

idop
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER
FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Prayer sheets

IDOP

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER



Blessed are the Persecuted

7th and 14th November 2021

ABOUT THE IDOP

Today, more than 300 million Christians around the world live in places where they face persecution. These Christians face harassment, detention, legal restrictions, violence and even death for their faith in Jesus. The Bible tells us that we should pray for those who are mistreated as if we ourselves are mistreated (Heb. 13:3) and that if one member of the body suffers, we all suffer (1 Cor. 12:26). For more than two decades, the World Evangelical Alliance has organised the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP), as a global event that unites millions of Christians in prayer for the persecuted Church. Annually, the IDOP is observed on either the first or second Sunday of November, depending on the convenience and choice of churches partaking in the event.

For more information visit: www.idop.org



INTRODUCTION

This resource has been developed to help you pray in an informed manner about our brothers and sisters in Christ who suffer persecution for their faith in different parts of the world. The Bible tells us that we should pray for those who are mistreated in a spirit of oneness, as if we ourselves were suffering with them (Heb. 13:3). The Bible also says that if one suffers, we all suffer! (1 Cor. 12:26).



GLOBAL OVERVIEW OF PERSECUTION¹

- ➔ Around the world, more than 300 million or one in eight Christians live in places where they face persecution for their faith
- ➔ Last year, on average, daily:
 - o 13 Christians were killed daily for their faith
 - o 13 Christians were unjustly detained or imprisoned
 - o 5 Christians were abducted
- ➔ With the pandemic, persecuted Christians, who are often impoverished and marginalized, faced increased challenges and vulnerabilities

¹ World Watch List 2021

A close-up photograph of a pair of hands, likely belonging to a child, gently holding a small, rustic wooden cross. The hands are positioned in the center-right of the frame, with the fingers slightly curled around the cross. The background is a soft, out-of-focus bokeh of warm, golden-brown and blue tones, suggesting a church interior with stained glass windows or candles. The lighting is warm and intimate, highlighting the texture of the wood and the skin of the hands.

COUNTRIES IN FOCUS

India

1

Overview

One of the most populous countries in the world, India is home to more than 65 million Christians. Hindu nationalism is the predominant driver of Christian persecution in the country. In many states, conversion is a punishable offence. Also, those who convert to Christianity face pressure from their families to recant their faith. Christian leaders and churches have continued to face violent attacks and intimidation by Hindu extremist groups, who view them as following a foreign faith. Dalit Christian women, in particular, are extremely vulnerable to persecution because of their gender and class status.

Prayer points

- ➔ Pray for God's protection over Christians who are in the forefronts of persecution
- ➔ Pray for the work of churches to continue unhindered in reaching the unreached in the country
- ➔ Pray that God would touch and transform the hearts of those responsible for persecuting Christians
- ➔ Pray that God would strengthen Christian converts to stand firm in the faith despite the pressure and the persecution they face

INDIA





Nigeria

2

Overview

Almost 50 percent of Nigeria's 200 million population are Christians. The main driver of persecution in the country is Islamic extremism. Christian communities face violent attacks by Islamic extremist groups such as Boko Haram and the Fulani, particularly in the Northern parts and the Middle Belt of the country. According to Open Doors, more Christians are killed in Nigeria than in any other country. Christian girls, in particular, face the threat of abduction and forced marriage.

Prayer points

- ➔ Pray for God's protection and comfort over persecuted Christians who are vulnerable to attacks by extremist groups
- ➔ Pray for the authorities to bring to justice those responsible for unleashing violence on Christian communities
- ➔ Pray for churches to continue to minister boldly despite the pressure and persecution

Nepal

3

Overview

Till 1990, Nepal was the only Hindu Kingdom in the world. The main driver of persecution in the country is Hindu extremism. Christian converts from Hinduism face persecution from their families and extended families. According to the law, conversion is banned in Nepal. Christian leaders often face harassment and detention by the authorities for engaging in evangelism. Also, Christian organizations and ministries face challenges when seeking legal recognition and registration with the government.

