

September 2023 Prayer

To you, O LORD, I call;
my rock, be not deaf to me,
lest, if you be silent to me,
I become like those who go down to the pit.
Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy,
when I cry to you for help,
when I lift up my hands
toward your most holy sanctuary.

—Psalm 28: 1-2

Pakistan—Mid-August, a Muslim mob in Jaranwala, Pakistan, attacked the Christian community in their town following a perceived blasphemy against Islam. Nineteen churches and 86 houses were vandalized and set on fire. Believers from Jaranwala have expressed deep hurt after the attacks, but they have stated they know persecution will make them stronger and have already begun to pray for those who have perpetrated these crimes. They have asked for prayers for encouragement and more strength to face the situation in their town and in Pakistan in general. Praise God for such faith and join the believers in Jaranwala as we pray for those who committed these attacks—for them to find peace and salvation in Christ. Pray for the witness of Christians in Pakistan to remain courageous, strong, and full of God’s grace. Pray that they would be comforted, protected and provided for. (*Source: Ananias House*)

Egypt—Christian women and girls, particularly those who are poor and do not have a father or husband, are often vulnerable to pressure to leave the Christian faith and convert to Islam or marry a Muslim. One Christian woman who had recently been widowed continued to run her husband’s grocery store when neighbors began harassing her and her daughter. When she confronted the neighbors about this, they told her that she should allow her daughter to convert to Islam and marry their son. They threatened her that if she did not agree, they could do whatever they wanted to her daughter. Praise God that she was able to move to a different city for protection for her daughter. Please pray that in this new home she would be able to support herself and keep her daughter safe. Pray that her faith would stay strong and that God would protect and provide for them. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

Nigeria—We continue in prayer for Leah Sharibu, who was abducted from her school in 2018 by radical Muslims. When she refused to renounce her faith, she was not released with the other girls. She has been held for nearly 6 years, and other than a video released by the extremists, her parents have not heard from her since. The last they were told was that she would be a “slave for life.” Pray that her faith would remain strong and that she would be protected emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Pray that she would be released and until that time that she would be miraculously comforted as she perseveres in these horrific circumstances. Pray for comfort and strength for her parents, Rebecca and Nathan, as they experience the continual anguish of knowing their daughter is in the hands of cruel captors. (*Source: Open Doors*)

India/East Asia—Due to El Niño and fertilizer shortages because of the war in Ukraine, there are significant rice shortages right now that could affect a large portion of the world’s poor. Forty percent of the world’s rice exports, or 10 million tons, has been blocked by India to protect that rice for its own citizens. Sub-Saharan Africa receives almost all of its rice from India, so this ban will affect millions of hungry, poor Africans and East Asians. In addition, historically, one ban often leads to another, and experts are concerned that other countries will follow suit. Please pray for protection for those people

in the world that depend on rice for their main staple. Pray that countries like India would have wisdom in how to use the rice they have to be able to provide for their own people but to also have enough for others. Pray for God to miraculously multiply the rice that is available now. (*Source: NPR*)

China—August 30 is the International Day for the Victims of Enforced Disappearance, a horrific human rights abuse that is very commonly employed by the Chinese government to intimidate and silence any critics of their policies. We pray for the protection and safe return to their families of three of 40,000 and 50,000 people were held either in RSDL (Residential Surveillance in a Designated Location [secret jails]) or *liuzhi* detention (secretly detained by the Chinese Communist Party's private police force) in 2021. Pray for Gao Zhisheng, detained on and off from 2006 and last seen in 2017. A Christian human rights lawyer who has defended many dissidents during his career, it is known that he has been repeatedly tortured and that he is at high risk for death. Pray also for prominent human rights lawyer Tang Jitia who was disappeared in 2021 when he was traveling to Beijing for an EU Human Rights event. He was placed in a secret jail, not even RSDL, and was not heard from for over a year despite no charges being brought against him. He is still forbidden to talk publicly about his ordeal. Pray also for Gulshan Abbas, a retired Uyghur doctor who disappeared from her home in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in 2018. She was missing for 2 years when her family finally learned she was serving a 20-year sentence on unfounded terrorism charges—though it is widely understood Gulshan was targeted in retaliation for the human rights work of her sister in the United States. Pray for the thousands who are unjustly detained and for the families and friends who endure their own pain and suffering not knowing the whereabouts or fate of their loved ones. (*Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

