

June 2024 Prayer

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

—Romans 12:15

Bhutan—“Christians in Bhutan often risk losing their citizenship or other rights because of their faith in Christ. Pastor Abhaya and his wife have been denied a marriage certificate by the government, which jeopardizes their whole family, especially their children, who have been denied citizenship. The family may have to relocate to another country for the sake of their children. Pray for this family as they make decisions related to their future and the church Pastor Abhaya leads. Pray that Christian families in Bhutan will be able to meet the needs of their families despite this kind of pressure.” (*Source: Voice of the Martyrs*)

Pakistan—False rumors were spread in the town of Gillwalla about an older man named Nazir Masih, claiming that he had burned pages of the Quran. Soon after, an angry mob attacked him and continued to kick him while he lay bleeding and defenseless on the ground. He is now in critical condition in a nearby hospital. The mob then burned Nazir’s home where he lives with his extended family, and some of his family was injured in the attack. They also looted and burned his son’s shoe shop. This senseless violence caused such heart-wrenching suffering, so please pray for Nazir and his family. Pray that they would heal and that their home and business would be restored to them. And pray for the hearts of the perpetrators— that they would be shocked at themselves for beating an innocent, elderly man and ruining his home. Pray that they would recognize the sin in their hearts and seek forgiveness from Jesus and Nazir himself. Pray that God would bring redemption from this tragedy. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

China—“Temu is as addictive as sugar,” says retail analyst Neil Saunders. “The experience and cheap prices give consumers a little dopamine hit and keeps them coming back for more.” The behemoth online retailer Temu, known for its rock-bottom prices, has incorporated addictive gaming features into their platform, while dealing in goods produced through the exploitation and slave labor of Uyghur Muslims in China. According to Freedom United, “Temu has no system to ensure compliance with the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, legislation put in place to try to prevent Uyghur-made products from entering the U.S. According to a report by the House Select Committee on the Chinese Community Party, this all but guarantees that shipments from Temu contain products made with forced labor, saying American consumers need to be aware of the ‘extremely high risk that Temu’s supply chains are contaminated with forced labor.’” Additionally, Senator Rubio sent a letter the Department of Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas, stating, “Private firms and journalists have unearthed compelling evidence that both Shein and Temu are facilitating the entry of goods made with Uyghur forced labor...I urge you to investigate these companies.” Pray that consumers would be made aware of these egregious practices and refuse to be tempted by addictive games and cheap prices at the cost of others freedom. Pray for the protection of Uyghurs who are being disappeared, tortured, “re-educated,” and enslaved. Pray that the US government will take effective and meaningful access to block these morally tainted goods from entering the US. Pray for those who oppress and enslave others, that they would come to their senses, see the evil of what they are doing, and repent. (*Sources: BBC; Freedom United*)

Nigeria—In May, the Nigerian army rescued 209 children, 135 women, and six men who had all been held hostage by Boko Haram. Many had been held by the extremist group for years. They all looked exhausted, their clothes were worn thin, and some of the girls had babies who had recently been born. The army found them in Sambisa Forest, which had been a hideout for Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria. Some of those who were rescued said they couldn't escape because they feared being tortured if caught and couldn't leave their little ones. Praise God for this good news of release and freedom for hundreds that were suffering. Pray that He would heal, comfort, and restore them. Pray that they would look to Him as the great Redeemer and Deliverer. (*Source: ABC News*)

Europe and the United Kingdom—A year-long investigation by the *Washington Post*, *Lighthouse Reports*, and a consortium of international media outlets has revealed clandestine partnerships of the UK and European countries with several North African countries employing illegal and draconian methods to deter mostly black Sub-Saharan Africans from migrating to Europe. Tunisia, Morocco, Rwanda, and Mauritania have been enabled and supported by EU countries and Britain to use inhumane and aggressive policies against asylum-seekers, especially detaining migrants and dumping them—including children and pregnant women—in extremely remote, barren locations without food, water, or resources. These harsh conditions not only threaten lives, it makes asylum-seekers more vulnerable to human trafficking, kidnapping, extortion, modern slavery, torture, sexual violence. And the trucks, training, and equipment to carry out these horrific practices are all provided by Europe. Freedom United shares two accounts: “Lamine, a 25-year-old from Guinea, said despite having refugee papers from UNHCR, he has been repeatedly beaten and detained by Moroccan forces in Rabat, then dumped in the interior. . . migrants [were] rounded up and sold by Tunisian government officers for a little over \$6 each to unscrupulous military agents in Libya. . . Moussa, a young man from Cameroon and his group were held by plainclothes militiamen carrying AR-style rifles and taken to a small, dirt-floor prison where roughly 500 migrants were packed together under a corrugated roof. Prisoners were forced to provide a phone number so ransom could be demanded from their families. With only a hole in one corner as a toilet, they were fed once a day and repeatedly beaten, leaving behind scars from machete hacks by guards. To keep the migrants under control, the captors also randomly fired their weapons. . . Moussa . . . witnessed three migrants die of wounds caused by stray bullets. The trucks Tunisian security forces used to round up Moussa and his group were provided by Italy and Germany to ‘fight human traffickers’ or ‘combat irregular immigration and organized crime.’ While Tunisian forces did the dirty work, the investigation makes clear it’s Europe providing the material support facilitating these human rights abuses.” Pray for the care and protection of vulnerable asylum-seekers. Pray that the African and European countries participating in these abuses would stop these inhuman practices and seek the well-being of all humans. Pray for the underlying situations that create the need for people to seek asylum. (*Sources: Freedom United; others*)

