exert themselves to give

Christian citizens as much security as Muslims have.

SUNDAY 20 Lord Jesus, we ask Your blessing on Your persecuted followers in many countries – those whom the world hates. May they draw comfort from the knowledge that You also were hated by the world without reason. May they find strength in remembering that You also were persecuted and that their suffering is for the sake of Your Name. May their lives shine with Your love, joy and peace, drawing others to You, even their persecutors. Help us to learn from their patient endurance, their forgiveness and faith, that their lives and ours will bring glory to You. (John 15:18-21)

MONDAY 21 A 40-year-old Muslim woman in Algeria is taking her Christian husband (50) to court, accusing him of trying to convert her to Christianity. Also accused of the same "crime" are three members of another family, all Christians, who had tried to mediate between the couple. At the time of writing, the case had not yet been heard. "Inciting a Muslim to change his religion" is a crime under Ordinance 6-3 of 2006. The punishment is two to five years in prison and fine of up to a million dinars (approx. £6,500; US\$8,500; €7,500). Pray for the four Christians accused, that the charge against them will be dropped.

TUESDAY 22 Authorities in the Algerian village of Azaghar, south-east of Algiers, sealed a church building on 16 October after falsely claiming that it failed to comply with health and safety regulations. The 300-strong

congregation had responded to an earlier request to install fire exits and fire extinguishers. The church has a powerful ministry to local Muslims. Pray that the authorities will cease their harassment and hindrance of these believers as they seek to obey Christ's command to be His witnesses.

WEDNESDAY 23 Thank God for the second acquittal of a 29-year-old Algerian Christian from Tizi Ouzou who has been charged with “illegal importation of Christian materials”. In 2016 he had visited a Middle Eastern country and brought home with him to Algeria some items, like keyrings and scarfs, with Christian inscriptions on them. He was tried and acquitted once, but in September 2018 the prosecutor decided to appeal against the acquittal. The young man appeared in the Appeal Court in Algiers on 18 October and was again acquitted of all charges.

THURSDAY 24 The trauma and hardships endured by Christians in Syria during the recent war have made them hungry for spiritual food. Not only adults, but also teenagers



Syrian Christians

and children are regular in church attendance. Pray for all who minister to them, whether pastors or those who lead choirs, women's groups, youth groups and children's work. Ask that they will be channels of God's healing, hope and peace for those who have endured so much.

FRIDAY 25 A year after the liberation of Mosul, Iraq, from Islamic State (IS), only about 20 Christian families were living in the city. Up to 200,000 Christians had fled from Mosul and its surrounding villages when IS seized the territory in 2014. One was Maryam, then aged 17. Like most of Mosul's Christians, her family does not dare to go home to Mosul because of the changed attitudes of so many of their Muslim former neighbours, who have become hostile to Christians. Maryam thinks that with time the Muslims of Mosul might forget the extremism they learned under IS rule. “It's four years that they are under them [IS], so of course they will need time to be more open-minded.” Remembering how the people of Mosul (called Nineveh in ancient times) repented so quickly and wholeheartedly long ago (Jonah 3:6-9), pray that Mosul's Muslims will soon be ready to welcome back their Christian neighbours as friends and equals.

SATURDAY 26 Saudi children are taught an extremely negative view of Christians. School textbooks for the last academic year contained material that depicted Christians as liars and encouraged intolerance and violence including the killing of apostates from Islam. It is therefore not surprising that Saudi society in general despises

Christians. The law bans them from any public expression of their faith, and even gathering in private for Christian worship sometimes leads to arrest. Pray for Christians in this land, most of them migrant workers enduring terrible conditions of employment. Pray also for the few Saudi believers, converts from Islam, who could be executed for apostasy, that they will be protected and enabled to grow in knowledge and love of the Lord Jesus.

SUNDAY 27 **O Jesus, we pray today for Christians who cannot meet together to worship You, their beloved Lord and Saviour. We think of those whose hostile, unbelieving families will not let them go to church; of those who live so far from any other Christian that there is no one to come together with in Your Name; of those who are secret believers, their faith known only to You. Please speak to each one, by Your Holy Spirit, encourage, teach, guide and strengthen them. Bless them with the knowledge of Your presence as they abide in You.**

MONDAY 28 “Your house church is like a Christian factory. Every time a Muslim walks in the door, a Christian walks out.” These were the words of an Iranian Revolutionary Guard to “R”, the first in his family to convert from Islam to Christianity. Since he believed, about 70 of his family and friends have also decided to follow Christ. Praise the Lord for the persecuted yet rapidly growing Church in Iran and ask our heavenly Father to protect and provide for His children there, especially as the US sanctions bite deeper with passing time.

