

## August 2024 Prayer

*Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.*

—Luke 21: 10-11

**India**—In Bihar, in the middle of the night, Hindu extremists broke into Pastor Sushil Komar's house and killed his teenage son, Nilesh. They broke his hands, strangled him, and then hung him from a tree outside the home. Extremists had been threatening this family for some time, pressuring them to leave their Christian faith. Please pray fervently for the Lord's hand of comfort on this pastor who has lost his only son in such a heart-wrenching and horrible way. Pray that the Lord would carry him through this suffering. And pray that the attackers would have no peace until they confess and repent from this wickedness. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

**Egypt/Yemen**—After his conversion from Islam in 2014, Yemeni Christian Abdulbaqi Saeed Abdo was forced to flee to Egypt when his family and his in-laws sought revenge for his conversion by killing his first wife by replacing her cooking oil with gasoline. Despite being granted official asylum seeker status by the UNHCR in 2021, Egypt detained Abdo for "contempt of Islamic religion" and "discrimination against Islam" after he shared Christian videos online. He was also accused of being a part of a terrorist organization for joining a Facebook group for Muslim-background believers. During his time in Egypt, Abdo remarried and had five children—all of whom would be in life-threatening danger if they were repatriated to Yemen, which Egypt has threatened despite this being in direct contradiction to his UN-designated asylum seeker status. While in prison, he has often been solitary confinement and has been deprived essential medications for his heart condition, high cholesterol, and hypertension. He was placed in the "punishment room" for writing Bible verses on a scrap of paper and also forced to recite Islamic prayers and fast during Ramadan. Persecution in prison comes from both guards and other inmates. Pray that the Lord would sustain Abdo through these many trials and strengthen his faith. Pray that God would provide for and protect Abdo's second wife and children. Give thanks that groups like Jubilee Campaign, Middle East Concern, and ADF International know of Abdo's situation and are advocating at the highest levels for his release. Pray that their efforts would be successful. Pray for the repentance and salvation of Abdo's family members who murdered his first wife and persecuted him, for prison guards, inmates, and all who encounter him during his imprisonment. (*Source: Jubilee Campaign*)

**Sudan**—Praise God for His protection over Father Arsenius, priest of a Coptic Orthodox Church, and his son who were attacked by the military junta. They shot his son in front of him and threatened to shoot him as well if he did not renounce Christ and turn to Islam. His son was bleeding heavily, but when Father Arsenius knelt down to help him, the attackers put a knife to his neck. They told him they would kill him if he helped his son and they would shoot him too if he did not accept Islam. He courageously told his attackers that he would not renounce Christ and if God wanted him to die by their bullet, then His will is above ours. Praise God for filling him with courage and faith, and praise God for sparing his life and his son's life. His son was able to receive treatment at a hospital and recover. Please pray for this

country and the many that are suffering since conflict broke out between two warring military groups in April 2023. Pray for the many millions of people in need of humanitarian aid and pray that God would both protect Christians and use them to reach the lost and the hurting. (Source: *Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

**Democratic Republic of Congo**—Lazare Sebitereko Rukundwa is a believer who founded Eben-Ezer University of Minembwe in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo. An internationally recognized scholar, he was a visiting professor at Penn State Harrisburg. He sheltered people fleeing violence in his country. He was a civil society delegate during the Inter-Congolese Peace Consultations in Nairobi, actively working for peace. Then he was falsely and ironically accused of calling to arms the people of Eastern DRC. Even with video evidence of Professor Rukundwa advocating for peace and the “Nairobi Process,” he has been held over a year in Makala Central Prison in Kinshasa. But despite unbearable living conditions and being deprived necessary medication, he has led numerous ministries in prison including a literacy program that has taught prisoners who were previously street children to read, write, and calculate. He joined the chaplaincy at the prison and a group of ordained prisoners who minister to fellow inmates with donations and resources they are able to obtain, including distributing Bibles. He began a skills training program teaching prisoners to make soap, disinfectant, detergent, paint, and pigment, as well as starting a tree-planting program. In this prison, there are children and whole families, many of whom are just in prison because of financial need. Rukundwa and the chaplaincy have been able to have funds raised to help these people. Praise God for the many ways He is ministering to and providing for imprisoned people in DRC through Dr Rukundwa’s work. Praise God for Dr Rukundwa’s strong faith, as he proclaimed, “Even as I long for health and freedom, I see the good that God is doing.” Pray that he be restored to his family and for the preservation of these wonderful ministries even after his release. Pray for peace and an end to violence in DRC and for the establishment of just and ethical leaders to govern DRC with integrity and the protection of human rights. (Source: *Christianity Today*)

