

## April Prayer Items

*The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? The Lord is with me; he is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies. Psalm 118: 6,7*

**Yemen**—A care home for the elderly and disabled in Aden, Yemen run by Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity, the Catholic community founded by Mother Teresa of Calcutta was attacked on March 4, 2016. The 16 people killed by the gunmen who attacked the care home were all Missionary Sisters or helper/workers from Rwanda, Kenya, and India. There is also real concern for the wellbeing of an Indian Salesian priest, whose whereabouts are currently unknown. No group has claimed responsibility for this atrocity, but there has been ongoing attacks and human rights abuses in the region, much of which targets the Christian community, such as the December 2015 bombing of Church of the Immaculate Conception in Aden by militants. We join Middle East Concern and Christians in the Arabian Peninsula in prayer as they ask that “the families, friends and colleagues of those murdered will know the comfort, presence and peace of Jesus. Christians in Yemen will know the Father's protection and the Spirit's guidance in every aspect of their life and witness. The murderers will know the Spirit's conviction of their sin, and seek the Father's forgiveness and new life through the Son. Peace and justice will be restored in Yemen, and aid will reach all who are in need.” (*Source: Middle East Concern*)

**Cameroon/Nigeria**—On March 26, 2016, local forces in Cameroon apprehended a girl and a young woman both strapped with explosives, as they were sent out on a suicide bombing mission by Boko Haram. Though both were definitely victims who had been abducted by Boko Haram, there had been hope that the young girl might have been one of the Chibok schoolgirls that had been kidnapped two years ago. However, after going through an identification process, it was revealed that she was not one of the girls. Pray for the girl, believed to be only 12 years old, and the woman, who were taken from their homes and nearly forced to end their lives and possibly many others in an act of incredible violence. Praise God they were intercepted and will be protected. Praise God that the planned attack was thwarted, and pray that though they cannot shed light on the plight of the Chibok girls, they might have other information that could help other kidnapping victims and/or thwart the plans of Boko Haram. Persevere in prayer for all the abducted girls from Chibok, that they might be sustained as this ordeal continues, that they might find the love of Christ amid this horror, and that they might be protected from further violence, such as being forced to be suicide bombers. Pray for the thousands of other children abducted by Boko Haram, beyond the Chibok schoolgirls, who are forced to be cooks, fighters, and sex slaves. Pray that a miraculous intervention might end the evil and violent activity of Boko Haram and that many might instead turn to Christ. (*Source: Reuters*)

**Pakistan**—While Christians around the world celebrated the resurrection of Christ, believers in Lahore, Pakistan, were the target of bombing that killed at least 72, 29 of them children. Pray for the families and friends who lost loved ones in this horrific act of violence, that those who remain will be comforted, find peace, and offer forgiveness. Pray for the more than 300 who were wounded at this Easter celebration, that they might be healed emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Give thanks that the Pakistan government appears to be taking the event seriously and has questioned more than 5,000 people and detained more than 200 in relation to the crime. Pray for justice for the victims, peace for Lahore, and for the eyes of those who committed this atrocity to be opened to the wrongness of their actions and their need for Christ. Pray for the Christian minority in Pakistan, who comprise 1.6 percent of the population, are mostly quite poor, and who are feeling increased pressure in an already hostile environment. Continue to pray for Asia Bibi, imprisoned since 2009 for her faith, as well as Imran Ghafur Masih, given a life sentence for his Christian faith in 2010. (*Sources: BBC News; The Voice of the Martyrs*)

**Lebanon**—Six months ago, Jawad, a 24-year-old man originally from Syria, converted to Christianity, and subsequently has been the target of numerous violent attacks from locals in his community. One time, over 30 people confronted him with sticks, knives, and saws. Jawad has not been the only victim either—his younger brother was stabbed, and his grandmother sustained multiple injuries, including a broken hand and lacerations requiring stitches. Their home and property have also been attacked and damaged, yet Jawad continues to share the gospel. Pray for the protection and sustenance of Jawad and his family, and that he will continue to boldly share his faith with those around him. Pray that the eyes of many might be opened by his witness. Pray that he and his family will be comforted by the Holy Spirit and maintain an attitude of love and forgiveness. (*Source: The Voice of the Martyrs*)

