



barnabasprayer

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

To help you
pray for the
persecuted
Church

JULY/AUGUST
2019

barnabasaid.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

MONDAY 1 Five Sunday School children and a Christian woman were killed on May 12 when Al-Nusra Front Islamist rebels fired rockets on the Christian town of Suqaylabiyah, near Hama, Syria. Two of the victims were brothers. Bashar (aged about nine) was killed instantly, but Marcel (about eleven) lingered in a critical state for five days until he also died. Pray for their mother, Yasmin, who is now alone, as her husband was killed three years ago. Pray for all others



Widowed Yasmin with her sons, who are now both dead

mourning loved ones that they will be comforted and for other children who were severely injured that they will be healed.

TUESDAY 2 Kidnapped by a rebel group on her way to college and held for twelve days. Crouching among the rows of chairs in church during an intense rebel bombardment. Rockets “falling as rain,” hitting the family home, her mother with a dramatic nervous breakdown, her father at a loss what to do. These are the memories of “Leah,” a dentistry student from Syria, in one nine-month period during the Syrian Civil War. In June this year she flew to Australia to start a new life there, her flight paid for by Barnabas Aid’s Operation Safe Havens. Pray that Leah will quickly settle down in Australia, where she longs to “live a decent life without sectarianism, in a safe and secure country.”

WEDNESDAY 3 Algeria’s long-serving President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced his resignation in early April, having led his country since the civil war finished in 1999. The announcement followed street protests and pressure from the military. Elections for a new president, due to be held tomorrow, were canceled in response to street protesters who did not believe the elections would be credible. Pray that the Lord will raise up a righteous president, at the time of His choosing, who will bring greater religious liberty for all in Algeria, including the Christians, who are mostly converts from Islam and their children.

THURSDAY 4 When Algerian Christian leaders met in May to review the situation of the churches,

they noted a string of injustices, threats and interrogations. They asked prayer for freedom and an end to the harassment of Algerian believers. Specifically, please pray for the reopening of the church building in Ighram, closed since October 2018; reopening of the Christian bookshop in Oran, closed for two years, despite the fact that a judge has ruled that the accusations against its owner were false; dropping of the case against the pastor of Makouda Church for building a wall around the church building; and the reopening of Boudjima Church, opened on January 11, and sealed by the authorities on May 27.

FRIDAY 5 Egyptian Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli has told the committee overseeing the process of legalising church buildings that they must work faster. The committee was established in 2017 to clear the backlog of unlicensed church buildings and by April this year had approved 894 applications, with 2,836 applications still waiting to be approved. Pray that the committee will speed up its work, so that Egyptian Christians gathering for worship will not be breaking the law.

SATURDAY 6 Egyptian Christians in Mit-Nama, north of Cairo, long for a building in which they can meet to worship together. In 2001 they bought land and tried to construct a church, but twice were forced to halt because of Muslim extremist attacks at the site. On April 23 this year, the police ordered the Christians to stop holding services in another building they had recently purchased, amid reports of local Muslims being stirred up to attack

it. The police promised the Christians could resume construction work on the first church if they agreed to leave their present building, but the Christians – doubtful if this would really happen – refused to go. Ask God to give them wisdom, keep them safe and enable them to worship Him without fear. Mit-Nama has 1,500 Christian families.

SUNDAY 7 O Triune God, Almighty Lord, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, we bring before You those who suffer for their faith in Christ. May they know your mighty power at work in their lives, whether to change situations and take from them the cup of suffering, or to give them grace and strength to endure with love unflinching and faith undimmed. Whatever Your sovereign will for them, may their lives bring glory to You and draw others to put their trust in the One who died to take away the sins of the world, our Lord Jesus, in whose Name we pray.

MONDAY 8 “We are going to lock you in prison and you are going to beg me for your life,” said a lawyer in Kyrgyzstan on February 23 to Eldos, who had been beaten almost to death in October by Muslims angry that he had left Islam to follow Christ. The lawyer was representing the men who had attacked Eldos and was trying to force him to drop charges against them by threatening violence and also threatening to fabricate false criminal charges against Eldos and Eldos’s own lawyer. A few days later Eldos fled the country and, by the time you are reading this, he and two relatives should be safe in another country far away, with financial help from Barnabas Aid. Pray that Eldos will be fully healed in body, mind and spirit from his two ordeals.

