

September 2024 Prayer

When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers.

–Proverbs 21:15

**Cuba**—Pastor Lorenzo Rosales Fajardo was peacefully protesting in July of 2011 when he was arrested and sentenced to prison. Despite his suffering behind bars, he has consistently shared the Gospel and baptized new believers in the prison. Many around the world have prayed for him and advocated for his release. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention recently ruled that his imprisonment is considered “arbitrary detention” and goes against nine different Articles of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. As we pray for his speedy release after this UN Group decision, we can be encouraged that letters and prayers are indeed a vital support for him and others that suffer persecution. Pastor Fajardo writes: “We thank God for all the brothers, sisters, and friends who always pray and are interested in me. Thank you for your displays of affection and Christian love, for the... letters I receive daily from all over the world, for the phone calls, and all the spiritual and material help offered to me and my family. All of this lets me know that I am not alone, nor forgotten in this tribulation. I have not lost my JOY, that is, my happiness, being able to survive in prison... there are sad days [when] I lack the motivation to pray, but today I can say like the Apostle Paul to the Philippians, ‘I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.’” Please pray for his faith to remain strong and for him to continue to minister to others in the prison until he is released. Pray for his health, safety, and encouragement. (*Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

**Democratic Republic of Congo**—Give thanks that journalist and peace activist Elias Bizimungu was released after being tried and condemned for “insulting the army.” The trumped up charge stems from his claims that the Congolese army and police failed to protect the people under siege in the province of Nord-Kivu—as well as being complicit in the human rights violations. Praise God that despite the widespread conflict, violence, and human rights atrocities that have plagued DRC for decades, there are many courageous people within the country like Elias Bizimungu who are willing to speak out against these things and work for peace, justice, and truth. Pray that the God of justice and truth would protect them, would strengthen the church and believers there, and remove from power those who abuse it. (*Source: Amnesty International*)

**Myanmar**—Reverend Dr Hkalam Samson was arrested and held in prison for 500 days by the military junta. They were trying to silence this human rights’ defender and religious leader. Rev Samson suffered cramped conditions and malnutrition along with harsh interrogation, but was released unexpectedly last April. In the midst of the joy of his release, on that same day, he was re-arrested. Now, after spending more months under guard, he has been released yet again. His attitude and faith have remained strong as he believes that God can work in any situation. Please pray that Reverend Samson would indeed continue to remain free and able to continue his work. Pray for all those in Myanmar who are held behind bars to receive encouragement and hope in the midst of their suffering. (*Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

**Turkey**—At the end of August the “French Church of Bursa was ordered to evacuate when authorities claimed the building was unsafe due to high groundwater levels. However, the church worked with a certified office of the Chamber of Geological Engineers who produced a report indicating there was not a significant risk and the issues were superficial. The “French Church” was built in the late nineteenth century by French traders and restored in 2002-2004. It is used as a regular meeting place of worship by the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant communities. This is not the first time local government has tried to “terminate worship” at the site. They have not offered an alternative location, and a request to

set up a meeting tent was also refused. Of the more than 100 churches that used to be established in Bursa, only the French Church remains a place of Christian worship. We join with Middle East Concern in praying that: “God encourages the Christian communities in Bursa through the problems with the French Church; God grants wisdom to the church leaders to communicate well with the authorities; a solution will be found that enables the various congregations to continue meeting in Bursa.” (Source: *Middle East Concern*)

**Colombia**—This summer, two men attacked Ramón Arturo Montejo, a Catholic priest. They stabbed him, stole his car, and ran him over with his car, killing him. They later abandoned the stolen car, leading one to believe that this was not a car theft but a personal attack. World Watch Research analyst Rossana Ramirez comments: “The violent nature of Father Montejo’s death points to the dangers faced by those working for peace and justice in conflict-prone areas in Colombia. Father Montejo was known for his peace efforts and involvement in several hostage releases, and it is believed that he was specifically targeted for assassination – here masked as vehicle theft. This is always a danger in Colombia where the work of church leaders directly challenges the authority and interests of local criminal groups.” Please pray for safety and protection in the violent and dangerous areas of Colombia. Pray that the light of the Gospel would go out, change lives, and transform the hearts of violent criminals. Pray also for comfort for grieving friends and family of Ramon Montejo. (Source: *Open Doors*)

