

October 2017 Prayer Items

*The eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love.
—Psalm 33:18*

Nigeria—Violence at the hands of Boko Haram in northern Nigeria has been escalating in recent months, with more than 200 killed since June. Additionally, Fulani herder militia have been carrying out attacks, such as the murder of 22-year-old Anna’s husband. The Fulani militia are now thought to be working in connection with Boko Haram. Christian Solidarity Worldwide reported a recent attack: “On 18 September three suicide bombers killed at least 12 people and injured 26 others at a gathering of farmers in Mashimari, in Konduga Local Government Area, Borno state.” Pray especially for the protection of non-Muslims in the north of Nigeria, who are most vulnerable and are not adequately protected by the government, itself suspected of aiding in the persecution of non-Muslims. Pray that the government might act with impartiality and integrity. Pray for those who are guilty of these violent attacks, that they might be convicted of their evil of their actions, turn from darkness and find the Light and Salvation of Jesus. (*Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

Saudi Arabia—We rejoice for the seemingly small but very significant development in Saudi Arabia of the granting of driving privileges to women. Not only will this nation begin to allow women to drive, they will also be able to do so without a male relative or chaperone. This freedom will dramatically improve the lives of women in this very controlled society. While giving the right to drive to women was the right move on the part of Saudi Arabia, they still have a long way to go on their involvement in the conflict in Yemen. Two years ago, they blocked an effort in the UN to set up an independent inquiry into atrocities perpetrated in Yemen. Now they are attempting to do it again by opposing new efforts for an independent inquiry. They also used their influence to have their name removed from a list the UN compiled of nations that kill and maim children. Pray that they would not have success in blocking this effort for the inquiry, pray that the truth would come to light and that all atrocities would be revealed and those responsible held accountable. Pray for peace in this devastated region and for the protection of the suffering and vulnerable population. Pray also that Saudi Arabia will use reason and grace as they pursue criminal justice in their society. There has been a recent disturbing increase in the number of execution in recent months. Since July, executions in Saudi Arabia have averaged 5 per week. In general about 40 percent of the executions are for drug-related offenses, and the extreme use of execution has been a means to quash dissent and control minority groups. (*Sources: BBC; The New York Times; Amnesty International*)

Turkey—Originally arrested in October a year ago, American missionary Andrew Brunson was threatened with deportation, along with his wife, for being a “threat to national security.” In an upsetting development, he was further accused of working to overthrow the Turkish government, despite his persistent plea that he is not guilty and is simply a missionary working to proclaim Jesus Christ. Now President Erdogan is attempting to link the release of Andrew Brunson to the extradition of the Muslim cleric, Fetullah Gulen, implicated in the attempted coup of the Turkish government more than a year ago. We join Middle East Concern and Christians in Turkey who request prayer for Andrew Brunson and his family that Andrew will be released soon and be reunited with his family; that God will make His

presence felt and encourage Andrew and his family in this difficult time; that those engaged in negotiations for Andrew's release will have much wisdom; and that justice and righteousness will prevail in Turkey and that the officials involved in bringing false charges will be stopped. (Source: *Middle East Concern*)

Nepal—We rejoice with Nepali Christians at the recent release of 4 Nepali believers, who had been sentenced to 5 year in prison on charges of witchcraft. Lali Pun, Bimkali Budha, Ruplal Pariyar and his wife Ganga were all found guilty of the false charges after praying for a mentally ill woman, even though the woman's husband had said they were not guilty. Not only were the 4 released, their conviction was overturned. This all follows 2015 legislation in Nepal making it illegal to proselytize. In a similar case of persecution, 8 Nepali Christians had been arrested for distributing Christian pamphlets at a Christian school, while trying to help children traumatized by the 2015 earthquake. These are disturbing trends in this nation, and we pray that Nepal will halt these moves toward repression. Pray for the protection and continued boldness of Christians in Nepal. (Source: *World Watch Monitor*)

North Korea—Jung Kwang-il, a defector from North Korea who had experienced the horror of a prison camp, is now in South Korea and doing all that he can to reach his people with the Gospel. Since June, he and his activist group No Chain have organized ten different balloon launches to carry the message of Christ to North Korea. In the most recent launch, they sent 350 balloons containing 1,000 flash drives filled with Bible passages. These flash drives were donated by American high school and college students. Praise God for the way He uses the body of Christ to work together to reach the lost. Praise God that the balloons arrived, as GPS shows that all the Scripture-filled balloons dropped in the Mount Kumgang area of North Korea. Please pray that these flash drives would go to people with hearts open to the Gospel, and that God would protect Jung and his ministry Pray that this extremely dark country would be transformed by the Light of Christ. (Source: *International Christian Concern*)

Cameroon—The separatist movement in Anglophone region of Cameroon—the area of the country comprised of people from various cultural backgrounds who are not part of the predominantly French-speaking rest of the country—has been gaining momentum. As a result of harassment and repression from the French-speaking government, many from Anglophone region have joined in protests calling for independence. Tensions between security forces and pro-independence protesters escalated to violence--estimates of the dead range between 15-30. Pray for peace, security, and a quick resolution to conflict in this region of Cameroon. Pray that government forces and leaders act with integrity and in the best interests of their citizens and freedom. (Sources: *Africa News; Reuters*)

Vietnam—In recent years, several individuals and families in the Central Highlands have become Christians, including a number of Communist party members. As a result the new converts have faced harassment and persecution, including having their livestock killed, their crops burned, and their food stolen. Most recently officials used backhoes to push their homes into the river, and the families have been forced to relocate and live in tents. Despite their hardships and the unsuitability of their new land for farming, the new community of believers is thriving. Pray for their continued sustenance and provision from the Lord. Pray for those persecuting these believers that they might instead find the grace and forgiveness of Christ. (Source: *The Voice of the Martyrs*)

Pakistan—Persevere in prayer for Imran Ghufar, who has been in prison since 2009 after being falsely accused of burning pages of the Quran. The courts continue to postpone his appeals, and he is only able to visit with his brother and sister for 30 minutes a week. He is deeply concerned about his aging parents, who are not well. His father was recently hospitalized for high blood pressure, and he also suffers from diabetes. Pray also for Asia Bibi, facing the death penalty for blasphemy, and separated from her husband and children since 2009. We continue to hold them up to the Father, to sustain them, comfort them, and allow them to be a strong witness to all who persecute them. We pray for the nation of Pakistan, that it will move away from this cruel repression and toward freedom and justice for all their citizens. (*Source: The Voice of the Martyrs*)