TUESDAY 29 R, his brother and two sisters were arrested in Iran, and put under intense psychological pressure to try to make them renounce Christ. After hearing threats of what would be done to his sisters if he continued as a Christian, R decided to return to Islam. He was brought before the interrogator and opened his mouth to recant, but found the words that came out were saying just the opposite, affirming his faith in Jesus! Eventually a wealthy Muslim neighbour paid their bail money, saying they were “good people”. All are now in another country, where their elderly parents came to visit them before returning to continue their pastoral ministry in Iran, where persecution is likely to await them. Pray for God’s protection of the parents and their ministry to other converts in Iran. Pray that He will continue to use their children to build His Church wherever He may take them. Praise Him for the generosity of their Muslim neighbour.

WEDNESDAY 30 Sudanese officials raided a house church in Nyala, South Darfur, on 13 October, arresting all 13 Christians who were there. They released two who were from Christian backgrounds but detained the other eleven who were converts from Islam. A Barnabas Fund contact reported, “They tortured them, beating them a whole day and night and telling them you face death because you changed your religion.” The group’s pastor, Tajdeen Yousif, was held for several more days after the other ten had been released. All eleven were ordered to report daily to authorities, but went into hiding instead. Sudan is one of the few countries in the world where

converts from Islam can and have been executed for apostasy in modern times. Pray that they will be kept safe physically and will be strong in the Lord spiritually.



Pastor Tajdeen Yousif

THURSDAY 31 Al-Shabaab terrorists flagged down a bus in a Muslim-majority area of Kenya on 14 September and ordered all on board to show their identity cards. They separated out three passengers who were non-local (assumed to be non-Muslim) and asked them to recite the first chapter of the Quran and the Islamic creed. The first chapter of the Quran is familiar to all Muslims as part of their daily prayers. Saying the Islamic creed is seen by Muslims as conversion to Islam. Two of the three refused and were then tied up and killed. One who died was a labourer from another part of Kenya and the other was a boy called Joshua who assisted the bus driver. Pray for an end to the violence of Al-Shabaab terrorists against Christians in north-east Kenya.

February

FRIDAY 1 Barnabas supports 30 Kenyan missionaries who are planting churches amongst unreached groups in mostly Muslim areas of their homeland, often facing hostility and sometimes violence. Pray for their safety and protection, especially those in the north-east where Al-Shabaab terrorists are active. Two missionary families had to be urgently airlifted out in early November because the threats and activities of Al-Shabaab had reached such a point that the security forces were unable to be effective.

SATURDAY 2 A Kenyan missionary serving amongst Muslims in his country was asked to help carry the body of a woman from her house to the burial place. On the way, the missionary felt God telling him the woman was not really dead. Despite insults and taunts from the Muslims, the pastor took the hand of the woman and prayed, “Father, that Your glory and power be shown to these people through this action. Live!” at which the woman coughed. This made all the onlookers “start to enquire more about this Jesus Christ in whose name a woman was brought back to life before their very eyes,” reported the missionary. Pray that they may commit their lives to our risen Lord.

SUNDAY 3 O Lord Jesus, who said “I will build my Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it,” we praise You for the Church in China, which has survived persecution by Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims, Confucianists, Communists and more, over many

centuries. We rejoice in the wonderful growth in numbers of Christians in our time, perhaps as many as 200 million, but only You know. We pray that You will sustain and encourage each one, especially as pressure on them grows under the government of President Xi. May they know Your presence, Your peace and Your power every day. (Matthew 16:18)

MONDAY 4 More than a thousand Chinese police and other government agents forced their way into an unofficial church (“house church”) in Henan province at 7.00 a.m. on 14 September 2018 and seized items from the building. Church members had locked the doors, but the officials broke in. In the midst of a growing crackdown on Christianity, pray that Chinese believers will shine like stars, as they live pure and blameless lives in a Communist society, and hold firmly to the word of life (Philippians 2:14-16). Ask that they be seen as bringers of wholeness and harmony.