**United States**—Many instances of human trafficking have been uncovered in the United States, a sobering reminder that this horrific crime is happening right in our own communities. It also takes a variety of forms, such as the 34-year-old Highland Park, Illinois, woman who illegally escorted 5 individuals into the United States from Mexico, promising jobs, housing, and safety. Instead she confiscated their passports and documents, and forced them to work to “pay off their debt,” a figure that was continually increasing. She threatened that their families in Mexico would be killed if they failed to comply with her demands. In Florida, a sex-trafficking sting led to the arrest of 3 men, who thought they were “purchasing” a 13-year-old non-verbal autistic girl. Thankfully in this case, they were met by police officers. Both these cases occurred in recent months, and unfortunately, are just the tip of a horrible, criminal iceberg—and law enforcement still needs to shift focus more from arresting and prosecuting trafficked victims to uncovering rings and prosecuting perpetrators. In fact, only 10 percent of arrests made in sex worker-related crimes are of pimps, traffickers, or customers. Please pray for the protection of vulnerable people within the United States, who are deceived or coerced into modern slavery. Pray that perpetrators who prey on vulnerable people for their own greed or pleasure would be held accountable for these atrocious acts. Pray that law enforcement and other agencies who support victims of trafficking would be ever more successful in their efforts. (Source: *ABC News; Fox News*)

**India**—In the village of Iradaha, 18 Hindu-background, Christian families were attacked by a mob of over 200 people. Two were hospitalized and many others, including women and children, were injured. Although they alerted the police, no one came to help them. The next day, as they attempted to file a report, the police authorities refused to hear them. Please pray for comfort for these families after such a traumatic experience. Pray for protection over the believers in India where prejudice and persecution remain widespread. Ask the Lord to encourage them to remain strong in their faith, especially in a situation where mobs can attack in such a way with impunity. Pray for hearts of extremists to change and be captured by the grace and love of Christ. (Source: *Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

**Jordan**—While training to become an imam, a Jordanian man instead found Christ. However, once his family discovered that they have threatened him with death unless he renounces his faith and completes

his imam training. One family member told him, “Your head will be on the street.” Violent persecution of believers is common in Jordan, where only 2 percent of the population is Christian. Much of that persecution comes from close family, tribes, and the local community. Pray for this man who has placed his trust in Jesus—that he will be protected and strengthened in his new faith. Pray that his life will be a powerful witness, and that those in his family who are currently threatening his life will themselves come to know the love, grace, peace, and salvation of Christ. (Source: *Voice of the Martyrs*)

**Pakistan**—Eighteen-year-old Tabi was arrested when villagers falsely accused him of blasphemy. They say that they saw him tearing up a piece of paper with verses from the Quran on it. In the past, such allegations have led to torture and even death. Please pray for this young man who must be terrified and surely awaits long imprisonment and suffering. Pray for a miracle and for justice to reign and that he would be released soon and spared this injustice. Please pray that he would cling to Jesus Christ and experience His presence vividly while in prison. Ask that the Lord would make him a light and use him in that dark place. (Source: *International Christian Concern*)

**China**—For almost a decade, the Chinese government has been on a brutal, systematic campaign of genocide of the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. The widespread abuse has included detention, surveillance, forced labor camps within Xinjiang and across China, the forced removal of Uyghur children from their families to Chinese “boarding schools,” the sterilization of young Uyghur women, and the destruction of historic Uyghur sites and holy places. In response to the recent reports of these human rights abuses, the Chinese government has launched a propaganda blitz centered around turning the region into a tourist site, complete with fake dinosaur parks, and faux “historic” places, food stalls, new shopping areas, and dancing demonstrations. The propaganda campaign called, “Seeing Is Believing,” is aimed at luring Chinese and foreign tourists to the region to “see that it is safe and good.” But the strictly controlled, media-silent region is hiding the hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs who are languishing in “re-education” camps, detention centers, and modern slavery behind closed doors. Please pray that despite its current success, the campaign of lies would be exposed for what it is. Pray that those in China and around the world who are aware of and opposed to the genocide would persevere and continue to speak out for Uyghurs—with their political voices and well as their consumer dollars. Pray that the Uyghur people and culture would be protected and preserved, and that basic human rights would be upheld in China. (Source: *Freedom United*)