

June 2017 Prayer

*The eyes of the Lord are on those who fear Him, on those whose hope is in His unfailing love.
--Psalm 33:18*

Europe and Sudan—Due to mounting worry about the number of refugees traveling to Europe as a result of the conflicts in Africa and the Middle East, the European Union has warmed relations with the brutal authoritarian regime in Sudan. While many around the world have legitimate concerns about the flow of refugees, this new partnership between the EU and Sudan is deeply concerning, and will result in EU-supplied money, training, and equipment being used in the surveillance and oppression of Sudanese citizens. Already Sudan has plans to use these resources to aid the work of their Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a violent militia that evolved from the genocide perpetrated in Darfur. Pray for the protection of the Sudanese people and for all the players in the international refugee crisis to use wisdom and integrity as they attempt to deal with the ongoing issue. (Source: Enoughproject.org)

Yemen-- As Saudi Arabia continues to bomb war-torn Yemen, the poorest of Arab countries, more than 25% of its citizens are plagued by famine, and a cholera epidemic has now added to the suffering and death. An estimated 17 million people lack a reliable food supply, and parents are even resorting to selling their daughters for money to buy food. Please pray for this crisis. Pray for God's miraculous intervention to rescue the population of Yemen. Pray for the war to stop and Saudi Arabia to cease the attacks. Pray for daily bread for the hungry and for healing for the 60,000 people inflicted with cholera. Pray that the disease will not spread as is predicted. And most importantly, pray that the people of Yemen would cry out to Jesus for comfort and salvation and trust in Him as their eternal Savior. (Source: *The New York Times*)

Pakistan—Imprisoned since 2012 for allegedly sending blasphemous texts, Zafar Bhatti, a 51-year-old pastor was just sentenced this past May to life in prison related to these charges. Though Pastor Bhatti denied having sent the texts, and the phone was not even registered in his name, a lower court gave the guilty conviction while also overlooking other pertinent evidence proving his innocence. Pakistan's penal code calls for the death penalty for blasphemy but has no provisions for prosecuting those who falsely accuse others—and so this already unjust law is often further misused for personal retribution. Pray for Zafar Bhatti and his family, who have already had to suffer for years while he awaited this sentence and were separated from one another. Pray for their sustenance, for good outcomes as appeals go to a higher court, for his witness to be full of grace and truth, for many to come to faith in Christ through his ordeal. Continue to persevere in prayer for the country of Pakistan that they would have mercy and love and begin to reverse such extreme and unjust laws. Continue also to remember Asia Bibi in your ongoing prayers for this region and those who suffer so much discrimination and abuse for their faith in Christ. (Source: *Christian Post*)

Laos-- Last February, the leaders of a Buddhist village in Laos approaches four Hmong Christian families and told them to renounce their faith or be cast out of the village. As the

Christians stood firm in their faith, they were tied up and driven to a distant rice field where they have been camping under plastic tarps ever since. No other village has allowed them to live nearby because of their faith in Jesus. Remarkably, two other families from their village turned to Christ because of their witness, and some from other villages have come out to ask about their situation and have heard the Gospel and have been saved. Government officials have come to their defense and are now telling their village leaders to allow the Christians to return. Pray that this indeed happens so that they will be able to have homes again and continue to share their faith with neighbors. Praise God for their witness, for their suffering for Christ, and for His sustenance during this trial. *(Source: Voice of the Martyrs)*

Honduras—Moisés Sanchez, Secretary General of the Honduran agricultural union STAS, was brutally attacked mid-April as a result of his work organizing agricultural workers on Fyffe plantations in Honduras. His brother was severely wounded by a machete to the face as he tried to come to the aid of Moisés. Two men beat, robbed, and held Moisés Sanchez captive for 40 minutes, as well as searched his phone in an effort to find out information about his organizing efforts. Fyffe, which supplies melons to the likes of Aldi, Walmart, Giant, and Safeway, has resisted efforts by workers who are seeking better working conditions. Most of these workers are women, and their primary complaints center around exposure to toxic agri-chemicals, refusal by the company to pay into the social security system for the workers, the blacklisting of whole communities, and the illegal firing of women if they become pregnant. Other activists raising awareness about working conditions on Fyffe plantations have been victims of similar threats and attacks, some having to leave the country for their safety. Pray for Moisés Sanchez, that he might heal from this attack, that he might have the courage and perseverance to continue his work on behalf of plantation workers, and that his life and body might be protected. Pray for those who labor under harsh conditions for meager salaries that they might be brought to better circumstances in this life but also to ultimate freedom in Christ. Pray for those in control of the Fyffe corporation that they might be convicted of their sin, become not only willing but eager to ensure the well-being of their workers, that they might act with justice towards their workers and give them a fair wage for their hard work. May they also come to a transforming knowledge of Jesus. *(Source: International Labor Rights Forum)*

