

Saudi Arabia— In 2012, Saudi Arabian writer, blogger, and activist, Raif Badawi, was arrested for setting up a website with a blog where Saudis could openly discuss politics, religion, and other societal topics. Despite this being a completely peaceable act on behalf of free speech within his country, Raif Badawi was sentenced this year to 10 years in prison and floggings equaling 1,000 lashes, administered 50 at a time each Friday for 20 weeks. The first was administered on January 9, 2015, after which Raif was not deemed medically fit to withstand another flogging immediately, but the sentence still stands, awaiting his recovery. Even as he has expressed gratitude for the international outcry about his unjust situation, Raif also continues to call attention to the many political activists languishing in Saudi prisons. Pray for Raif and all those who display extraordinary courage in speaking out for freedom, equality, justice, and free speech in their nation. Pray that they will be preserved, upheld, and ultimately freed, and their voices heard. Pray for the government of Saudi Arabia, which has recently undergone a transition to a new king, that they will recognize the basic human rights of their people and protect their citizens, rather than perpetrating inhumane and unjust punishments upon them. Pray for a new era of openness and freedom for this nation. (Source: Amnesty International; The Guardian)

International— Between 1990 and 2012, approximately 2.3 billion people gained access to disease-free water sources, greatly improving their lives and having a significant impact of mortality rates of children. Give thanks to God for the great progress made on this front and for the stirring of compassion and industry within the hearts of many globally to address this most essential of human rights. Pray for the 748 million people around the world who still have no access to clean water, and thereby remain vulnerable to the disease, conflict, and arduous, time-consuming work that surround procuring water. Pray for children like 11-year-old Nivesh, who must collect water at least 3 times a day, though she fears for her life while doing it, saying, "There are people who will kill you if they find you alone." Some days, Nivesh gathers water all day so that she can go to school the next day. Though the vast majority of those who lack access to clean water reside in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is no part of the globe untouched by this injustice, including 9 million people in developed regions. Pray that those who have free and abundant access to clean water might continue to be moved to value this resource, motivated to ensure others have it, and become increasingly good stewards of it. (Source: World Vision)

North Korea— As if North Korea's treatment of its population was not bad enough, recent findings by human rights organizations have uncovered widespread exporting of human labor from North Korea, only to enrich the coffers of Kim Jong-un and bring badly needed foreign currency into North Korea. Workers from North Korea are promised salaries of \$120 a month--veritable riches compared to starvation conditions most of the population of North Korea endures--to work abroad and send money home. However, the reality upon arriving at their work sites reveals gross deception and slave-like conditions. Toiling for 12-20 hours a day, seven days a week in Siberian logging camps, Chinese factories, Kuwaiti construction sites, digging military tunnels in Myanmar, or building monuments to African dictators, North Korean workers earn a few dollars a month and none of that is reaching their families at home. Human rights

watchers estimate that approximately 100,000 North Koreans work abroad providing the North Korean government with \$230 million a year. These workers also serve as mules to smuggle hard currency into North Korea, which has been limited by the international community. Pray for these workers, who are deceived and exploited, yet still weep while they eat their small rations of rice because they are thinking of their starving families at home. Persevere in prayer for the country of North Korea, that it might be freed from the horrific dictatorial grip that has terrorized its population for decades. Pray for the government of North Korea, that those in charge, particularly Kim Jong-un, might through the Holy Spirit become deeply convicted of the atrocities they perpetrate and embark on a mission to reform their society to one of equity, openness, and fairness. Pray for the protection and perseverance of the North Korean people, and especially for the spread of the gospel. (Source: The New York Times)

Middle East/Iraq— Praise God that many Yazidi families have come to Christ after ISIS drove them out of their homes. The Yazidi people were previously so remote and reclusive that local churches and missionaries could not reach them with the Gospel. When they were forced to flee to refugee camps, Christians there met them with the good news of Jesus Christ and as many as eighty families have turned to Him. Praise God that He can use even tragedy for good by bringing eternal salvation to the lost. Pray that He would meet their physical needs and bring them comfort while they are displaced. (International Christian Concern)

Indonesia— Praise God for the faith He gave to Ronald, a Muslim man who turned to Jesus. When Ronald visited his family to tell them that he had accepted Christ, his father and four older brothers beat him close to death and threw him outside. He said that God strengthened and comforted him during the horrific trial and sent a Christian to save his life. Though he was permanently blinded as a result of the beating, he is well enough to teach the Bible now and praises Jesus Christ despite his suffering. Pray that the Lord would continue to heal and encourage Ronald and to use his testimony to bring others to faith. Pray especially for his family to be transformed to Christ followers. (Open Doors)

Sudan— Pray for comfort for the family of Neima Abiad Idris, a Christian singer and mother of six from the Nuba mountains who was killed by an Antonov bomb. Neima's recent album was called "Building Peace, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation" and this was her hope for the Nuba people. Neima also led a ladies' choir in the "rebel-controlled" area that is continually bombed by the Islamic government. Pray for safety for this region, and pray that Neima's songs and faith in Christ will continue to encourage other believers and promote peace. (Voice of the Martyrs)

Eritrea— Eritrean Christians are among the most persecuted people in the world and their hardships are increasing. With 22 arrests in the past three weeks, more of them are experiencing the brutal conditions of prison: being locked in metal shipping containers and consuming only small amounts of bread and tea. Despite this, the church is growing and those that survive prison have kept their faith in Christ. Please pray that their courage and trust in God would remain strong despite suffering, while

you pray that Eritrean leaders would uphold human rights and treat all people with dignity and equality. (Open Doors Italy)

Bangladesh— Please pray for protection over innocent citizens as political violence has escalated recently, filling hospitals with burn victims of gas bombs. Pray that the government will not allow perpetrators to go unpunished and that all efforts to stop this violence will be employed. Pray also that Christian believers will have opportunities to share their hope in Christ with those suffering around them and that the love of Christ will transform the hearts of those in Bangladesh. (Human Rights Watch)

Sierra Leone— Praise God that believers are sharing the love of Christ during the tragic Ebola crisis. As they reach out to the rural poor with humanitarian aid and education about sanitation, they are also showing the hope of the Gospel. Please pray for their safety and effectiveness while praying for West Africa to be spared more Ebola cases. Pray also that the predicted food shortage would not claim more lives. (Voice of the Martyrs)

Colombia— Please pray for protection for five Christian leaders who have received death threats recently. They represent five different churches who have been helping victims of violence and engaging in peace-making efforts while defending human rights. Pray that the members of the neo-military group who are making the crude and frightening threats would turn to Christ for salvation. Pray that the pastors and ministers would have faith and trust in God, would have discernment to know when to flee and when to stand strong, and that God would use this situation to bring glory and honor to His name while bringing more people into His kingdom. (Christian Solidarity Worldwide)