

Prayer June 2011

“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. [John 15:9](#)

“But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” [Joshua 24:15](#)

COLOMBIA—Violence Intensifies in Colombia—VOM Sources

[Romans 1:16](#)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

VOM workers are on high alert as violence continues to increase in Colombia. On the morning of May 12, a bomb exploded in Puerto Lleras, killing several policemen and injuring bystanders. In addition, FARC guerrillas have openly murdered individuals on town streets and burned buses throughout the region. The guerrillas have reportedly been conducting an internal purge, killing many of their own and accusing them of being traitors to the communist cause. VOM contacts believe some of those killed were secret Christians. “In all our ... years in Colombia, we have never seen it this unstable,” said a VOM contact. “Yet we believe that this is also the most opportune time that we have ever seen for the gospel.” The contact said he cannot come close to supplying all the Bibles being requested by those turning to the Lord. Pray for Christian workers in Colombia as they struggle to sustain their various ministry efforts amid the increasing violence. Pray that many within the communist movement will turn to Christ.

EGYPT—12 Killed in Religious Riots—*Release International*

[Psalm 23](#)

The LORD *is* my shepherd;
I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name’s sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You *are* with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD
Forever.

Seven Coptic Christians and five Muslims were killed during religious riots in the Imbaba district of Cairo on May 7–8. In addition to those killed, more than 230 people were injured and a church was

guttled by fire. The violence broke out on Saturday evening after hard-line Salafi Muslims claimed the St. Mina Coptic Church was holding a woman against her will. Thousands of Muslims descended on the area, prompting Coptic residents to barricade the streets around the church. At about 7 p.m., attackers started throwing firebombs at Coptic-owned property, and Copts retaliated by throwing glass and stones. Police arrested 190 people in connection with the violence. Pray that Copts and moderate Muslims across Egypt will take a stand against further religious violence.

ARABIAN PENINSULA—New Believer Avoids Forced Marriage—*VOM Sources*

[2 Thessalonians 1:3–4](#)

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure...

By God's grace, a new "secret" believer has avoided an arranged marriage with a Muslim man. In the tradition of her country, "Fatima's" father had selected a husband for her. She was worried about being forced to marry a man she didn't know, but Fatima's mentors encouraged her to pray for her husband-to-be rather than rebelling against her father. Recently, Fatima's family discovered that the man doesn't have a job, so the marriage will very likely be canceled. In Fatima's country, women must be completely covered in public, and they are often accompanied by a male family member. A woman cannot choose a spouse without her family's permission. Pray for Fatima. Another man could propose marriage, and she could be forced by her family to accept. Pray that Fatima will grow in faith before she faces further persecution.

Fear God and keep His commandments,
For this is man's all. [Ecclesiastes 12:13](#)

IRAN—Three Believers Released; Pastor Still Incarcerated—*VOM Sources*

[Romans 7:4](#)

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

Three Iranian believers were set free on Saturday, April 30, 2011 after 238 days in prison. A fourth believer who was arrested at the same time remains in custody. Arash Kermanjani and his wife, Arezou Teimouri, were at the home of Pastor Vahik Abrahamian and his wife, Sonia, when they were arrested together on Sept. 4, 2010. The four were taken before a judge on April 28, and they and their lawyers were asked to present their cases. Two days after the hearing, the judge unexpectedly ordered the release of Arash Kermanjani, Arezou Teimouri and Sonia Keshish-Avanessian, the wife of Pastor Vahik. Sonia does not know why her husband was not freed at the same time, and she is extremely worried about him. Though free, they may be called before a judge and re-imprisoned at any time. Please pray for Pastor Vahik, who remains in prison, and his wife, Sonia. Pray he will be released soon, and that all four will make wise decisions about their future. Pray for their church body in Iran.

LAOS—Christians Brutalized and Killed—*VOM Canada*

[Colossians 3:15](#)

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Several Christians were recently attacked and killed in Xiengkhouang province, Laos. On April 15, troops from the Lao People's Army encountered a group of Hmong Christians. All of the believers' Bibles were confiscated, before the troops repeatedly raped four of the women, then shot and killed them. Their husbands and children were beaten, tied up and forced to witness the gruesome killings. At last report, the whereabouts of the surviving believers were unknown.