**Turkey**—The disputed region of Diyarbakir, southeast Turkey, has seen fighting between government forces and Kurdish rebels, and recently as a result, the government in the region has begun action to expropriate land and buildings belonging to a variety of Christian groups in Diyarbakir. At the end of March 2016, the government announced in the press the expropriation of 6,300 plots of land belonging to various churches as an effort to protect them and their historical value. However, Christians, who have been long displaced from their church buildings during the fighting, see this as a governmental takeover, and have not been given any alternative places to meet. Pray that seized buildings and lands will be returned to Christians in Diyarbakir, and that they will not be too discouraged by this setback as they have already been deeply affected by the pressure and violence of the fighting in the region. Pray that church leaders and lawyers would have wisdom as they pursue a legal path to protecting church ownership. Pray that the government will do the right and just thing, and return the property to their rightful owners, or at least offer a provision for the return of the buildings after the regional conflict is resolved. Pray that peace and civility will be returned to Diyarbakir, and that all those involved in peace negotiations and the legal disputes surrounding the contested church property will deal with each other with gentleness, kindness, and respect. (*Source: Middle East Concern*)

**Israel/Yemen**-- Yemen has become more and more dangerous for the few remaining Jews who are often targeted amidst the sectarian violence. Praise God that a group of Jews was able to escape war-torn Yemen and arrive safely in Israel. The prime minister's office and U.S. State department were involved in covertly flying the Jewish group to safety in Israel to be welcomed by family and friends. Praise God for His protection and pray that He would bring them to ultimate safety and deliverance in Jesus Christ. Pray that they would look to the Messiah for salvation. (*Source: CNN*)

**Cuba**-- While Cuba is experiencing spiritual revival and freedom, and thousands of much-needed Bibles have been made available, a prominent religious rights activist and pastor, Mario Felix Leonart Barroso, was arrested on March 20. His wife, Yoaxis Marcheco Suarez, is now under house arrest, locked in their home with their two young children. They were arrested shortly after many human rights activists linked to the Ladies in White were detained on their way to Sunday mass, and right before President Obama arrived in the country. Mrs. Suarez is concerned for her husband's health. Please pray for Pastor Mario's protection and health, and pray that his family can be reunited soon. Praise God for the spiritual growth in Cuba, the new freedom, and for the thousands of Bibles that have poured into the country. (*Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Haven Today*)

**Bangladesh**-- Hussein Ali, a 68-year-old Christian convert, was stabbed to death during his morning walk by three ISIS attackers. The group claims that this preacher was killed as an example to others. Please pray for his family to find comfort in Christ as they grieve his loss. Pray for protection for the Christian community in Bangladesh, as well as a spirit of love and forgiveness toward their enemies. Indeed, Hussein Ali knew his life was in danger and he told others to forgive them because they didn't

understand what they were doing. Pray also for the small church there to grow. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

**Maldives--** Please pray for the country of Maldives, where there is no church and no Bible (except for a few sections) translated into their Dhivehi language. The very few believers meet in secret because of the extreme persecution there. Pray for bold and courageous missionaries to take the Gospel to this small population of less than half a million. Pray that the body of Christ there will grow and that God would bring healing and change to the social evils of drug abuse, incest, and abuse. Pray for the Holy Spirit to do a mighty work in the hearts and lives of the population that claims to be 100% Muslim. (*Source: Open Doors*)

**Myanmar--** Pray for protection for a middle-aged couple who became Christians four years ago and live in a completely Buddhist village. Inhabitants of the village confronted the husband and challenged him to bow to a statue and recite a Buddhist text. When he refused and said he was a Christian, the townspeople cut the electricity line to his house. The couple foresee many struggles and persecution ahead but don't know where else to go, so please pray for help and protection for them. Pray that they would be courageous and faithful. Pray that God would send other Christians to encourage and support them, and that they would be a light to their Buddhist neighbors to lead them to Christ. (*Source: Open Doors*)