

IDOP 2024

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR
THE PERSECUTED CHURCH**



COURAGEOUS FAITH

3RD AND 10TH NOVEMBER 2024

PRAYER GUIDE

Courageous faith

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we gather for the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP) on the 3rd and 10th of November 2024, I invite you to unite with millions of believers across the globe to stand in solidarity with our persecuted family. The theme for this year, "Courageous Faith," inspired by Deuteronomy 31:6, calls us to remember the strength and resilience of those who, despite facing intense opposition, hold firmly to their faith in Jesus Christ.

The reality of persecution today is sobering. In the past year, around 5,000 Christians were murdered simply because of their faith. Over 14,000 Christian properties have been attacked, and more than 4,000 believers have been detained, often in harsh and inhumane conditions. An estimated 316 million Christians worldwide live under significant persecution, facing daily threats to their lives, livelihoods, and freedoms. These numbers are not just statistics; they represent our brothers and sisters—men, women, and children who courageously endure suffering for Christ.

Persecution is intensifying around the world. From the Middle East to Asia, from Africa to Latin America, and even in some regions of the West, Christians are increasingly being targeted for their faith. They are marginalized, oppressed, and silenced. Yet, in the face of this adversity, the faith of many remains unshaken. Their courage is a testament to the power of God at work in the midst of suffering.

Deuteronomy 31:6 exhorts us to "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." This promise was given to the Israelites as they stood on the brink of entering the Promised Land, facing formidable enemies and uncertain futures. Today, it resonates deeply with those who stand firm in their faith despite the threats and dangers they face.

This year, as we observe the IDOP, let us be inspired by the courageous faith of our persecuted brothers and sisters. Let us commit to praying fervently for them, asking God to strengthen and sustain them in their trials. Let us also consider how we can actively support them—through advocacy, raising awareness, and providing practical assistance, where possible.

I urge churches, ministries, and believers around the world to participate in IDOP 2024. Use these days not only to pray but to educate and mobilize your congregations and communities. Let us amplify the voices of those who are often unheard and stand as one body, united in Christ, against the injustices they face.

In a world where religious freedom is increasingly under threat, our collective prayers and actions are more crucial than ever. We stand with our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ, encouraged by their example and committed to supporting them in their time of need.

May our prayers be a source of strength to those who suffer, and may we, too, be inspired to live out our faith with courage, knowing that the Lord our God goes with us.

In Christ,

Godfrey Yogarajah
Ambassador for Religious Freedom
World Evangelical Alliance

LAOS

Christians in Laos, a Buddhist-majority country, are a small minority, numbering around 212,000 in a population of over 7.6 million. Persecution has intensified recently, with a disturbing rise in violence against believers, including the murder of a pastor in October 2022. Christians have been expelled from their communities, their homes destroyed, and many endure severe hardships for their faith.

In June 2023, six Christians, including a pastor, were arrested while praying in a village in Khammouane Province. Their arrest highlights the ongoing crackdown on Christian activities by local authorities, who heavily monitor and often shut down house churches.

An estimated 75% of registered Lao Evangelical congregations are forced to worship in homes, which are considered illegal venues for religious gatherings.

Converts to Christianity from Buddhism face additional dangers, often viewed as traitors to their communities. They suffer violence, expulsion, and pressure from both family members and local officials. Many Christian families have been pressured to renounce their faith or face having their homes destroyed.

PRAYER POINTS

1

Pray for strength, protection, and encouragement for Christians in Laos, especially those facing violence, arrest, and expulsion for their faith.

2

Pray for God's wisdom and discernment for church leaders as they navigate the challenges of leading congregations in a hostile environment.

3

Pray that the Lao government will uphold the constitutional rights of religious freedom and intervene to stop the persecution of Christians, particularly in rural areas.

4

Lift up in prayer those who have converted from Buddhism to Christianity, asking God to give them courage and support as they face rejection from their families and communities.

5

Pray for increased global awareness and support for persecuted Christians in Laos, that the international community may advocate for their rights and provide tangible support.



PAKISTAN

Christians in Pakistan, a small minority making up only 1.8% of the population, are facing an alarming increase in persecution. The recent attack on August 16, 2023, in Jaranwala, where churches and homes were destroyed due to blasphemy accusations, tragically highlights their vulnerability. Blasphemy laws, often used to unfairly target Christians, have become a weapon for inciting violence and discrimination.

The situation for Christian women and girls is especially dire, as they are often abducted, forced to convert to Islam, and subjected to sexual violence. The recent case of a 15-year-old girl who was raped on July 1st, 2024, and denied justice due to police negligence, reveals the deep-seated discrimination and lack of legal protection for Christians in the country. These horrific incidents create a cycle of fear and vulnerability, leaving victims traumatized and without any hope for justice.

Systemic discrimination further pushes Christians to the margins of society, limiting their job opportunities to menial work and subjecting them to degrading labels. While historical churches enjoy some freedom, they are constantly monitored and at risk of attack. Most Christians live in Punjab Province, which has unfortunately become the epicenter of this persecution.

