

September 2020 Prayer

Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

—Hebrews 10: 33-34

Democratic Republic of Congo—The DRC has a long, tumultuous history that includes colonial exploitation and genocide, war, unspeakable atrocities, and gender-based violence. On top of this suffering, this African nation is now facing its second consecutive Ebola outbreak, amid the COVID-19 pandemic also spreading through the country. These life-threatening health challenges disproportionately affect women and girls, a part of the population that was also particularly vulnerable and attacked during years of violent conflict. Pray for the women of DRC, for protection, for healing, for education, and provision of healthcare and basic needs. Pray for the country as a whole that the Ebola epidemic might be contained quickly with fewer victims. Pray for the supply of soap, clean water, masks, and other essentials as the country attempts to battle these diseases. (*Source: Women for Women*)

Vietnam— 20 year old Poh, newly married, turned to Christ when his wife shared the gospel with him, but when he explained this to his parents, his father tried to kill him. His father, uncles and brothers then tried to force him to sacrifice to evil spirits. He fled the village for his safety and now lives in another village near his in-laws, but fears ever returning to his family. Please pray for his faith to remain strong in the face of persecution and fear. Pray that he would have strength to put Christ before his family, even if he is caused to forsake them. And pray that his parents would know the Way and the Truth and the Life. (*Source: Open Doors*)

Qatar—For years, reports have been coming out of Qatar that migrant workers, being brought into the country under false pretenses, are being horribly exploited. Human Rights Watch just released the results of an official investigation which confirms illegal and abusive employment practices in the Middle Eastern country. Ninety-five percent of Qatar's labor force is comprised of 2 million migrant workers from Nepal, India, the Philippines, Kenya, Bangladesh, and Uganda. They are responsible for building stadiums, hotels, infrastructure, and other services related to Qatar hosting the 2022 FIMA World Cup. They also comprise almost the entire service industry. But the widespread practice of *kafala*—the “sponsorship” program of employer importing a workforce—leaves workers vulnerable. They have had their passports confiscated, wages delayed or withheld altogether, suffered the arbitrary docking of pay and fabricated debts, and have been forcibly held in company-owned housing without the ability to leave except for work. Give thanks that this massive system of forced and exploitative employment has been exposed. Pray for justice for these abused and exploited people. Pray that systemic reform and the implementation of laws will address this endemic corruption and evil. Pray that those who perpetrate these crimes would repent of this evil. (*Source: Human Rights Watch*)

China— More than thirty plain-clothes officers raided a summer camp for students that was organized by a house church in August. Sadly, the pastor's wife was arrested and church equipment was confiscated. Those that led the campers in music instruction were accused of “Conducting illegal religious activities“. Please pray for safety for the pastor's wife and this church and for the young people involved in the camp to recognize the eternal value of their faith. Pray for the young believers to be steadfast and bold in sharing the Gospel with others. Please pray for the church in China to continue to grow exponentially despite persecution. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

United States—Despite repeatedly identifying herself as a reporter while covering recent protests in Iowa for the *Des Moines Register*, journalist Andrea Sahouri was pepper sprayed, had her hands zip-tied, and was detained for over three hours. She is now facing charges for “failure to disperse, and for interference with official acts under Iowa Law.” This is just one of numerous accounts of journalists being prohibited from covering protests safely and freely. Pray for fairness and justice in the case of Andrea Sahouri, as faces these charges. Pray for the protection of a free press in the United States and around the world. (Source: *Amnesty International*)

Nigeria— Fulani militia rolled into Damba-Kayasa in Southern Kaduna on motorcycles early on the morning of August 24. They approached a school and kidnapped a teacher and four students, ages 9-15. In addition, they set fire to a church and abducted two others from the village. The military did not seem to defend the village, and when members of the community tried to rescue those who were abducted, the terrorists shot at them and killed a young father. Please pray for God to sustain and comfort this young man’s wife and baby that he left behind. Pray also for those that were abducted, particularly the children, to be released soon and to be protected by our Heavenly Father in the meantime. Pray for them to cling to Him while they are held captive and that He would be a Source of peace, strength, and hope for them. Pray for a miraculous deliverance of all seven captives and that the perpetrators would be convicted and turn to Christ. (Source: *Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

United Kingdom/International—Human trafficking for the purpose of illegal organ harvesting is widespread, with hot spots in countries such as China, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Brazil, Nepal, the Philippines, Kosovo, Iran, and former Soviet states in eastern Europe. Political prisoners, religious and ethnic minorities, and other vulnerable populations are the most targeted group for this barbaric practice. And while this seems like something unbelievable from science fiction, not only is this increasingly common, it has generated an industry where “medical tourists” from nations all over the world can travel to receive these illegally acquired transplant organs. It is believed around 1.5 million detainees from Chinese prison camps have been killed for these purposes, generating approximately \$1 billion revenue. South Korea, Belgium, Norway, Italy, Taiwan, Spain, and Israel have all passed legislation to combat forced organ harvesting, organ transplant tourism, and organ trafficking. This September, the United Kingdom will begin discussions on passing similar legislation. Pray that this laws will pass quickly and will be effectively enforced. Pray that other nations will soon follow suit, drying up the market for illegally acquired organs, and curtailing this evil industry. Pray for the protection of the vulnerable and the comfort of families who have lost loved ones to this practice. (Source: *Freedom United*)

Iran— Iranian believers Ramin Hassanpour, Saeede Sajadpour, Hadi Rahimi, and Sakine Behjati (husband and wife) each received 2-5 year prison sentences for “actions against national security, attending home churches, and spreading Zionist Christianity.” It is believed that their involvement in a house church caused their arrests and prison sentences. Please pray for their protection while in prison, for their faith to remain strong and for opportunities to share the gospel. Pray also that the nation of Iran would provide freedom of religion and respect the right of its people to choose what they believe. Pray for the Iranian church to grow in faith and in number. (Source: *Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

Pakistan— David Masih was recently arrested, sent to prison, and charged with blasphemy after pages of the Quran were found in a city drain. No evidence ties Mr. Masih to the incident, and yet if he is found guilty, he could spend the rest of his life in prison. Often false accusations of blasphemy are aimed at Christians and stem from religious hatred and persecution. Please pray that this brother in

Christ would be found innocent, that justice would prevail, and that he would be allowed to go free soon. Pray that God would sustain him while he is behind bars, surely fearing for his life. Praise God that He is in control and has already won the victory in Christ Jesus. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

South Korea—While this nation has overall done a good job of containing COVID-19 within their borders, a troubling byproduct of blaming the spread of the virus on religious communities has developed. Primarily targeting Protestant groups, media outlets and government officials—including President Moon—have publicly blame religious congregations for spreading COVID-19, despite clear evidence that it is being transmitted through secular gatherings, public transportation, and other means. In contrast, religious groups have been markedly vigilant about adhering to health and safety guidelines, mask-wearing, and cooperating in general with government recommendations. Pray that this harmful targeting and scapegoating will cease, that President Moon will reconsider these accusations, and that churches will no longer be subject to public animosity and outcry. Pray that Jesus will be glorified even amid these trials. (*Source: Jubilee Campaign*)