Prayer points

- ➔ Pray for God's wisdom and protection upon Christian leaders and ministry workers in the country
- ➔ Pray for greater freedoms for Christians to be faithful to the Great Commission
- ➔ Pray that God would strengthen Christian converts to stand firm in their faith and stay faithful to Jesus





REFUGEE CAMP, SOMALIA

Somalia



Overview

The majority of Somalia's 16 million population is Muslim. However, the exact number of Christians is unknown. In Somalia, the State religion is Islam. Also, Christians face immense difficulties in revealing their identities in public. Converts, on the other hand, face intense pressure from their families and extended families who force them to recant their faith. Moreover, Christians also face violent attacks by extremist groups such as the al-Shabaab,

Prayer points

- ➔ Pray for God's protection over Christian converts who face persecution from their families and the community
- ➔ Pray that there would be increased religious freedoms and safeguards for religious minorities in the country
- ➔ Pray that God would change the hearts of those persecuting Christians

Myanmar

5

Overview

Myanmar is home to over four million Christians. Buddhist nationalism is the main driver of persecution in the country. In conflict-stricken States with large Christian populations, churches face restrictions and discrimination from the authorities and attacks by the military. Moreover, Christian converts face opposition from their families who force them to recant their faith. Further, the law regulates religious conversion and imposes an extensive approval process.

Prayer points

- ➔ Pray that God would strengthen Christian converts to stand firm in the faith and boldly follow Jesus
- ➔ Pray that there would be greater political stability in the country
- ➔ Pray for God's protection over Christians, particularly in the conflict-stricken states

FISHERMAN IN MYANMAR



Overview

Christians face intense persecution in Afghanistan. For instance, apostasy is a crime punishable by death in the country under Islamic law. Christians, therefore, do not reveal their faith in public. Moreover, there is no space for any form of Christian expression in the country since groups such as the Taliban maintain a hardline approach to Islam.

Pray points

- ➔ Pray for God's safety and protection over secret believers in the country
- ➔ Pray that Christians would have access to resources and that despite the challenges they would be strengthened in their faith
- ➔ Pray that groups such as the Taliban would experience a change in heart and turn from the oppression of non-Muslims
- ➔ Pray for greater freedoms for Christians in the country

Pakistan

7

Overview

Around four million out of Pakistan's 200 million population identify as Christians. Over 95 percent of the country's population are Muslims. Islamic extremism is the dominant source of persecution in the country. In particular, converts from Islam face a very high threat of persecution. Christian girls also face the risk of abduction and forcible marriage. Moreover, Pakistan's Blasphemy laws have been a tool of oppression in the hands of extremists who have used it to target Christians. Further, churches face the threat of attacks and Christians face discrimination in society, especially in relation to employment.

Prayer points

- ➡ Pray for God's protection over Christians in Pakistan
- ➡ Pray for the safety of converts and young Christian girls and women who face a higher risk of persecution
- ➡ Pray that blasphemy laws in the country would be repealed or substantially reformed
- ➡ Pray that Christians would continue to boldly proclaim their faith despite the challenges they face



WOMAN IN PAKISTAN



ALGERIA

Algeria

8

Overview

Less than one percent of Algeria's population identify as Christian. The main driver of persecution in the country is Islamic extremism. Converts from Islam face a higher risk of persecution, especially from their families, extended families, and the community. In the past, State authorities have also forcibly closed many churches. Further, the legal system comprises laws that regulate non-Muslim worship and includes legal stipulations that prohibit anything that would 'shake the faith of a Muslim' or that could be used as a 'means of seduction intending to convert a Muslim to another religion.'

Prayer points

- ➔ Pray for God's protection over all Christians in the country
- ➔ Pray that despite the pressure and persecution, Christian converts would stand firm in their faith and be faithful to Jesus
- ➔ Pray for greater freedoms for Christian churches

Iran

9

Overview

There are around 800,000 Christians in Iran. This is less than one percent of the total population. Christian converts face a very high risk of persecution from their families and communities. The authorities also regularly raid underground churches and arrest church leaders. Dozens of Christian leaders continue to be imprisoned for their faith. The government often sees Christianity as a threat to Islamic rule in the country.

Prayer points

- ➔ Pray for the safety of church leaders, especially of underground or secret churches
- ➔ Pray that God would strengthen the faith of converts who face pressure to recant their faith
- ➔ Pray for the release of Christian leaders who are imprisoned
- ➔ Pray for greater freedoms in the country for Christians to freely exercise their faith



Overview

Over 60 percent of Eritrea's population identify as Christian. However, evangelical Christians or those belonging to non-traditional churches face harsh persecution from the State. Many of the Christians arrested in the country are detained under inhuman conditions. Moreover, Christian converts face harassment and intense pressure from their families to recant their faith. Church leaders also complain that the authorities heavily monitor their activities, raid churches, and seize Christian material.

Prayer points

- ➔ Pray for the safety and release of Christians who are detained for their faith
- ➔ Pray that those in the highest positions of power in the country would experience a change of heart and stop persecuting Christians
- ➔ Pray for God's wisdom and guidance for Christian leaders as they lead their flocks and stand up for the rights of the Christian community





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