**Burkina Faso**—A video has been circulating that shows 18 military men in army uniforms mutilating a dead body. Soldiers nearby shout, “For the homeland or death!” These soldiers are a special forces unit linked to the president of the country whose battalions have been known for massacres and executions of hundreds of civilians at a time, including children. This recent gruesome act, a war crime and affront to human dignity, further demonstrates their lawlessness and complete lack of morality. Pray that the family members of this victim would be spared from viewing the video, and pray for comfort for those who have suffered such loss during this conflict. Pray that God would bring about justice to these perpetrators, and pray that they would come face-to-face with the severity of their atrocious actions. Pray that they would turn to Christ as they see the wretchedness of their sinful hearts. (Source: *Human Rights Watch*)

**Pakistan**—Pray for the protection and release from prison of Anwar Kenneth—a former officer in Pakistan’s Fisheries Department and Christian believer—who has spent over 20 years on death row because of false charges of blasphemy. In 2001, Anwar Kenneth wrote a response letter to a Muslim scholar in which he shared his Christian beliefs. As a result he was charged with “defaming” and “insulting” the Prophet and given a death sentence. It took over ten years for his case to be reviewed by the Lahore High Court, who upheld the

sentence of capital punishment and has kept him on death row for 10 more years. During that time his health has deteriorated and his son has had to flee Pakistan because of death threats he received. Give thanks that Jubilee Campaign has taken on his case, and there is real hope that Anwar Kenneth's release could be secured. Pray that God in his mercy would allow Anwar Kenneth to live the rest of his life in safety as a free man. Pray that capital punishment would no longer be a punishment for blasphemy in Pakistan and that basic human rights including religious freedom would be upheld and protected in the country. (Source: Jubilee Campaign)

**Afghanistan**—If a Christian's faith is discovered in this oppressive country, they often face death or torture. Such was the case for Yasaman's husband, who was followed by two men, attacked, and killed because of his Christian activity. Many Christians have left the country, and those that remain must practice their faith in secret or they will be persecuted or killed by the Taliban, the community, or their own families. Please pray for comfort for Yasaman who mourns her husband's death. Pray for Afghan Christians to be protected from persecution and to be able to find others to fellowship with even when there are so few secret believers. Pray for Taliban leaders who oppress their people to be convicted and to meet Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord for those courageous Christians who have chosen to stay in the country despite the risk, and pray that they would have safe opportunities to share the good news of Christ. (Source: Open Doors)

**Guatemala**—More than two years ago, 67-year-old journalist and founder of the newspaper *El Periódico*, José Rubén Zamora was arrested and detained on false charges of money laundering—charges later overturned. However, this internationally recognized and award-winning journalist remains imprisoned in what is broadly recognized as part of a wider attack on justice workers and human rights defenders in Guatemala. In 2022, there were 3,754 attacks against human rights defenders, and at least 73 judicial workers, journalists and activists had to go into exile, according to data from Guatemala's Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit (UDEFEQUA). Pray for his safety and for his prompt release. Pray for the upholding of basic human rights in Guatemala, especially of those who are courageous enough to investigate, report, and prosecute large-scale corruption and human rights violations in the country. (Source: Amnesty International)

**Nigeria**—Fifteen-year-old Adanna was abducted by Islamic extremists last February with her seven-year-old brother from her grandmother's home. Her brother was returned to his family, but seven months later, she is still held captive. Her kidnappers threatened to burn down her grandmother's home if she did not go with them. She was forced to marry a Muslim man and convert to Islam, although she's a Christian who loved going to church and loved singing in the choir. Her grandmother is working with authorities to bring her home and is deeply concerned for her. Please pray for the peace of Christ to fill her grandmother. Pray for complete protection, physical and emotional and spiritual, for this young girl. Pray that Adanna would cling to Christ, continue to sing praises to Him, and know Him more and more through this fearful time. Pray for her release and rescue. And pray for God to work in Nigeria, where there is so much violence and evil practices, and to keep His body strong and safe. (Source: International Christian Concern)

**Syria**—In the five years since Syrian Democratic Forces and a US-led coalition defeated IS (Islamic State) in Syria, the autonomous authorities in Syria have abused overly broad anti-terrorism laws to arbitrarily and indefinitely detain thousands of men, women, and children without charges or trials. They have been held—many for all five years—in inhumane conditions, denied access to legal representation, tortured, and pressured into false confessions. Despite the need to effectively combat terrorism, the persecution, torture, and detention of innocent people is not acceptable and defeats the purpose of fighting terrorism. Give thanks that recent laws are paving the way for victims of flawed trials and unjust detention in northeast Syria to receive targeted amnesty in cases where there was insufficient evidence to have convicted them. Give praise to the God of justice that there is some justice being restored to this blighted region and that one day perfect justice will be fully restored to all nations. (*Source: Amnesty International*)