TUESDAY 9 Friends of the men who attacked Eldos (see previous page) made menacing visits to Christian homes in three villages in Kyrgyzstan, calling out the owners and swearing to them that they would burn down their homes if his attackers were punished. Pray that the Lord will give grace to these Christians to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them or threaten to persecute them (Matthew 5:44). Ask that their Christ-like response will change the hearts of these men of violence, leading them to meet personally with the Prince of Peace.

WEDNESDAY 10 Kyrgyzstan is the most democratic of the five Central Asian republics, but persecution of non-Muslim minorities is on the rise, especially in the north-eastern region of Issyk-Kul. The authorities seem to want to conceal the rise of radical Islam in Issyk-Kul, apparently because they do not want to discourage tourists who come to visit its lake and ski resorts. Since 2010 there have been many incidents of violence against Christians in Issyk-Kul, but these are usually hushed up. Pray that the Kyrgyz authorities will exert themselves to ensure peace and freedom for all.

THURSDAY 11 Turkmenistan is a strict and closed country, and Turkmen believers have little contact with the outside world and little access to Christian literature. But the Holy Spirit moves where He pleases (John 3:8) and reminds us of everything that Jesus said (John 14:26). Praise God that the Turkmen government cannot keep Him out, and ask that the Spirit will teach and help our

brothers and sisters in Turkmenistan, equipping them and strengthening them to shine for Christ in their homeland and draw others to Him.

FRIDAY 12 Christians in Albania wrote to Barnabas Aid earlier this year to request prayer for their country. With political instability, opposition protests, growing unemployment and a deteriorating economic situation, people have lost hope. “Pray that God will intervene in this situation,” ran the request, asking also that God will empower His people, so that the Albanian Church will be strong and rise up in prayer and preaching the Gospel.

SATURDAY 13 A 13-year-old Armenian Christian boy called Arthur was tricked into reciting the Islamic creed on a live Turkish TV program on May 11. Many Muslims consider that saying the words of their creed, whether or not in earnest, makes the person a Muslim. The boy has therefore effectively converted to Islam. Now that he is a “Muslim” he will be considered an apostate from Islam if he re-affirms his Christian faith. According to the Hanafi school of Islamic law, which is dominant in Turkey, the punishment for a boy (child) apostate is to be imprisoned until he comes of age and then killed. This incident gained a lot of publicity in Turkey and Arthur’s parents are suing the producers of the TV show, with the encouragement of a Turkish Congressman. Pray for Arthur’s safety and peace of mind, and that God will work all things together for good for those who love Him so that this furore may lead to greater religious liberty in Turkey (Romans 8:28).

SUNDAY 14 Lord God, we pray for all those affected by Cyclone Fani, which caused so much destruction in Odisha State, India. We lift to You especially the Christian victims, whose poorly-built shacks and meager possessions suffered much damage from the wind and rain. We ask that You will strengthen their faith to cope with such losses, particularly those who had already lost everything they owned a decade earlier in the terrible anti-Christian violence of 2008-9 in Odisha. May they be comforted by the thought of the treasure they will have in heaven, as promised by the Lord Jesus in whose Name we pray.



Barnabas Aid provided relief for 4,000 Christian families to help them rebuild their simple homes after Cyclone Fani

MONDAY 15 Christians in rural parts of Bangladesh need our prayers. Many have no one to give them pastoral care or teaching. There may be just one worship service a year, say at Christmas. Few have secure livelihoods and so people are migrating to the cities to look for work. Some in these contexts are being trained in Christian leadership. Ask that they will be equipped with all they need to teach and encourage believers in such desperate situations.

TUESDAY 16 When The Islamic State (IS) terrorists caused explosions at three churches and three hotels in Sri Lanka on Easter morning, they killed about 253 people, mainly Sri Lankan

Christians. An IS statement rejoiced at how many Christians and “citizens of the Crusader alliance countries” had died. But we know that in heaven there is far greater rejoicing at the faithfulness of the Christian martyrs, who have been given the crown of life (Revelation 2:10). Pray that this knowledge may bring consolation to the bereaved and courage to the survivors. At Zion Evangelical Church, Batticaloa, 14 of the dead were children. They had been asked by their Sunday School teacher a few minutes earlier, “How many of you are willing to die for Christ?” Every child had raised their hand.