TUESDAY 5 Christians in Japan are only 1-2% of the population, although four centuries ago they were around 6%. Since 1947 there has been a constitutional guarantee of religious freedom and Christians now face little more than minor disapproval from society and some issues about burial of their dead. But earlier there were times of great suffering with perhaps as many as 40,000 martyrs. For over 200 years Christianity was completely “hidden” underground. Last year, twelve Christian sites in Japan, all related to persecution, were added to UNESCO’s list of World Heritage sites. Pray that this

recognition may encourage Japanese believers and draw others to seek the Lord Jesus Christ.

WEDNESDAY 6 All citizens of North Korea live under constant scrutiny and surveillance. Groups of 15-30 families living close to each other (called *inminban* groups) are headed by a female official who must look out for suspicious activities and make sure there are no forbidden items in the homes e.g. tunable radio sets, Western DVDs, Bibles. So there are random midnight searches of homes. Twice a week people must attend lectures about the greatness of the Kim family, who have led the state in turn since 1946 and are venerated almost as if they were gods. Every Saturday people must attend public criticism sessions when they criticise themselves and each other for their failings in the previous week. Pray for the protection of Christians, trying to survive in this context, when their loyalty is to the Lord Jesus Christ, not to Kim Jong-un.

THURSDAY 7 Evangelical Christians in Russia continue to be the main targets of the 2016 Religion Law, often called in Russia the “Yarovaya Law” after the person who first proposed it in the Duma. The law is ostensibly an anti-terrorist law but most of the cases are accusations of illegal missionary activity. Some Christians are also accused of extremist activities, of holding activities without the proper permissions, or of failing to put up a sign displaying the full name of their organisation. The Christian community is asking for amendments to the law, which is so vague that it is virtually impossible

to avoid being accused. Pray that their calls will be heeded and helpful changes will be made to the law.

FRIDAY 8 Out of the first 280 cases filed against Christian believers under the 2016 Religion Law (see above), only about 10% were won by the Christians. The other 90 lost their cases and were fined. Please pray for three Russian lawyers, who have recently started working full-time (with support from Barnabas Fund) to give legal representation to Christians under pressure. Ask that God will grant them favour with the judges and success in the courts.

SATURDAY 9 Russian believers request prayer about the issue of church buildings. Typically an evangelical congregation will buy a house and adapt/rebuild to create premises suitable for worship and ministry with some living accommodation. Now these “prayer houses” are threatened with demolition unless



This prayer house in Tula, Russia, is in danger of demolition unless the authorities will grant it registration. The words on the outside say “Our Father ... hallowed be Your name”

they can get official registration to make the building legal for use as a church. At the time of writing there are three court cases in progress with congregations trying to prevent demolition of their buildings. Please pray that the Christians may obtain justice and that no hindrances will prevent them gathering together for teaching, prayer and fellowship.

SUNDAY 10 **O righteous God, who tests minds and hearts, we pray for those who persecute Your people, who plan and work to do them harm, to accuse them falsely, to attack them violently, to weaken their faith in whatever way they can. We pray that the evil of the wicked will come to an end and that the righteous will be made secure. We ask that You will soften and change the hearts of those who persecute, and work in their lives so that they may come to know and love Your Son Jesus Christ, in whose Name we pray. (Psalm 7:9)**

MONDAY 11 The last year has seen growing pressure on Protestant Christians in eastern Ukraine, also known as the self-proclaimed Lugansk People’s Republic (LPR). In October, Barnabas Fund learned that all their activities were to be banned, most likely meaning that all their church buildings would be forcibly closed. Congregations hastily began to empty their buildings of books and furniture. Pray for wisdom and strength for the church leaders, and for full religious liberty to be maintained in the LPR.

TUESDAY 12 A congregation in Albania that is more than 80% converts from Islam has many young people (aged 13+) who are distressed by Muslims

attacking their faith in Jesus and the Bible, attacks which they do not know how to answer. At school, they encounter atheistic materialism which is propagated by most of the teachers. Please pray for a discipleship programme, supported by Barnabas Fund, which is aimed at helping these young believers from a Muslim background to know how to respond to the accusations and questions they face so that their faith may not be shaken.