This incident and other recent reports indicate a disturbing increase of repression against Christians in the country. Pray for comfort for all those mourning the loss of the four Christian women. Pray for the peace and strength of Christ to reign in the hearts and minds of Laotian Christians under pressure for their faith.

INDIA—Christians in India Facing Widespread Persecution—*International Christian Concern*

[Acts 20:28](#)

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

There have been several accounts of recent persecution of Christians in India. On April 17, Hindu extremists burned down Grace Good News Vision Church. The church's pastor was reportedly forced by police on March 24 to give a statement that he would no longer hold church services, to which he did not adhere. On April 6, Hindu extremists burned Pastor Prakash Siddi's farm after he refused to stop leading worship meetings. Allegedly, the pastor was told by police not to file a complaint or he would likely risk retaliation by the extremists. On April 22, fifteen extremists stormed a Good Friday service at Calvary Bethel Church in Nandi Taverre village. The attackers tore up the worshippers' Bibles and chased them from the building. The church's pastor, Pastor Nayak, was arrested and later signed a statement agreeing to refrain from leading church services. Pray that pastors of small congregations like these would remain faithful to God and set good examples for others in the midst of trying circumstances.

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" [Hebrews 13:5-6](#)

CHINA—Government Imposes New Regulations on "Illegal" House Churches—*VOM Sources*

[Ephesians 3:10](#)

to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,

The pastors of some of China's house churches are facing new restrictions, according to VOM workers. The pastors must provide police with weekly reports detailing their whereabouts and how many people attend their meetings. If pastors travel outside their city, they must report their plans, and they are restricted to short trips. If the pastors fail to report and police are unable to contact them, they are arrested. VOM workers say these regulations primarily target large house churches that organize under a specific name, advertise and meet publicly. House churches, which operate outside the official state church, are illegal under Chinese law. But because of the house church movement's rapid growth in recent years, the government is struggling to deal with these churches. Pray for the house churches in China, especially those that have been targeted by these new regulations, and ask God to grant their leaders wisdom.

CHIAPAS—Evicted Christians to Return to Community—*VOM Sources*

[1 Corinthians 4:10-12](#)

We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;

Thirty-two Christians in Chiapas, Mexico, say they are ready to return to the community where their neighbors torched their homes and stole their livestock. The group fled the area in January 2010 after being forcibly evicted by a mob of 200. The Christians had been worshiping in a believer's home for almost a year because the same mob had destroyed their church. Members of the community were unhappy that the Christians would not contribute to or participate in religious drinking festivals held in their town. The Christians filed a court case requesting compensation for their burned homes, but they have seen no progress since the government loaned them the use of a large home in another city. The 32 believers have decided they will return to their community on June 15, with or without government help. "It is time to go home," they say, "and win the others to Christ, whatever the cost." Pray for these Christians and others who have been run out of their communities because of their Christian faith.

AZERBAIJAN—Fines and "Preventative Talks" for Praise Church—*Forum 18 News Service*

Psalm 31

In You, O LORD, I put my trust;
Let me never be ashamed;
Deliver me in Your righteousness...

Two Christians from the Praise Church in the city of Sumgait were fined for attending an "illegal" meeting on Sunday, May 15. Elchin and Afar Pashaev were fined \$190 under Azerbaijan's Code of Administrative Offenses for attending a religious meeting at a location other than the Praise Church's registered address. About 40 church members had gathered at the "Blue Lake" restaurant for their Sunday meeting, but it was interrupted by the police raid at about 11:30 a.m. "Police wrote down the names of all those present; then all were taken by bus to the police station," a Christian told Forum 18 News. Only Elchin and his wife, Afar, were fined, but the Interior Ministry reported that police conducted "preventative talks" with other church members. In recent years, state control of religious activity has sharply increased in Azerbaijan. Amendments to the religion law in 2009 established penalties for religious activities not specifically authorized by the state. Pray for the church in Azerbaijan.