WEDNESDAY 17 Two of “Ruth’s” three daughters died in the Easter Sunday church bombings in Sri Lanka. “I don’t have the strength to bear this pain,” she cried. Ruth herself had been seriously injured in the blast, but the loss of her daughters, aged 13 and 15, was the pain that she could not bear. After hours of searching, “Ethan” found his wife’s remains but could only identify her from the toes. He and their three children are desperately traumatized. Many bomb victims have lost eyes or limbs. Many family breadwinners are dead or too injured to work. Barnabas Aid has assisted with their practical needs, but ask that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, will meet the emotional and spiritual needs of all affected by the Easter bombings.

THURSDAY 18 Muslims in Sri Lanka are very active and successful in converting impoverished Christians and Hindus to Islam by generous material help. In eastern Sri Lanka, even a Christian pastor has recently become a Muslim, after Muslims helped his wife in their situation of

practical need. Christian schools are being changed to Islamic schools, which is legally possible as soon as Muslims become a majority of the students. Muslims are actively seeking to marry Christian girls. Pray that Sri Lankan Christians will continue to be faithful and rejoice in the Lord God, their salvation and strength, no matter what the depths of their poverty (Habakkuk 3:17-19).

FRIDAY 19 Christians in Nepal are confused and intimidated by a new law restricting religious activities; they are less vocal and less willing to give their testimony, said a Nepali church leader to Barnabas Aid. This reaction has occurred despite vigorous efforts to train Christians in religious liberty during the months before the law came into force in September 2018. Hindu extremist groups, however, seem to have been emboldened by the law and are challenging Christian activities, sometimes even before they happen. Pray that Christians will not give way to fear but will cling to the Lord, trusting in Him to protect them.

SATURDAY 20 Join Nepali Christians in giving praise and thanks to God that four Christians, arrested in Dang on April 23, were freed on April 29 after a hearing lasting almost a day. Those arrested were two Nepalis, an Indian and an American. Pray that this will set a legal precedent for the interpretation of the extremely vague new law (see above) under which they were accused of attempting to convert people to Christianity. Pray too that it will help the Christians of Nepal to draw courage from the Lord's promise that He is with them to save and deliver them from the hands

of the authorities of their country (Jeremiah 42:11).

SUNDAY 21 O Lord, who promises wisdom to those who ask, please help Christians who face new situations of pressure and persecution, where laws have recently changed, imposing punishments on those who faithfully obey Christ's teaching, or where society is growing more intolerant and hostile. May Your Holy Spirit be their counselor, to lead and guide them into uncharted territory. We ask that You will especially give to pastors and ministers the gifts of discernment, insight and wisdom, that they will know how to advise other believers who look to them for leadership. We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ. (James 1:5)

MONDAY 22 Since shedding its Marxist-Leninist government in 1989, the small West African country of Benin has gradually become known as one of the most stable democracies in Africa. Christianity is nominally the largest religion, with Islam second. Voodoo (Vodun) is strong and its practitioners are often at loggerheads with evangelical Christians. The government is committed to religious liberty and is supposed to protect people from being forced to undergo the terrifying Voodoo initiation rites. At elections in April this year there were no opposition candidates to vote for, because both parties were allied to President Patrice Talon. Pre-election protests had to be broken up by force. Pray for freedom, peace and stability to be maintained in Benin, that the authorities will be effective in protecting Christians and Muslims from Voodoo practitioners, and that there will not be a return to oppressive Communist rule.

TUESDAY 23 At the start of the rainy season, followers of traditional African religions (animists) in Burkina Faso engage in special rituals, which are opposed by Christian leaders. It was in this context that two church buildings were attacked in May in Lena, an area of western Burkina Faso where the animistic Bobo tribe is dominant. In the country as a whole, Christians are around 20%, traditional African religions 30% and Muslims 50%. Pray that Christian leaders will continue to speak God's Word with great boldness, no matter what threats and violence they face (Acts 4:29).



An Assemblies of God church in Burkina Faso, after it was attacked by followers of traditional African religions

WEDNESDAY 24 A pastor in Burkina Faso and five of his congregation were murdered by Islamist gunmen who attacked the church in Silgadji on Sunday April 28. The attackers demanded that their victims deny Christ and convert to Islam, but they refused. One at a time, they were called out from the congregation standing under a tree, taken behind a building and shot. Pastor Jean had recently had a vision, from which he understood that he was in imminent danger, but

had said that he preferred to die for his faith rather than leave the village where he had ministered for nearly 40 years. Pray for a great harvest of faith from these grains of wheat which have willingly fallen into the ground and died for Christ (John 12:24).

THURSDAY 25 "Pray for me to keep the faith because we know we may die very shortly," said a Christian mother to her son after the attack at Silgadji (see above). Three further attacks on Christian events in Burkina Faso occurred on May 12, 13 and 26, creating another 14 martyrs for Christ. "There is an atmosphere of panic in the town. People are holed up in their homes," said the mayor of Dablo after a Sunday worship service there was attacked. This kind of Islamist violence against churches and schools was unknown in Burkina Faso until 2015 but has escalated causing 216 schools and 70 churches to be closed down. Pray that Christians may not be fearful, but filled with a peace that transcends understanding, enabling them to calm and encourage the non-believers (Philippians 4:7).

FRIDAY 26 Elections were held in Indonesia on April 17 and results announced on May 21: Joko Widodo, the incumbent president, had been re-elected with a 55% majority. The next day supporters of the candidate who had stood against him were protesting and six people were killed. Widodo has a track record of helping the country's Christian minority, but the vice-president is strongly Islamist. In fact, observers feel that the whole country is moving to a more Islamic position. Pray for the Church in Indonesia, which has experienced considerable

Islamist violence in recent years. Ask that Christians may be able to stand their ground and keep their faith as the pressure on them grows.

SATURDAY 27 Brunei began phasing in a *sharia* penal code in 2014, and announced in December 2018 that the second and third steps of the three-step process would take place together on April 3 2019. There was an international outcry at the proposed death penalty for men found guilty of homosexual intercourse. In early May the Sultan of Brunei announced that the death penalty for this “crime” would not be enforced. *Sharia* also lays down a death penalty for the “crime” of leaving Islam. Pray for a similar international outcry about this and that the Sultan will agree not to enforce the death penalty for apostasy either. Pray that Brunei Muslims who want to follow Christ may do so without danger or harassment.

SUNDAY 28 **Our loving heavenly Father, who knows everything, we pray today for Afghan Christians, many of them secret believers, who may never meet another Christian in their earthly life. Thank you for calling them out of darkness into Your wonderful light, for making them part of a royal priesthood and holy nation. We ask that Your loving presence will keep them from all loneliness or fear, and Your Holy Spirit will teach them and lead them, enabling them to grow more and more into the likeness of Your Son Jesus, who is their and our Lord and Saviour, in whose Name we pray. (1 Peter 2:9)**

MONDAY 29 Praise God that Pakistani police have declared Farhan Aziz (25) to be innocent of the charge of sending “blasphemous” text messages on his

phone. He was released on May 1, after nine months in custody. Farhan, a Christian, had been accused under Section 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code, which carries a mandatory death sentence. Pray for his protection from zealous Muslims who truly believe they would be pleasing Allah if they killed him. Humanly speaking, it is unlikely he can ever return to his home town, Gujranwala. An angry mob tried to attack Christian homes when Farhan was arrested.

TUESDAY 30 Please pray for Aasia Bibi and her family, who are now living in Canada. Ask that the Lord will help them cope with a language, climate and lifestyle so different from what they were used to in Pakistan. Pray that they will also adapt to being able to live all together again after nine years of separation when Aasia was in prison, falsely accused of “blasphemy” and – for most of the time – under a death sentence. Pray that their Christian faith, which brought them through such trials and tribulations in Pakistan, will not waver now that they are in Canada.

WEDNESDAY 31 Thank the Lord for the skill, courage and determination of Aasia Bibi’s lawyer, a Muslim, who put his own life in danger by defending her in court. Saif-ul-Mulook is now representing a Christian couple who were sentenced to death in April 2014 for sending “blasphemous” text messages to two Muslims. Shafqat Emmanuel and his wife, Shagufta Kausar, are illiterate and say they were incapable of sending text messages. Pray that Saif-ul-Mulook will be successful in getting their conviction overturned.

August

THURSDAY 1 Continue to pray for Stephen Masih, in prison in Pakistan accused of “blasphemy.” He suffered permanent brain damage in childhood when he had typhoid fever and since then has had fits and outbursts of bad language because of his mental disability. His family could not afford the medicine he needed to prevent these symptoms. A Pakistani Christian organization, with support from Barnabas Aid, is representing him legally and covering his other needs including the medication. Pray that the Lord will grant them wisdom and protection, and also for Stephen and his family, that is, his older sister Alia and their bedridden mother. It was Alia who begged for Stephen’s life while he was brutally beaten by a crowd of Muslims, including Muslim clerics, when the accusation was first made. But the beating did not stop until the police arrived to arrest him.