WEDNESDAY 13 Bashir Masih (aged 60) and his family were the only Christians living in the village of Gujar Khan, in Punjab province, Pakistan. On 20 September a group of Muslims attacked Bashir and his wife as they stood at the door of their house. At 4.00 a.m. the next day they got a phonecall telling them to leave or be killed. In the afternoon, at least twelve armed men stormed the house. They hit Bashir and his sons with iron rods, ripped the clothes of his daughters-in-law, and threw the young children against the walls. Then they looted the house and set it on fire. Pray that this family may know the Lord's peace in their hearts, healing of their injuries, and provision for all their practical needs.

THURSDAY 14 Praise God that, by the generosity of Barnabas supporters, 387 Pakistani Christian families who used to be bonded labourers in brick kilns are now free. The debts they or their parents had incurred long ago, at times of family crisis, used to keep them tied to their jobs and burdened with a feeling of shame and hopelessness. But, with the debts paid off, their lives are transformed and they are overflowing with thankfulness to God

and to those who gave the money. Many testify to how being freed has given their spiritual lives a great boost as well as changing their physical situation. Pray that they will continue growing and rejoicing in the Lord, and that more families can be freed.

FRIDAY 15 The Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) noted a sharp rise in incidents of violence and targeted hate against the Christian community in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh last year. Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state of India, with 17% of the country's total population. Christians make up 0.18% of the state. The EFI's Religious Liberty Commission has called on the government of Uttar Pradesh to "restore the confidence of the Christian community by enforcing law and order and through exemplary punishment to communal elements who attack peaceful Churches and worship services on flimsy and made up charges." Pray that the state government will respond favourably.

SATURDAY 16 Please pray for the Christian minority in South India, as they struggle to rebuild their lives after the terrible floods six months ago, the worst for almost a century. It takes years to recover from such devastation. Many of the Christians are Dalits, the despised lowest stratum of society, so they are doubly despised. Before the floods they were poor, now they are destitute and even more hated than previously because some Hindu extremists blamed Christians for causing the floods by angering the Hindu gods. Ask our heavenly Father to comfort the bereaved and to provide for those who have lost

homes, possessions and their means of livelihood. Barnabas Fund is assisting.

SUNDAY 17 O Lord Jesus, we seek Your blessing on our brave brothers and sisters in Vietnam, who face persecution of many kinds, including arrest, detention, and mob violence. May they cling faithfully to You, resisting all attempts to make them deny Your Name. We pray especially for ethnic minority Christians, who are often treated the worst. Be their strength and their shield. We ask that you will move the hearts of the Vietnamese authorities to take concrete steps toward increasing religious liberty. Touch their hearts and make them see that Christians are not dangerous but have a positive influence on society.

MONDAY 18 At the time writing the Thai authorities are still detaining a group of Vietnamese Christian



Ethnic minority Montagnard Christians face particular persecution in Vietnam
Image Source: Stoptorture-vn.org

refugees from the Montagnard ethnic group, whom they rounded up *en masse* in August. The adults are in a detention centre and the children are held somewhere else. Most of the group have been granted refugee status by the UNHCR, but the Thai authorities have a track record of ignoring refugees' status and instead detaining or deporting them. The adults (aged 18 to 70) must wear prison-style uniforms and share squalid, crowded cells. But their greatest concern is not their present conditions, appalling though they are, but rather what might happen if they were deported back to Vietnam. Pray that they will be strong in the Lord and not give way to fear.

TUESDAY 19 Twenty Christian families (105 people) in a rural part of Laos were given one month to abandon their Christian faith, leave the village or be put in prison. The church leaders responded by showing to the local district head the national constitution/laws stating that Christianity is a recognised religion in Laos. But the district head simply replied that in his area Christians will not be allowed. At the time of writing, the church leaders are trying to get their case brought to the attention of the central government. Five of the 20 families have given up their faith, because they are so frightened. Pray that the other 15 will stand firm.

WEDNESDAY 20 In the last year, the Rwandan government has shut down an estimated 7,000 churches across the country. Because group prayer is banned except in government approved buildings, this means the Christians

must now gather secretly. Some of them are reportedly worshipping in caves. The official reason given for the closures is that the buildings do not meet new strict building regulations introduced in February 2018, but the closures also signal that the churches are under observation by the authorities. Over 90% of Rwanda's population identify as Christians. Pray for them, as they react to the changing environment, that they will be faithful to the Lord in everything.

THURSDAY 21 A ministry in Uganda brings the Gospel to Muslims while also discipling and caring for converts from Islam. They link new believers with mature Christians who meet together in fellowship groups, weekly or more often. The recent converts can grow and the mature Christians have an opportunity to serve and love these vulnerable new brothers and sisters, who have usually sacrificed so much to follow Christ. Praise God for bringing so many Ugandan Muslims to Himself and ask His blessing, protection and guidance for this ministry and its brave leaders.

FRIDAY 22 In the chaos and violence of Cameroon, as languages and religions vie with each other, a Cameroonian Baptist pastor has compared the situation with the persecution of Christians by the Roman Emperor Nero. Although this may be poetic licence, he also cites detailed statistics about displaced pastors, who cannot feed their children let alone send them to school, and churches closed down – only five of 46 in Belo region are still functioning. Without pastors or worship services and ministry,

Christians are beginning to fall away from the faith. Pray that the Holy Spirit will remind the bereft believers of the teaching of the Lord Jesus (John 14:26).

SATURDAY 23 Kazakhstan society is undergoing a process that could be called “soft Islamisation”. Radical Muslims have taken control of most of the small businesses, and Islamic money – mainly from Turkey – is funding most of the educational institutions. Christians comprise about 25% of the population of this vast Central Asian republic. As they become increasingly marginalised and (humanly speaking) powerless, pray that they may be powerful witnesses for Christ, drawing many Muslims to Him.

SUNDAY 24 Heavenly Father, we ask for Your wisdom, peace and hope for Christian parents in Tajikistan, who are forbidden by law to take their children to church or allow them to participate in any public Christian activities. Help them to take every opportunity to teach their children Your Word and Your ways, talking to their children about You at home and outside, at any and every time of day. May they take comfort in knowing that Your father heart feels for them and understands their concerns for their little ones. May Your Holy Spirit bring the children to full faith in Your Son, Jesus, in whose Name we pray. (Deuteronomy 11:19)

MONDAY 25 Eldos (25, from Kyrgyzstan) was cornered by three Muslim men who tried to force him to recite the Islamic creed. As a convert to Christianity, Eldos refused, because

this would have been to deny Christ and return to Islam. The men beat him viciously, causing severe concussion, breaking his jaw and nose, knocking out 20 teeth and making his eye bleed. The first hospital to which Eldos was taken refused to treat him but two other hospitals have operated on some of his injuries. At the time of writing, Eldos is troubled by headaches and nightmares. Ask the Lord Jesus to touch and heal His faithful son, Eldos.

TUESDAY 26 President Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan has been in post for two years. He is making many changes to the strict regime of his predecessor. For example, he is encouraging foreign investment and is much more tolerant of religious activity. There were official celebrations to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, and he has permitted a limited number of Uzbek Bibles to be imported.



An Uzbek convert from Islam is baptised in a well

For the first time in 17 years, local congregations and church buildings are able to get registration, so that they can function legally. Thank the Lord for these developments which are easing the pressure on Christians who have suffered so much for their faith.

WEDNESDAY 27 Despite a more tolerant attitude from the central government of Uzbekistan (see above), Christians – especially converts from Islam – still face persecution from other sources: Muslim relatives, local government officials and Islamist terrorists. Gathering to pray in a private home remains illegal and those who are caught usually find themselves in court the next day and then having to pay a fine. Thank God that the fines have become much smaller over the last two years. Pray that the persecuted believers of Uzbekistan will not grow weary or lose heart, as they “consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners” (Hebrews 12:3).

THURSDAY 28 Police in Uzbekistan arrested 43 converts to Christianity from Islam, including twelve teenagers. The believers were arrested at a Christian camp in early October and held for over eight hours. Pressure was put on them to work as police informers, or to incriminate the leaders and organisers of the camp. All the adults were found guilty of “illegal assembly” at their trial on 30 October, but were only given small fines. The teenagers were not charged. There had been attempts to film the trial for TV but the Christians refused this. Pray that the 43 will be strengthened in their faith by this experience and that their persecutors will be drawn to Christ.



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Front Cover: A displaced Christian in Myanmar (Burma) holds a Bible in her own language, which was given by Barnabas Fund. (Words on the cover of the Bible have been blurred for safety so as to keep confidential her people-group.)