

# LETTER WRITING GUIDE

January to June 2018

Dear Friend,

The beginning of a new year marks the start of resolutions and the promise of endless possibilities. But for persecuted Christians, it mostly signifies an increase in pressure and persecution for their faith. This can be very disheartening.

It's then that persecuted Christians need spiritual upliftment and words of love. And that is where you and I can help them. We can remind them with words, that they have a *"living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."* (1 Peter 1:3)

And we're able to comfort, encourage and uplift our fellow Christians in trying times because God has given us the ability to do so. As 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 says, *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."*

So, let's encourage our persecuted brothers and sisters just as God has comforted us, by sending them words of encouragement to uplift their weary souls.

Together in His service,



Executive Director, Open Doors Southern Africa

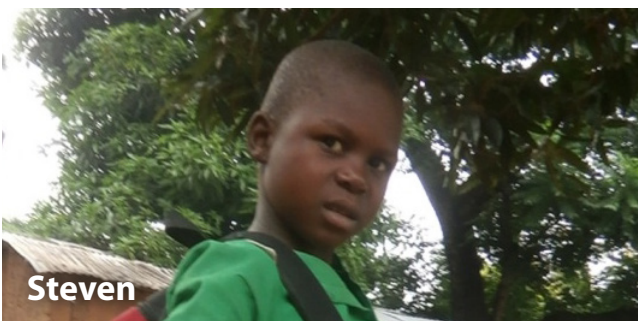
## Jeovani and friends are all smiles thanks to you



Jeovani



Dieu



Steven

In 2013, when little Jeovani, Dieu and Steven suffered debilitating leg injuries from a bomb blast resulting in amputations, all three struggled to adapt to life with their disabilities.

Last year, Open Doors visited them to see how they were doing. Double-amputee, Jeovani, has made good progress, walking around using only one crutch. Dieu is doing well, running and even playing sports. Steven outgrew his prosthesis but has since received a replacement.

Our local co-worker reported after the visit that Jeovani, *"was all smiles and very happy when we met him. He tells his friends that it's people abroad who care for him, showing them the cards and letters and images..."* When our team asked Dieu how we can pray for him, he replied, *"Please pray for my friends who help me (OD supporters); pray that God would bless them in return for their support."* And our co-worker said, *"Steven is always grateful and looks forward to every delivery, as it's an opportunity for him to show the cards to his friends. It's always a happy moment for him."*

Thank you for bringing smiles to the faces of Jeovani, Dieu and Steven through every letter and card!



# Send believers in the Middle East a message of hope and encouragement



## MIDDLE EAST



Representative image used.

### Please note:

- Avoid adding text to the pictures. If text is placed on the picture it should be limited.
- When sending a video please send the text separately with any specific instructions as the video will be recreated into Arabic.

For more information about this campaign or “app”, contact us at [letterwriting@opendoors.org.za](mailto:letterwriting@opendoors.org.za) with any questions.

Last December, we created an encouragement “app” (smartphone application) to send words of encouragement to Christians in the Middle East who are forced to regularly move around.

One believer said, *“We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for these encouraging verses, we thank you for your prayers and encouragement....”*

This year, we want to focus on a specific theme for each month. This will help us generate more relevant messages that will resonate with believers in the Middle East. Visit [www.opendoors.org.za/write](http://www.opendoors.org.za/write) to view the February to June themes.

### Send:

- An original picture (not a picture downloaded from the Internet), with a separate Bible verse or personal encouragement, or your prayer written out (100 **characters** max, for text imposed over pictures; 500 **characters** max, for text accompanied by a picture. Images: 1080 pixels x 1080 pixels);
- An original, short video or voice recording, no longer than 15 seconds, with messages of encouragement or prayer;

**to [letterwriting@opendoors.org.za](mailto:letterwriting@opendoors.org.za) and we will make sure that your message is uploaded to the “app”.**

## Uplift Middle Eastern teenage boy Abdu

**E-campaign ends 25 April '18**

When Abdu (15) and his brother became Christians after their mother converted, they couldn't go to school because of their conversion. Abdu now lives without his family. He hasn't seen his mother in two years, after she went abroad to arrange a better future for them. His father is a drug user and dealer, so Abdu moved out. His biggest fear now is that he will lose the Christian family he is currently living with. *“I don't want to lose any more people. I really wouldn't know what to do. I still pray every day that God will reunite my family,”* said Abdu.

Content from teenagers would be welcomed most, as Abdu misses contact with his peers. Pray that God will strengthen Abdu during this difficult time in his life and will reunite his family.

### Some ideas:

- Video of a teenager encouraging him directly.
- Video of you reading your favourite Bible verse.
- Video of a group of friends singing their favourite worship song.
- Pictures of cards made for him.
- Picture of a nicely handwritten prayer, or video of youth reading the prayer.
- Very short (100 words) reflection on a Bible passage.

Please mention your name, country, possible testimony and personal wish for Abdu to make it more personal. Send messages to [letterwriting@opendoors.org.za](mailto:letterwriting@opendoors.org.za).