FRIDAY 2 The freedom of Christians to live out their faith in South Africa is under very real attack, principally in the law courts where those “offended” by Christian beliefs bring cases against them. On many of these issues, Islam takes the same or even a stronger stance than

Christianity, but legal cases are not brought against Muslims. Ask that the Lord will bless church leaders in South Africa with great wisdom to know how to respond.

SATURDAY 3 South Africa’s Commission for Cultural, Religious and Language Rights is seeking new laws to make it compulsory for all ministers of religion to be registered, all religious organizations to be registered and all buildings used for religious purposes to be registered – including private homes where small groups meet for prayer and Bible study. This is a serious threat to religious freedom in South Africa. Pray that Christians will be vigilant and know how to act wisely and effectively to preserve religious liberty for all.

SUNDAY 4 Heavenly Father, we lift to You those Christians who put their lives at risk whenever they gather to worship You. We ask that You will keep them in perfect peace with their minds stayed on You, not distracted by fears. Enable them to concentrate on seeking Your face, on praying and praising, on listening and learning from You. We pray too for those who are preparing to harm Your people today, that You will take from their hearts all hatred and violence. Cause them to abandon their plans and focus their energies on seeking the God who is love. We pray in the Name of Jesus. (Isaiah 26:3)

MONDAY 5 Assyrian and Armenian Christians in Iran, descended from Christians who came to the country many centuries ago, worshipping in languages not understood by the Muslim majority, have not endured nearly as much harassment from the



Stephen Masih

authorities as have Christian converts from Islam. In recent months, however, this has begun to change and increasing pressure is being put on the historic Christian communities. Pray that they will not be dismayed but will call to mind the apostle Paul's view that suffering for Christ is a gift from God: "For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him." (Philippians 1:29).

TUESDAY 6 On May 9 a large number of officials from two security organizations in Iran descended on the Assyrian Evangelical Church in Tabriz, changed the locks on all the doors, removed the cross from the church tower, and installed some monitoring equipment. The clear message was that Assyrian Christians are no longer allowed to worship there. Pray for Assyrian Christians in Iran, who are feeling "sad, disappointed and worried," according to a message pleading for help. Ask that those who are advocating for them, whether publicly or behind the scenes, will succeed in persuading the Iranian authorities to reverse their actions.



Assyrian Evangelical Church, Tabriz, north-west Iran, before and after the forcible removal of its cross

WEDNESDAY 7 Today is the anniversary of the beginning of a massacre of Assyrian Christians, which took place in 1933 in and around the town of Simele in Iraq. Up to 3,000 Assyrians were killed by the Iraqi army and Kurdish irregular forces. The violence had been foreseen by Christian leaders, who had therefore begged that Assyrians be allowed to re-settle in other countries. The French promised that some could settle in Syria, but when hundreds of Assyrians tried to cross into Syria they were turned away at the border and then attacked by the Iraqi army as they trekked back home. The British, for whom the Assyrians had recently fought as loyal, valued and trusted troops, provided bombs for the Iraqi army to use against Assyrian men, women and children. The British had also reneged on giving the Assyrians their own independent homeland when Iraq was created eight years earlier. Pray that lessons will be learned, even now, and that God will bring good out of the treachery and violence.

THURSDAY 8 Jordan (the Old Testament land of Gilead) is often considered an oasis of stability and moderation in a region of turbulence and extremes. But it is not a place of equality or full religious liberty for its small Christian community. Jordan's stability may not last. It has millions of Syrian and Iraqi refugees as well as a large population of Palestinians. There is discontent about rising prices and government mismanagement. Christians are usually the first to suffer when upheaval comes to the Middle East, so pray for the protection of Jordanian Christians, asking

also that they may be like “balm of Gilead,” a source of peace and healing in their beloved land (Jeremiah 8:22; 46:11).

FRIDAY 9 Thank the Lord for the growing Church of Saudi believers. Each one has made a brave decision to follow Christ in a country where they could potentially be executed by the state for apostasy from Islam. Many have shared their faith with other Saudi Muslims – another very courageous step. Pray that they may be protected by the shed blood of Christ and that the Holy Spirit will guide them to other Saudis who are seeking a God of love, who can take away their sins.

SATURDAY 10 Praise God for the generosity of the Australian government in providing visas for persecuted Christians from the Middle East and elsewhere. They pledged to accept 18,750 refugees in the year to June 30 2019 among which have been many Christians. Australia has no problem acknowledging the needs of those who are suffering threats, violence, and persecution because they follow the Lord Jesus Christ. However, Christian converts from Islam have been rejected for humanitarian visas due to difficulties in verifying the genuineness of their conversion. Pray that there will be similar generosity in the coming twelve months, extended also to converts from Islam. Pray that other countries such as the UK and the USA will follow Australia’s example.

SUNDAY 11 **We thank and praise You, heavenly Father, for the growth of the Church in China, and we rejoice that there are now far more followers of Your Son than members of the Chinese**

Communist Party. May those who have newly come to faith in Him learn to be mature believers, walking closely with their Savior and Lord. May all Your people in China be salt and light in their communities, sources of love, truth and harmony. May their patient and loving response to harassment and persecution bring glory to Christ, in whose Name we pray.

MONDAY 12 Many officials, senior and junior, across Henan province, central China, have been offering small financial incentives for anyone who reports illegal religious activities, such as meetings of unofficial churches, known as “house churches.” There are also heavy fines of up to 200,000 yuan (\$30,000) for anyone who provides a venue for an “illegal religious event.” Secular educational institutes that allow their facilities to be used for such events could lose their licences as well. Remembering how Saul put such energy into persecuting Christians but later became a preacher of the faith he had tried to destroy, pray for the officials of Henan province that their hearts will be utterly changed.

TUESDAY 13 Christians of the Uighur ethnic group in north-west China are converts from Islam. They face hostility from the Chinese authorities because they are Uighurs and from the rest of the Uighur community because they are Christians. The New Testament with Genesis and Exodus has been printed in the Uighur language but it is very difficult for believers to get hold of a copy. However, an increasing number are now able to access the Scriptures in their own language online, either written or audio. Pray that our Uighur brothers

and sisters may be able to build up their faith by reading the Word.

WEDNESDAY 14 North Korea remains a very secretive and oppressive country. Reports that President Kim Jong-un had officials executed because of the breakdown of his talks in Vietnam with American President Donald Trump have not been verified at the time of writing. But executions certainly do take place in North Korea. Christians can be executed for the “crime” of owning a Bible. Some Christians also die from the harsh conditions in the labor camps where they are sent to serve long sentences. Praise God for the wonderful and enduring faith of North Korean believers and pray that the Church will grow, not shrink, under this extreme persecution.

THURSDAY 15 Two years after The Islamic State terrorists in the Philippines attacked the city of Marawi, reducing the heart of the city to rubble, little has been done to rebuild all that has been destroyed, so 100,000 people are still displaced. Church buildings and Christian people were the main target of the attack. The government has promised that all unexploded bombs will be cleared by the end of this month, demolition and debris removal will be completed by the end of November 2019, and reconstruction completed by the end of December 2021. Pray for determined action to provide proper homes for the victims of this anti-Christian violence.

FRIDAY 16 Christians in parts of Laos suffer severe persecution, which often affects their ability to support themselves economically. Barnabas funds training and other projects to help believers become self-sufficient. “Noy” is from an extremely poor and very persecuted area. With a small grant from Barnabas she started her first micro-business and now buys meat every day to cook by the roadside and sell. The income helps fund her studies in a local vocational school, because her desire is to learn a skill that she can use to get a better job and thus support her mother and herself. Praise God for Noy’s selfless determination and her love for the Lord. Pray that her faith, her business and her studies will thrive.



18-year-old Noy runs this business to earn money so she can study and get a better job to support her mother

SATURDAY 17 Kiamaiko has the largest livestock market in Nairobi, Kenya. It is also an area where anti-Christian violence broke out earlier this year, with churches damaged and five reported destroyed. Many Christians were

injured and some hospitalized. The violence began when police removed the loudspeakers from a noisy religious debate that Muslims were holding. Pray that relations between Muslims and Christians in the area can be restored. They had previously co-existed peacefully.