North Korea/China-- As a result of China's one-child policy and its preference for male children, some Chinese men have been seeking sex-trafficked women from North Korea and then treat them poorly. When given an opportunity to seek better treatment and more rights, the North Korean women are fleeing to South Korea and leaving their half-Chinese children behind. Because of this there are now numerous North Korean orphans in China that need homes. Pray for the new initiatives of small, Christian-led children's homes to care for the abandoned children. Pray that these would spread and be effective, offer healing, care, and protection to traumatized children and show and share the love of Christ to them. *(Source: Voice of the Martyrs)*

Egypt—Human rights in Egypt have been on a steady decline—especially with targeting NGOs over the past 3 years. The government has banned travel for some NGOs, frozen the assets of

others, and targeted for arrest and harassment the staff of others. This new law could be the end of NGOs operating in Egypt and a new era of intense repression in the country. Najia Bounaim, Campaigns Director for North Africa at Amnesty International, stated: "This is a catastrophic blow for human rights groups working in Egypt. The severity of the restrictions imposed by this law threatens to annihilate NGOs in the country, at a time when the authorities' escalating crackdown on dissent makes their work more important than ever. This law, which gives the government extraordinary powers to control NGOs and imposes harsh punishments and fines for any violation of its draconian provisions, is the latest ploy by the Egyptian authorities to silence all independent voices." Coming on the heels of the brutal attack of Coptic Christians on buses by gunmen, the plight of all citizens in Egypt, but especially minorities like Christians, is in dire straits. Pray for peace, justice, and integrity to be embraced and practiced by the Egyptian government. Pray for the vital work of NGOs and humanitarian organizations to continue undeterred, despite these attempts to thwart them. Pray for the protection of the people of Egypt, and for the perseverance of Christians in the region. Pray that many might see their witness and come to Christ. *(Source: Amnesty International)*

Sri Lanka-- We prayed in the past for Pastor Dayaratne, his wife Mala, and their ministry at Agape Children's Village that was forced to close down by the government in 2013. This children's home had been open since 2001 and was considered to be the best orphanage in Southern Sri Lanka, so it's closing caused many children to have to live on the streets. After a long court trial, the pastor and his wife happily report that they are now free to reopen Agape and welcome the children back. Praise God that He hears the prayers of His people around the world and that He cares for the orphan. Pray that they will have all the resources needed to reopen the children's home and that a great number of these children will grow up to love and serve Christ. *(Source: Open Doors)*

Nigeria—Christians and other religious minorities in central Nigeria are under constant threat and have been routinely and violently attacked by the Fulani militias, who roam the region and kill and commit other atrocities with impunity. People are so afraid, they are not even able to attend to their fields and the crops are withering, causing significant food insecurity. The government has continually failed to protect civilians in central Nigeria, despite having security offices in the area. Ironically, these same persecuted populations are also targeted by the government for arrest, being accused of hate speech and "inflammatory pronouncements." Pray for the end of this ethno-cleansing and the protection of these vulnerable communities. Pray that the believers among these persecuted groups might have a spirit of peace and forgiveness and a strong witness for Christ. Pray that the government of Nigeria might finally take action to prosecute perpetrators and curtail the brutal reign of terror of the Fulani. Pray that the Fulani might come to understand the wrongness of their campaign against others, and might find the grace and salvation of Jesus. *(Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide)*

India-- Ten Indian Christians were arrested for bringing more than 70 Christian children to a summer Bible camp. The police felt the children were being forcefully converted to Christianity, but the children's parents are all practicing Christians and had given permission for their children

to go to the camp. In this region of Madhya Pradesh, the law requires individuals to file legal documents with the government to convert to a new religion. This also entails losing government benefits and rights so most Christians do not wish to officially report their children's religion. Since the parents had not officially converted their children to Christianity, police treated the children as legally Hindu and arrested the Christians. Please pray for the release of the 10 Christians who were taking the children to summer camp. Pray that unfair and discriminatory laws like these would be changed in India, and that religious freedom would be upheld. Pray also that these children would be permitted to go to their Christian camp in the future and that their lives would glorify the Lord. (Source: *International Christian Concern*)