Cameroon—Fighting between English- and French-speaking groups has led to horrible atrocities such as killing, rape, torture, and burning of homes. The fighting began as a result of a peaceful protest by the Anglophone community that was marginalized. Please pray for justice as Samira Daoud from Amnesty International states: “We call on Cameroonian authorities to investigate allegations of human rights violations and other crimes under domestic law committed in the context of the armed violence in the Anglophone regions, and to prosecute and punish those responsible for such violations in fair trials and before independent, impartial, and competent tribunals. Victims of these crimes and violations have a right to justice and reparation.” Please pray for the church to be a beacon of light and hope and a place of reconciliation between these two groups. Pray that the Lord would bring comfort to all who are suffering there now. (*Source: Amnesty International*)

Azerbaijan/Nagorno-Karabakh—The conflict in Azerbaijan over disputed territory has caused a humanitarian crisis for over 120,000 ethnic Armenians. The Azerbaijani government have sustained a 9-month blockade along the Lachin Corridor (the only access to the region) that prevents needed supplies from reaching Armenians in the mountains. They lack basic food, gas, and medicines, and people are walking long distances to wait in long lines in hopes of buying bread. One in three deaths there is due to malnutrition. Please pray that this ends before it turns into a full-blown genocide. Pray for these people to have access to food and medical care. Pray for peace in this region and a solution to this conflict. Pray for those that are suffering to truly seek the Lord for help and comfort and deliverance. And pray for those who are torturing the Armenians by denying them basic necessities and human rights to be convicted of this sin. (*Source: BBC*)

Nigeria—Gunmen attacked the small village of Heipang in the middle of the night, shooting at random and killing 21 people. Most of the victims were internally displaced people who had fled other attacks and five of the victims in the attack were infants. This senseless, wicked murder will likely go unpunished, as all the other attacks in the Christian farming community have been committed with

impunity. Radical Fulani militants continue this rampaging in Nigeria. Please pray that these atrocities will come to an end. Pray for God to bring justice and punishment to those violent perpetrators who attack again and again. Pray for those living in fear of another attack and those who are mourning the loss of loved ones and neighbors to put their hope in God, who is the God of justice, who will one day wipe every tear from their eyes. *(Source: International Christian Concern)*

Russian/Ukraine—In August a hospital run by Ukraine's Ministry of Health in the Kherson region with support from Doctors Without Borders was repeatedly shelled with Russian artillery fire. On August 1 the operating theater suffered a direct hit, and a Ministry of Health doctor was killed. MSF/Doctors Without Borders has reported the destruction of hospitals in Kherson, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv and Mikolaiv regions. All these attacks are consistent with Russia's ongoing disregard for human rights and rules of engagement by the continual shelling of civilian infrastructure, residential areas, and medical structures. Continue in prayer for the innocent people of Ukraine caught in the indiscriminate bombing, among other atrocities being routinely committed by Russia. Pray that this evil aggression would not prevail. *(Source: MSF/Doctors Without Borders)*

Syria—A young leader in a church that had been witnessing to the Druze sect, a faction of Islam, was abducted in August when leaders in the Druze sect became hostile to the church community sharing God's love. Believers from the church have reported that this young leader has been whipped and tortured, and they have threatened to hang him. Druze leaders are now also threatening to destroy the Christian community in Syria. Members of the church of the young leader are praying for his protection and that even in this situation that he would display God's forgiveness and grace. Pray that this young leader might be released, and pray for the peace and comfort for his wife and baby girl. Pray for the protection and perseverance of the Church in Syria and that the hostility of those who oppose the Church would be transformed into repentance and faith. *(Source: Ananias House)*