SUNDAY 18 O Lord, we thank You that the United Nations has proclaimed a special day on Thursday to commemorate victims of acts of violence based on religion or belief. We pray that this will have an impact on leaders and individuals around the world, creating a greater respect for those who hold other religious views. We pray for all persecuted minorities that they may be allowed to choose their faith, worship freely, share their faith with others and live out every peaceful aspect of their beliefs without discrimination or harassment. We lift to you especially our own Christian family where they are a despised and vulnerable minority, asking that You give them patience, perseverance and grace to respond to whatever trials they face as would our Lord Jesus, in whose Name we pray.

MONDAY 19 Eritrea is being “brought in from the cold.” In November 2018 the UN Security Council lifted sanctions on it and in June 2019 the US removed Eritrea from a list of countries that it said would not cooperate with its anti-terrorism efforts. Yet six months earlier, the US had accused Eritrea of “systematic, ongoing, (and) egregious violations of religious freedom.” Eritrea remains a repressive, undemocratic and highly militarized country, where religious liberty is strictly limited. It

is reported that over 30 Pentecostal Christians were arrested while gathering for prayer in private homes in a period of just a few days at the time that the country was removed from the US terror list. Pray that the plight of persecuted Christians in Eritrea will not be forgotten and that other nations will use their power and influence to help them.

TUESDAY 20 An Ethiopian church leader wrote to Barnabas Aid in May about the situation in the south of the country, where about a million people had been displaced by ethnic conflict. Although the government has enabled some 80% to return home, the returnees are struggling because their houses and crops had been destroyed. About 120 church buildings had been burned down. In the east, four churches had been destroyed by Muslim extremists. Pray that in this time of hardship, persecution and distress, Ethiopian Christians may feel, like the apostle Paul, “when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10).

WEDNESDAY 21 Please pray today for Somali Christians, who put their lives in real danger by the decision to follow Christ. Whether in Somalia or another country, they could be killed by sincere Somali Muslims determined to please Allah by enacting *sharia* law, with its death sentence for leaving Islam. Ask that the King of kings and Lord of lords will protect our Somali brothers and sisters from all harm and will take away all fear from their hearts. Pray that their love, joy and peace will bring glory to their Savior and draw others to Him.

THURSDAY 22 Today has been proclaimed by the United Nations as “International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief.” The idea was brought to the UN General Assembly by Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, and the USA and followed the attack on Muslims at worship in Christchurch, New Zealand, and Christians at worship in Sri Lanka on Easter Day. The aim of the Day, among other things, is to combat hate crimes and acts of violence related to religion or belief. Pray that it will help to promote real change for the better.

FRIDAY 23 In a blow to the country’s Christian and other minorities, the Transitional Military Council now in control of Sudan has affirmed that legislation will continue to be based on *sharia* (Islamic law), as it has been since 1983. The Council took power after the ousting of President Omar al-Bashir in April. At the time of writing, the Council was still negotiating with Declaration of Freedom and Change, a coalition of activists and opposition political groups. Pray that Sudan will soon see an end of oppressive *sharia* legislation that discriminates against women and non-Muslims.

SATURDAY 24 Despite the ousting of President al-Bashir, who had ruled Sudan since 1989, a “deep state” of shadowy Islamist insiders closely allied to him are reported to remain in place, retaining their power and influence. After decades of authoritarian rule, there is a dearth of political parties or individuals with relevant experience to offer an alternative. It is therefore feared that the military will allow the

“deep state” to seize power in a counter-coup. This would mean severe oppression once again for the 3% Christian minority. Pray that God will intervene and change the course of events from these alarming predictions.

SUNDAY 25 Heavenly Father, as the United Nations urges the world to focus on victims of violence based on religion or belief, we focus our thoughts on those who have heard the call of Your Son Jesus Christ and responded by leaving other religions to follow Him. We thank you for their courage in making this commitment, knowing that they are likely to suffer violence as a result. Please sustain and strengthen each one, heal their wounds, calm their fears, and fill them to overflowing with love and joy in their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in whose Name we ask these things.

MONDAY 26 Pray for the protection of Christians in north-east Nigeria whose villages are often attacked, either by Boko Haram Islamist militants or by Fulani herdsmen. Their homes, churches, foodstores, and other buildings are set on fire, and believers are injured or killed. Ask that the Lord will give them grace to respond to this ongoing violence with Christ-like forgiveness and love for their enemies.

