

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

~ Romans 12:12 NIVUK

Taking place across Canada on November 1st, 2020 is the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP). This year's theme is "Hope in Isolation." We encourage churches, prayer groups, families, and individual believers to take some time that day to pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ. For more information and access to helpful resources, visit IDOP.ca.

IRAN: Adopted Daughter Seized from Christian Couple

Sources: Church in Chains, Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin, Middle East Concern

An Iranian court has ruled that the adopted daughter of Sam Khosravi and Maryam Falahi be taken from them because they are "not fit" to be her parents. Although declared on July 19th, the ruling has only recently come to light after reports revealed that the couple's appeal was rejected on September 22nd. The court further ruled that since Lydia's birth parentage is unknown, she is to be considered a Muslim and thus must be raised by Muslim parents. It is expected that Lydia will be returned to the orphanage.



The Christian couple adopted Lydia from an Iranian orphanage in February 2019. However, Sam and Maryam were among eight Christians who were arrested for their faith in July of that year. Sam was sentenced to one year in prison, followed by two years of exile. Maryam, a nurse, was banned for life from working in the public sector. The recent rulings are currently under appeal. To learn more about persecution in Iran, go to our [country report](#).

Pray for this couple as they suffer this heartbreaking separation from their only child after attempting to have children of their own for many years. Whenever feeling overwhelmed by the grief of the government-imposed seizure, may Sam and Maryam be reminded that they can take their troubled hearts to the God of all comfort. Ask the Lord, who initially brought little Lydia into their loving care, to continue watching over this precious child. Also pray that the criminal convictions facing Sam and Maryam will be overturned, and that ultimately this family will be miraculously reunited.

NIGERIA: Lawlessness Heightens Call to Prayer

Sources: Morning Star News, Christian Solidarity Worldwide



Hassana and Hussaina Garba
Photo: Facebook

The violence dominating areas of Nigeria continues as Fulani herdsmen terrorize village communities. Unfortunately, Christians are frequently targeted in these attacks. On September 18th, a church elder was shot in the stomach and his twin daughters kidnapped from their home in Katsina State. Thankfully, Ibrahim Garba survived the attack and received treatment in hospital. His teenaged daughters, Hassana and Hussaina, were released three days later.

Such incidents do not always end so positively, however, as was demonstrated in several other recent cases throughout Plateau State. On September 28th, the village of Kpachudu was also attacked by Fulani herdsmen. Two young women and a six-year-old boy were killed. A week before that, a 64-year-old Christian leader was lured out of his home with a phone call. Leaving the house to get better reception, he was ambushed and hacked to death with machetes.

On October 14th, Fulani militants ambushed Justine Patrick and two Christian companions as they were returning to Chaha village after working in the fields. The companions managed to escape, but Justine was killed with machetes.

These are only a few of the many cases of violence encountered by Nigeria's Christian population. The governor of Plateau State declared through a spokesman, "We will not allow these ugly incidences to return where helpless and innocent people are murdered in cold blood for no reason." He urged citizens to cooperate with security forces by providing information.

Despite many such pleas, the violence has continued unabated, leading some organizations to refer to the situation in Nigeria as genocide. For additional reports on the violence targeting Christians in Nigeria, go to our [country report](#).

Our hearts unite with the petitions of these dear Nigerian Christians who are choosing to faithfully abide with God in the midst of danger, even if it means dying with His name on their lips. What a comfort to know that those who have been slain are immediately drawn into His presence where they will experience eternal peace (2 Corinthians 5:8). May each of our surviving Nigerian brothers and sisters in Christ also take comfort in knowing that the "Good Shepherd" is walking closely by their side through this difficult time. In addition to pleading for their protection, pray for the healing of victims injured in the attacks, and for God's peace to console all who have tragically lost loved ones. May Nigeria's security forces, with the support of its governing leadership, find ways to quell these acts of genocide so believers can live peacefully and without further threat of violence.

REPORT UPDATE

PAKISTAN: Family in Hiding After Verdict

Source: Release International

Marilyn and her four young children have had to flee for their lives after her husband, Asif Pervaiz, was sentenced to death for blasphemy on September 8th ([read more](#)). Typically, even the families of those accused of blasphemy are targeted with acts of violence by opposing community members. In an effort to stay safe, Marilyn and her children are now in hiding.

Asif, 37, had already spent seven years in jail, leading up to his conviction last month. The case started with his refusal to convert to Islam or participate in Muslim prayers with others in the workplace. He was then accused of blasphemy

for allegedly sending texts of this nature from his cell phone to the supervisor.

VOMC's ministry partner, Release International, is providing assistance to Asif and his family at this time. The conviction is being appealed, with the support of Saif ul Malook, a Muslim lawyer who has risked his life to defend Christians – including Asia Bibi who was acquitted in October 2018 and then forced to flee the country with her family for protection.



Asif Pervaiz (right) with attorney Saif ul Malook (center).
Photo: Morning Star News

Please remember to pray for Asif Pervaiz while he awaits the outcome of his appeal in prison, asking for justice to prevail in his case. In the meantime, may the gracious love of God that Asif conveys in prison be used as a vibrant witness of our living Lord Jesus Christ so that many prisoners and officials will be drawn into the Kingdom of God. Additionally, pray that Marilyn and her children will experience His protection and provision while seeking safety in an undisclosed location. Continue to lift up the many other Christians throughout Pakistan who are facing persecution because of their faith in Christ.

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](#).