

"...Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

~ Matthew 5:44-45 ESV

NIGERIA: Pastor Shot to Death

Sources: Morning Star News, The Guardian, PM News

Suspected Fulani herdsmen killed Dr. Amos Arijesuyo, a pastor and university deputy registrar, on January 16th. He was travelling from Ibadan to Akure in Ondo state with four others when they were stopped in an ambush. Both the driver and Dr. Arijesuyo were shot by the assailants, requiring urgent medical attention in hospital where the pastor succumbed to his injuries. The driver is recovering from a shot to his arm.



Dr. Amos Arijesuyo
Photo: Facebook

Dr. Arijesuyo served as the deputy registrar, as well as the head of the guidance and counselling unit, at the Federal University of Technology

Akure. A spokesperson for the university condemned the death, calling it a "senseless act." He further stated, "Our prayers and thoughts are with the wife, children and family members of our departed colleague at this difficult period of unquantifiable grief." A member of Christ Apostolic Church where Dr. Arijesuyo was pastoring described him as "born intelligent and a passionate man of the Word (of God)."

According to the 2021 World Watch List from Open Doors, more Christians were killed for their faith in Nigeria during the past year than any other country in the world. It is second only to Pakistan in overall violence, and trails China in the number of churches attacked or closed. For more information on the persecution of Christians in Nigeria, and to review previously posted reports, go to our [country report](#).

Remember Dr. Arijesuyo's wife and children in your prayers as they grieve the sudden death of their loved one. Pray for his church congregation, colleagues and students who are also trying to cope with this loss. May those responsible for the attack be brought to justice and come to a point of repentance before God and their fellow Nigerians. Ask the Lord to help governing authorities find ways to stifle the violence from being continually perpetuated throughout the country.

REPORT UPDATE

IRAN: Mary Mohammadi Faces New Arrest

Sources: Article18, International Christian Concern



Fatemeh (Mary) Mohammadi
Photo: Middle East Concern

Fatemeh (Mary) Mohammadi is a Christian blogger who has openly expressed her concerns over the human rights abuses in Iran. She was previously imprisoned for being a member of a house church. In April 2020, she received a suspended sentence, plus ten lashes for "disturbing public order" (see [this report](#)).

On January 18th, Mary was arrested again when the "morality police" determined that her hijab was not properly adjusted,

her coat was unbuttoned and her pants were too tight. She has faced similar accusations in the past, though her primary "crime" has been her faith in Christ.

Prior to the recent arrest, Mary was unable to return to her work as a gymnastics instructor, despite having good relations with her employer. According to Mary, it's clear that her employer has received pressure from intelligence officials to not permit her return to the workplace. She was told by her former boss that they have a young child and, therefore, can't take the risk of allowing her back at work.

Pray for Mary and the many other believers in Iran who are facing imprisonment, fines and other forms of punishment because of their dedication to Christ. May God give these Christians the physical, emotional and spiritual strength they need to remain faithful in the midst of opposition. As Iranian Christians throughout the country endeavour to honour the Lord each day through their dedicated lives, pray that they will receive wisdom to know how to aptly respond to their accusers and boldness to stand firm in their faith.

PRAISE REPORT

ERITREA: Christian Prisoners Released

Source: Church in Chains

In September and October of 2020, a total of 69 Christian prisoners were released from the Mai Serwa prison near Asmara for reasons that are unclear. According to a recent report from Church in Chains, an additional ten Christians have since been released from the same prison during the second week of January. While the names of these latest released prisoners have not been made public, it is known that some of them were held in custody for over five years. (To date, no reports have been received indicating the release of detainees from other prisons in Eritrea.)



The Mai Serwa prison often uses metal shipping containers as jail cells.

With this latest announcement regarding the discharge of prisoners from Mai Serwa prison, it is now estimated that there are just under 300 Christians incarcerated, many without charge. For other reports on the persecution of believers in Eritrea, go to our [country report](#).

Praise God for those who have been recently released! Continue to remember our Eritrean brothers and sisters in Christ who remain in custody, often under severe and inhumane conditions. Pray for the Lord to work deeply in the hearts of the Eritrean authorities so they will cease their campaign against Christians and realize their need to acknowledge Him as their personal Saviour too.