## MIDDLE EAST

Representative image used.



## Provide words of comfort to Haoua



CAMEROON

Writing campaign ends 30 June '18



Haoua is the mother of 12-year-old Kadidja who came to faith in Christ through Christian neighbours in 2016. Haoua became a Christian after seeing the love and support the church showed her daughter.

Last October, when Haoua took Kadidja, who had liver cirrhosis, to hospital, her two-year-old daughter died after a brief illness, while in the care of a relative. A month later, on 22 November, Kadidja passed away from liver cirrhosis. Haoua has two more children, Bouba (8) and Sule (6).

Write a letter of comfort and encouragement to Haoua as she mourns the loss of her two daughters. Pray that God will help her to remain steadfast in the faith.

## Encourage young bomb victims in Indonesia



INDONESIA

Writing campaign ends 15 August '18



On 13 November 2016, after Sunday school in Samarinda, Indonesia, a man threw a cocktail bomb, which injured Anita (3), Alvaro (5), Trinity (4) and Intan (2). Intan passed away the day after the attack...

The other three children remain severely traumatised. And their families are struggling to rebuild their lives. Trinity and Alvaro, whose injuries are severe and complex, continue to undergo treatment. The scars on their faces, hands and legs have affected their self-image and personality. *"I am ashamed, my body is full of scars,"* said Alvaro. *"Trinity loses her temper easily after the blast,"* said her mother.

Anita, Alvaro, and Trinity need help to believe in God's beautiful plan for their lives. You can encourage them by writing them a card or letter. And by praying for them and their families.

Please address your cards to each child individually – Anita, Alvaro, or Trinity. If you are addressing the cards to their parents, please specify. Greeting cards, artwork by children, and postcards will be best.

The children's English is very limited. Visit [www.opendoors.org.za/write](http://www.opendoors.org.za/write) to see some encouraging words in Bahasa Indonesian (the national language) that you can use for your cards and artwork.

## Strengthen burn victim Manda



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Writing campaign ends 30 June '18



Manda (29), is a mother of four from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). She sustained severe burns to her body when her husband, angered over her rebirth in Christ, set her on fire.

Initially, her husband was happy with her decision and even considered joining her at her new church. But three months after her baptism, something changed. One day in May, he returned home drunk and while she was breastfeeding their youngest child, he poured petrol over them and set them on fire. The child did not survive, and Manda sustained terrible injuries that kept her in hospital for three months. She has no support from her family, but her church continues to stand with her. Because of her injuries, she is unable to work for long in the sun, making it hard to earn a living.

Strengthen Manda by writing her a letter of encouragement. Pray for strength and courage for Manda as she deals with the persecution and rejection.

# Some simple guidelines before you start writing



## PRAY BEFORE YOU START

Ask God to give you the right words to write. Include one or two Bible verses. For Bible verses in other languages, visit [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).



## SHOW SENSITIVITY

Please do not dwell on the recipient's plight, or share about the blessings of life in your country.



## KEEP IT SHORT AND SIMPLE

Print clearly. Write in simple English or, if you can, in the recipient's language. Short letters cost less for us to post, and are easier to translate.



## SECURITY

Please DO NOT MENTION OPEN DOORS in your letters, criticise a country's religion or religious extremists, its government, judicial system or political leaders. It is fine to include your name and country, but NOT your full address.



## CARDS AND POSTCARDS

Colourful cards can say so much more than a long letter on plain paper. If you are writing a postcard, please send it in an envelope rather than writing Open Doors' address on the card. If you are sending more than one letter or card, please put all your letters in one envelope, addressed to: c/o Open Doors.



## HANDMADE CARDS AND ARTWORK

Making cards is a great way of helping younger people to connect with persecuted Christians.



## GIFTS

Please DO NOT include money in your letter or card as Open Doors will not be able to forward your gift. It is unsafe to do so and can cause difficulties for the recipient.



## NORTH KOREA

We regret we are unable to forward letters to believers in North Korea.



## RESPECT

When writing to those in Muslim countries, please do not say anything negative about Islam or make reference to Israel (even when using scripture).

Remember to **continue praying** for the person you have written to as you post your cards and letters to:

**Letter Writing: Believer's Name, c/o Open Doors, PO Box 1771, Cresta, 2118.**

If you have any questions, please contact us on **011 888 9341**, or send an e-mail to [letterwriting@opendoors.org.za](mailto:letterwriting@opendoors.org.za).

Do not forget that you can find the latest updates, new writing campaigns, and additional information at [www.opendoors.org.za/eng/write](http://www.opendoors.org.za/eng/write). You can also download this edition of the Letter Writing Guide from our website, if you would like to share it with others.

## No more letters please

On behalf of the following persecuted believers, we would like to extend a sincere word of thanks for every letter and card written to them! These campaigns have ended, but please do continue to pray for them and their families:

- Elisha family, Nigeria.
- Kura family, Nigeria.
- Sunday school teachers, Laos.
- Hadija and Mellina, Uganda.
- Bahrom Kholmatov, Tajikistan.



**OpenDoors**

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide