

"The virus situation in Pyongyang and Sinuiju is more serious than the border areas. I think we could all die from starvation or being infected. Both are deadly and cause despair, but after knowing Him, my fear has vanished."

~ Recent convert to Christ in North Korea

In light of the global crisis we are facing at this time, the minds of many people are centred on the pandemic. But for persecuted Christians around the world, the threat carries added difficulties. Despised by governments, and even their neighbours, infected believers may be denied the medical care they so desperately need. Christian communities also face the prospect that their oppressors could use this time of uncertainty to spread their agendas while the eyes of the world are looking elsewhere. As you address the danger of COVID-19 in your prayers, take the opportunity to particularly intercede for your persecuted brothers and sisters.

BURKINA FASO: Christians Blamed for Virus

Sources: VOM Australia, Alliance Presse

In mid-February, Pastor Mamadou Karambiri attended a conference in France, along with his wife. Unfortunately, a number of delegates unknowingly became infected by the COVID-19 virus while there. After testing negative in France, they were allowed to return to their home country where they developed symptoms, becoming the first confirmed cases in Burkina Faso. At last report, the couple had been placed in quarantine.

Regrettably, this situation has resulted in an increase of persecution within a country that has faced significant violence in recent months. While militant Islamic groups threaten believers, some are now accusing Christians of bringing the virus to Burkina Faso. This small African nation has faced increased levels of violent attacks which are directly attributable to jihadist groups coming into the country from Mali. Many of these attacks have been directed against Christians, such as the church attack that took place on February 16th which left 24 believers dead ([read more](#)).



Please prayerfully uphold those in Burkina Faso and around the world who've been infected by the virus and are facing uncertainty over the outcome, including people who are in need of Christ and don't know where to turn. Pray that sound judgement and reason will prevail so that Christians will not have to endure added suffering because of unwarranted blame. More specifically, ask God to ensure the full recovery of Pastor Mamadou and his wife, so that their ministry can continue in this volatile area. Also lift up other believers throughout the country who are facing opposition, and even the threat of death, due to the hostility of militants.

ETHIOPIA: Church Destroyed and Believers Beaten

Source: VOMC Contacts



Ask God to give Ethiopian believers wisdom and grace as they navigate the challenges before them.

On March 13th, a church in the town of Jeru in northern Ethiopia was burned to the ground. During the attack, believers were severely beaten and expelled from their homes by fellow villagers. Those responsible were members of the Ethiopian Orthodox church.

While it may seem unusual for Christians to face opposition from others who claim to follow Christ, this is not unusual in Ethiopia. The dominant religions of the nation are Islam in the south and the traditional Orthodox church in the north. Those who are not members of either group frequently face strong opposition from neighbours and family members who consider them apostates.

Non-Orthodox Christians are considered second-class citizens who are not eligible to receive many of the benefits available to members of the country's two dominant religions. The government

provides free land for the building of mosques and Orthodox churches, as well as free burial plots; however, such privileges are not available to anyone outside of these groups. For more information on the persecution facing Christians in Ethiopia, visit our [country report](#).

Lift up the members of the attacked church in your prayers, as they work to rebuild their lives and find ways to worship together. Pray that they will be allowed to safely return to their homes. Ask God to mightily work in the hearts and minds of their opponents, so they will turn to Christ in genuine repentance and true faith -- receiving the grace and forgiveness that's been made available to them through the precious blood of Jesus. May Ethiopia's authorities govern fairly by providing needed support and protection for all citizens, and may the great compassion, character and teachings of Christ bring unity.

PRAISE REPORT

NIGERIA: Kidnapped Girl Successfully Escapes

Sources: The Guardian, Vanguard, World Watch Monitor

On the night of January 5th, Sadiya Amos had just finished a New Year's celebration when she was abducted. Two days later, her father was forced to attend a Sharia court where he was accused of preventing Sadiya from converting to Islam. A fake birth certificate was presented as evidence that she was 19 years old, rather than her true age of 17. Throughout the proceedings, the court refused to allow the teen's parents any access to her, nor let them know where she was located.

Confined to a locked room for more than a month, Sadiya was forced to convert and marry one of her kidnappers. One day, however, she miraculously found the door unlocked and the guards outside the door asleep. Fleeing, she managed to return to her parents. We praise God for providing a way of escape for young Sadiya.

Similar cases of abduction happen frequently around the world to Christian girls, such as the situation pertaining to Huma Younus in Pakistan ([read more](#)). Their concerned families are very appreciative of our continued prayers for their loved ones' safety, well-being, and hopeful release from captivity.

Praise God for making a way of escape for Sadiya. Pray for this teen's emotional healing as she recovers from this terrible ordeal. Ask God to provide Sadiya and her family protection from any retribution sought by the kidnappers. Pray that Nigeria's authorities and courts will provide true justice and protection for all who are vulnerable targets of such victimization. Remember the many other abducted girls, such as Huma and Leah (Sharibu), who are still being held in captivity – whether in Nigeria, Pakistan, or other nations where persecution is prevalent.

If you would like to post a prayer of praise or petition on behalf of our persecuted family around the globe, visit [VOMC's prayer wall](#).



Sadiya Amos Chindo (on right) with her grateful mother.
Photo: World Watch Monitor

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