TUESDAY 27 Islamist militants invaded a women’s meeting at a church in Dolbel, about 31 miles from Niger’s capital Niamey, and shot the minister as they made off with a stolen car filled with food and other looted items. Although wounded in the chest, hip and foot, the minister’s life was not in danger – praise God

for this and pray for his full recovery. Pray that he, the women and all the church members may stand firm and continue to strive together as one for the faith of the Gospel, without being frightened in any way by those who oppose them (Philippians 1:27-28).

WEDNESDAY 28 Two church buildings were burned out by Boko Haram militants in the mainly Christian village of Grossi in the far north of Cameroon on Saturday May 11. Sixty-seven houses, two shops and some grain stores were damaged, livestock killed and motorbikes stolen. Cameroonian security forces attempted to intervene but were overwhelmed by the Islamist militants and fled. “God help us,” said the pastor, predicting that Boko Haram would keep returning. Pray that God will guard and protect His people and be like a fortress to them.

THURSDAY 29 Secular humanism has been increasing its influence in Western society for many decades, almost unnoticed, working especially through the education system. This ideology puts humankind in place of God. From this comes moral relativism, which holds that there are no moral absolutes so each individual can decide for themselves what is right or wrong in any particular situation. These beliefs are poised to displace traditional Christian values in the West, values which are becoming despised and may soon become illegal. Pray for God’s will to rule and reign in the corridors of power of Western nations so this will not happen.

FRIDAY 30 The British government is struggling to provide legal definitions of terms such as

“extremism” and “Islamophobia” as it tries to find a way to prevent terrorism without reducing freedom of expression or religious liberty. Pray that it may be given wisdom from above. Pray for Christian believers who are elected members in any of the country’s parliaments, assemblies and in the House of Lords, that they will be used by God for His purposes. Pray that the Church will awake to the gravity of the situation and respond (2 Chronicles 7:14).

SATURDAY 31 “My Lord has sent me good news through Barnabas Aid,” exclaimed Amanat, a brick-kiln worker in Pakistan whose debt to the brick-kiln owner was paid by Barnabas supporters, thus releasing him and his family from bonded labor. “My mouth just does not stop praising God,” said Irfan after he was freed in the same way. Rani, whose husband, Liaqat, had been a bonded brick-kiln laborer since childhood, rejoices that they now sleep at night without worrying and can go to church instead of having to make bricks on Sundays, as when they were bonded by their debt. Thank the Lord with us for generous donations which have set free 791 bonded brick-kiln families, that is nearly 4,000 people. Pray for even more to be freed.



Free at last! Liaqat and Rani are so happy they can now go to church every week with their two daughters

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6731 Curran St, McLean,
Virginia 22101, USA



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USA

6731 Curran St, McLean, VA 22101

Telephone (703) 288-1681

or toll-free 1-866-936-2525

Fax (703) 288-1682

Email usa@barnabasaid.org

UK

9 Priory Row, Coventry CV1 5EX

Telephone 024 7623 1923

Fax 024 7683 4718

From outside the UK

Telephone +44 24 7623 1923

Fax +44 24 7683 4718

Email info@barnabasfund.org

Registered charity number 1092935

Company registered in England
number 4029536

For a list of all trustees, please
contact Barnabas Fund UK at the
Coventry address above.

Australia

PO BOX 3527,

LOGANHOLME, QLD 4129

Telephone (07) 3806 1076

or 1300 365 799

Fax (07) 3806 4076

Email bfaustralia@barnabasfund.org

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New Zealand

PO Box 276018, Manukau City,

Auckland, 2241

Telephone (09) 280 4385

or 0800 008 805

Email office@barnabasfund.org.nz

Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland

Office address: Office 113 Russell
Business Centre 40-42 Lisburn Road,
Belfast, BT9 6AA. Please send post to
our UK office address.

Telephone 028 91 455 246

or 07875 539003

Email ireland@barnabasfund.org

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South Africa

Office 301, 3rd Floor, Eikestad mall, 43
Anderinga Street, Stellenbosch 7599

Telephone +27 21 808 1668

Email bfsa@barnabasfund.org

International Headquarters

The Old Rectory,
River Street, Pewsey,
Wiltshire SN9 5DB, UK

Telephone 01672 564938

Fax 01672 565030

From outside UK:

Telephone +44 1672 564938

Fax +44 1672 565030

Email info@barnabasfund.org

Front Cover: A Pakistani Christian girl