

# Barnabas Prayer Focus

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HOPE AND AID FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH **Prayer Focus** | Update Number 265 | **November 2018**

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*Those who know your name trust  
in you, for you, Lord, have never  
forsaken those who seek you.*

Psalm 9:10

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A monthly resource for individuals and prayer groups produced by Barnabas Aid.

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## **Pakistan – Supreme Court overturns Aasia Bibi’s conviction**

Pakistan’s Supreme Court acquitted Aasia Bibi of “blasphemy” and gave permission for her release from prison on Wednesday October 31. In a dramatic turnaround, the Christian mother-of-five who had faced execution after being convicted of “blasphemy” in 2010 has been saved from death by a three-judge panel of the country’s highest court.

Aasia had spent nearly eight years on death row since being convicted of defiling the name of Muhammad, and nine years altogether in prison. A number of Christians and others are on death row for the same offence, but to date none have been executed.

Islamists have threatened to paralyze Pakistan through protests if the Supreme Court released Aasia Bibi. Following the verdict the patron-in-chief of the Islamist Tehreek-i-Labbaik party is reported to have stated that the chief justice and those who ordered Aasia’s release “deserve death”. At the time of writing, protests are erupting in major cities across Pakistan and soldiers have been sent to guard Youhanabad, the largest Christian neighborhood in Lahore.

“Please keep praying,” came a message to Barnabas Fund from Pakistan shortly after the judges’ decision was announced and protest demonstrations began all over Pakistan. “We have deep concern over the security situation after the court verdict ... this might lead to a fearful and violent situation for Christians.”

**Praise God** for the Supreme Court's acquittal of Aasia Bibi, parting the sea (Exodus 14:21) for her release in the face of threats and opposition – an answer to nearly a decade of faithful prayer from believers around the world. Pray that the Almighty will be a refuge for Aasia, keep her safe from danger and be a fortress against those who would seek to harm her or her family (Psalm 59:1). Ask that the mighty hand of the Lord (Exodus 14:31) will stay the efforts of Islamists to create violence and disorder in Pakistan and will defend His people on every side also protecting all who have spoken up for Aasia Bibi and worked to bring her justice and freedom.

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## **Kyrgyzstan - Young Christian convert left fighting for life after beating by Muslims**

Three Muslim men badly beat a Christian convert in the village of Tamchi in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, on October 17, leaving him fighting for his life.

The attackers cornered Eldos, a 25-year-old convert from Islam, alone in a courtyard and attempted to force him to say the *shahada* (the Islamic creed). Recitation of the *shahada* is considered conversion to Islam. He was viciously beaten and left bleeding with severe concussion, a jaw fracture, missing teeth, a bleeding eye, and suspected brain haemorrhage.

Allegedly, the police attempted to disguise the religious motivation for the attack by claiming Eldos was beaten for

playing loud music. They forced him to sign a statement to this effect, which they said he had given them verbally. However, Eldos' lawyer confirmed he had been unable to speak at the time because of the injury to his jaw.

Eldos has since had a complicated operation on his jaw and now needs treatment for his eye and dentures to replace his lost teeth.

Many Christians in Kyrgyzstan live with constant persecution since the introduction of a very restrictive Religion Law in 2009. In October 2017, a pastor's grandson was severely beaten at school for being a Christian and in May 2018 a Christian woman in Kyrgyzstan, recently converted from Islam, was held captive in her home and beaten by her Muslim family for refusing to renounce her faith in Christ.

**Ask** that our brother Eldos will know the love of God and that the sun of righteousness will rise, healing his wounds in its rays (Malachi 4:2). Pray that he will hold fast in his faith, secure in the knowledge that God will keep and protect us forever from the wicked (Psalm 12:7).

## Algeria - Christians to appear in court on accusation of “inciting” conversion of a Muslim

Four Algerian Christians from the same family are scheduled to appear in court on November 6 charged with “inciting a Muslim to change religion”.

In July 2018, a 40-year-old Muslim woman whose husband converted to Christianity filed a complaint against her Christian husband and against a Christian family, accusing them of “pressuring her to become a Christian”. The Christian family had attempted to ease the conflict between the couple.

Members of the Christian family were ordered to appear in court in the Kabylie region of northern Algeria on October 9 but the date was postponed.

Conversion from Islam is not a criminal offence in Algeria, but those who witness to Muslims potentially face a five-year jail sentence. Under Algerian law, any action which “incites, constrains or utilises means of seduction tending to convert a Muslim to another religion” is illegal.

**Pray that** the charges against the Christians will be dropped when they appear in court on November 6, and that they will not face jail for drawing alongside a new believer. Pray the convert’s wife’s eyes will be opened (Isaiah 35:5) to recognize the Lord Jesus and that she will come to know and love Him for herself. Ask the Lord to move in the hearts of the authorities to introduce equality and amend the law, which effectively makes it illegal for Christians to share their faith with Muslims, but allows Muslims to seek to convert people of other faiths.

## Niger - Church ransacked and burned

Attackers ransacked, looted and burned a church in the Kossey district of Niger's capital Niamey on October 11, leaving the building a charred shell. The tiny Christian community is less than 1% of the population and once lived peacefully alongside the large Muslim majority but tensions have escalated with the rise of jihadi groups in the Sahel region.

In 2015, over 70 churches were destroyed by Muslim mobs following the French *Charlie Hebdo* magazine's publication of a cartoon of Muhammad on the front cover. Barnabas Fund financed the repair and reconstruction of five of the worst affected churches. Other attacks occurred on churches in 2017 resulting to the deaths of four Christians.

Barnabas Fund's contact asked for prayer for the congregation and the church leader, Pastor Eduard: "Please pray that the Lord supports them and safeguards the churches of Niger."

**Lift up to the Lord** Eduard's small and faithful flock in Naimey. Pray that the Father will keep each one safely enfolded in His arms and let them not be afraid in the face of this attack, for the Lord will make their enemies stumble and fall (Psalm 27:2). Pray that as they abide with Him the Lord will safeguard them and their places of worship (1 Samuel 22:23).

**Barnabas Aid provides practical aid for persecuted Christians in over 60 different countries.**

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