The international community has expressed grave concern over the worsening situation, calling on the Pakistani government to protect religious minorities and uphold human rights. However, progress is slow due to a lack of political will and widespread societal prejudice.

PRAYER POINTS

1

Pray that God would protect Christians in Pakistan from violence, discrimination, and injustice. Ask for His strength and comfort to endure persecution and for courage to stand firm in their faith.

2

Pray for justice for victims of persecution and for the repeal of discriminatory laws like the blasphemy laws and for legal reforms that protect the rights of Christians and other minorities.

3

Pray that Christians in Pakistan would be able to freely practice their faith without fear of persecution or discrimination. Pray for an end to forced conversions and for the protection of women and girls from abduction and violence.

4

Pray that the persecution of Christians in Pakistan would not extinguish their faith but would instead strengthen it and lead to a greater witness for Christ.

5

Pray for the transformation of hearts and minds, that those who persecute Christians would come to know the love and forgiveness of God.



NIGERIA

Christians in Nigeria, although constituting nearly half of the country's population of 222 million, are experiencing a relentless wave of violence and persecution, particularly in the northern and central regions. Islamic extremist groups like Boko Haram, ISWAP (Islamic State in West African Province), and Fulani militants are perpetrating attacks, including the destruction of property, kidnappings, sexual violence, and murder. These attacks have resulted in the displacement of countless Christians, leaving them traumatized and stripped of their livelihoods. Tragically, Nigeria has the highest number of Christians killed for their faith globally.

Men and boys are frequently targeted by these extremist groups, while women and girls face abduction and sexual assault. The recent attack on June 2nd, 2024 where suspected Fulani herdsmen killed a pastor, his wife, and three other Christians in Plateau state, is a stark reminder of the ongoing violence and the urgent need for prayer and action.

Christians in Nigeria also face systemic discrimination. In the Sharia (Islamic law) states of northern Nigeria, Christians are often treated as second-class citizens and subjected to various forms of pressure and discrimination. Converts from Islam face rejection from their families and intense pressure to renounce their newfound faith.

The Nigerian government's response to the crisis has been inadequate, failing to protect Christians and hold perpetrators accountable. This lack of action has emboldened the extremist groups and exacerbated the suffering of Christians. As the crisis deepens, the international community is increasingly raising concerns and calling for urgent measures to protect the rights and safety of Christians in Nigeria.

PRAYER POINTS

1

Pray for God's protection over Christians in Nigeria, especially those living in areas plagued by violence. Ask for His protection around their homes, churches, and communities.

2

Pray for comfort and healing for those who have lost loved ones, homes, or livelihoods due to the violence. Ask God to mend broken hearts, restore hope, and bring peace to communities.

3

Pray for the Nigerian government to fulfill its responsibility to protect all citizens, regardless of their faith. Ask God to guide leaders to enact policies that promote peace, justice, and religious freedom for all.

4

Pray for the persecuted Christians in Nigeria to remain steadfast in their faith, even in the face of adversity. Ask God to strengthen them with His Spirit, fill them with courage, and empower them to be a light in the darkness.

5

Pray that the persecution would not hinder the spread of the Gospel in Nigeria, but instead, would fuel a revival and a greater hunger for God's Word. Ask God to use the suffering of His people to draw many to Himself and to bring transformation to the nation.



IRAN

Conversion from Islam to Christianity is illegal and can lead to arrest, imprisonment, and even torture in Iran. The Iranian authorities view Christian converts as a threat to national security, often accusing them of undermining Islam and the Islamic government. This results in punishments, including long prison sentences and deprivation of social rights.

House churches are also targeted by the authorities. Members of these churches risk arrest and imprisonment for participating in religious activities deemed illegal by

the regime. The recent case of Pastor Anooshavan Avedian, sentenced to 10 years in prison, exemplifies the realities faced by Christian leaders in Iran.

Even after release from prison, Christians continue to be monitored and live under the constant threat of re-arrest. Shabeddin Shahi, a Christian convert, faces a second hearing on charges of propaganda against the regime, highlighting ongoing persecution.

PRAYER POINTS

1

Pray for God's protection over Christians in Iran, especially those who are imprisoned or facing legal charges. Pray for strength to endure persecution and for courage to stand firm in their faith.

2

Pray for the release of Christians imprisoned for their faith in Iran. Pray for their well-being while they are incarcerated.

3

Pray for justice for persecuted Christians in Iran and for legal reforms that would protect their right to freedom of religion. Pray that the Iranian authorities would recognize the right to choose one's faith.

4

Pray that Christians in Iran would be filled with boldness to share their faith despite the risks. Pray that their witness would lead to the transformation of hearts and minds.

5

Pray for increased awareness of the plight of Christians in Iran. Pray for governments and organizations to advocate for their rights and to put pressure on the Iranian authorities to end the persecution.



Organised by the World Evangelical Alliance,
the IDOP is an annual, global event that unites
Christians in prayer for the persecuted Church.