India—Kosa Kawasi, 22-years-old, recently came to Christ along with his wife. Because they left Hinduism to convert to Christianity, his family members began threatening his life. Kosa alerted village authorities, hoping for protection, but none was given. His extended family tried to force the couple out of their home, and when they wouldn't leave, Kosa's uncle stabbed him to death. Please pray for this tragic situation in northern India where Christian persecution

has been rising and members of one's own family can be such a threat. Pray for Kosa's young widow who is now mourning his death, alone, and surely terrified of those around her. Please pray for the Lord's protection and comfort and that she would have a safe place to live. Pray for the cousin and uncle who were involved in the murder— for justice and a radically changed heart, ready to embrace the Gospel they are fighting against. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

Bolivia—Some disturbing statistics regarding sexual violence against women and children internationally: 1 in 5 girls will be sexually abused at least once in her life; up to 50 percent of sexual assaults worldwide are committed against girls under 16; sexual violence—especially experienced in childhood—can lead to increased alcohol and drug abuse later in life. These crimes and abuses are even more pervasive in countries where poverty and lack of community and governmental resources and preparedness make women and girls more vulnerable to perpetrators who exploit with impunity. Praise God that International Justice Mission has made great progress in Latin America and Africa in training communities and law enforcement in identifying, prosecuting, and punishing sexual predators. Give thanks to God for the programs they have set up to help restore and heal survivors of these crimes. This has been particularly vital in Bolivia “where 1 in 2 women and 4 in 10 adolescents experience physical or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. Eight of every 10 adolescents who were victims of violence reported experiencing multiple instances of abuse.” Pray that this good work would continue and expand in Bolivia where IJM has achieved over 150 convictions on sexual violence against women and children—including 13 convictions in just the first 3 months of 2023. Pray for the protection of women and children in Bolivia. And pray for perpetrators that their hearts and minds might be rescued from the vile evil that consumes them. (*Source: IJM*)

Egypt—Companies including Lancôme, Estée Lauder, and L’Oreal use Egyptian jasmine in some of their expensive fragrances. It was recently discovered that a large part of the supply of jasmine flowers has been picked by children, despite the fact that these companies do not condone child labor. On paper, their practices are ethical, but undercover video shows many of their workers are children. One woman named Heba and her four children under age 15 wake at 3 am to start harvesting jasmine flowers. On a typical night, the family will pick 1.5 kg of flowers and earn \$1.50. Partly because of inflation, but surely for higher profit, these large companies try to buy the cheapest jasmine oil from fragrance houses, so these businesses end up offering very little to the harvesters. Please pray for protection for these children, who should be in school during the day and sleeping at night. Pray that these companies would uphold ethical sourcing practice, something they have claimed they do. Pray that they would truly reject child labor and protect these families, and that the adults who work would be given a fair wage so they don't feel the need to bring their children to help. (*Source: BBC News*)

United States—Less than a year ago, sixteen-year-old Duvan Pérez was killed while working at the poultry processing plant in Mississippi owned by Mar-Jac Poultry. Despite this tragic death, the Department of Labor discovered in May that Mar-Jac is still employing children in a plant in Tennessee. A *CNN* report revealed that DOL investigators “discovered oppressive child labor at [Mar-Jac’s] poultry processing facility, namely children working on the kill floor deboning poultry and cutting carcasses,” adding that “the children had been working at the facility for months.” It is against federal law for children under the age of 18 to work cleaning

or using machinery in slaughterhouses and meat packaging plants—the circumstances under which Duvan was killed when he was sucked into a deboning machine. Even in light of these horrific events, many states are introducing legislation to roll back child labor laws and protections. Pray that these efforts—driven by industry—would be thwarted. Pray that companies like Mar-Jac would follow the law and ensure business practices that are legal and ethical and not purely driven by profit. Pray for the protection of young people—hard workers who most often come from situations of great need. (Sources: *Freedom United*; *CNN*)

Syria—A young man named George was traveling by bus when Islamic militants stopped it and kidnapped everyone that identified as Christian or whose identity card identified them as Christians. They tortured them, and then forced George to dig his own grave with his hands and told him he would be executed if he chose Christ. Out of fear, George pretended to become Muslim to avoid being killed, but a few days later the army apprehended them and George was able to escape. He sees this freedom as a miracle from God despite the fact that he, in his weakness, denied Christ. Now George is sharing the truth of his faith that has grown through this trial. Praise God who rescues and forgives. Please pray that George will find comfort and healing from the memories of his captivity. Pray that his faith would continue to grow and that he would be a light to those around him. (Source: *International Christian Concern*)