

FRONTLINE FAITH



ADVANCING GOD'S KINGDOM WHERE FAITH COSTS THE MOST

FEBRUARY 2019



Representative image used.

You're there when no one else is – thank you!

As a Muslim teenager, Nadia* had a desire to grow closer to God...

But she truly started searching for Him when she was 22 years old. She looked for Him in the Qur'an but couldn't find Him. Then a Christian colleague started sharing with her about God and the Bible. Despite all she heard, she closed her heart completely to God because she could lose her family, friends and job if she converted.

It was only when she almost drowned while swimming one day that she thought about God again. *"I realised this is the end; my life is over. I thought about my Christian colleague, the only person I knew who was sure he was going to heaven. I also realised the place where I was going to... hell,"* she said.

While recovering at home, she contacted her Christian colleague. *"I said [to him], 'God gave me a second chance, but I'll do this alone. Just give me a Bible and I'll read it.'"*

Yet, even after reading the Bible, she struggled with

becoming a Christian because of everything she could lose. Her friend suggested she ask God to remove her doubts. *"So I sat in my room and told Him, if You are the God of the Bible, I will follow You – even when I don't know how. Just tell me what You want me to do, and I will do it."*

“You're a huge source of encouragement to me and many other believers here. – Nadia*”

That day Nadia gave her life to Christ – almost 20 years ago now. Today, she is a mature believer and one of the leaders in a network of Palestinian Believers from a Muslim Background. Her mother was so touched by the changes she saw in Nadia's life, that she also accepted Jesus.

It hasn't been an easy road, but your support has helped Nadia in her most trying times. *"Open Doors has been supporting me practically in the days most difficult for me, but also spiritually."* And you also enabled her to attend Christian leadership training.

But it's not only Nadia that you've been assisting. Thanks to
(continued on page 2)

*Name changed for security reasons.

You're there when no one else is – thank you!

(continued from page 1)

you, Open Doors has been present in Israel and the Palestinian Territories for decades – supporting many others like Nadia throughout their life journey.

“You helped us for many years.... Many of us struggle after [our families] abandon us financially [and] socially.... You're a huge source of encouragement to me and many other believers here. We couldn't have survived without you. Thank you for your support, your prayers, and the wisdom you bring to our community of Believers from a Muslim Background.”

Thank you for making an indelible impact in the lives of believers like Nadia and countless others from a Muslim background in Israel, the Palestinian Territories and beyond. ☺



Thanks to you, Open Doors has been present in Israel and the Palestinian Territories for decades – supporting many others like Nadia throughout their life journey.



Thank you for standing with Nigerian believers

Last June, suspected Muslim Fulani herdsmen went on a killing spree in villages around Jos, Plateau State in Nigeria, murdering as many as 200 people and displacing thousands.

“They've lost loved ones, houses and all they laboured for. We saw people who were still in a haze over what they've gone through,” shared Kerrie*, an Open Doors staff member.

Sadly, these people have been left to fend for themselves, as aid organisations will not enter their area due to the insecurity. So churches have stepped in and created informal internally displaced persons (IDP) camps on their grounds.

Seeing the difficult circumstances these Christians face, Open Doors came alongside them – thanks to your help – and provided relief aid to more than 3 000 displaced people.

You helped deliver rice, maize, oil, tomato paste and toiletries, along with much-needed encouragement. When the IDPs saw the van arriving, some shouted for joy while others burst into tears.

“We thank God for using Open Doors to bring help to us. Even the government hasn't done what you did [for] us. You've brought food items and toiletries for us. We're indeed grateful,” said Mary Dung, one of the beneficiaries of your support.

Your support of relief projects such as this one is a source of strength to Christians in Nigeria's Middle Belt, who continue to face targeted violence against them by the Fulani, resulting in death, destruction and displacement. So thank you for standing with these brave believers through your partnership! ☺

*Name changed for security reasons.

Global Summer Offensive final month: Your support is vital!

February is the last month of our *Global Summer Offensive* campaign to reach a R11 742 442 goal and meet the urgent needs of our persecuted brothers and sisters who suffer on the front lines for the name of Christ. Your support in this final month is vital to help embolden believers to continue standing strong amidst increasing persecution for the faith.

If you haven't given yet, or if you would like to give an additional gift, please visit OpenDoors.org.za or phone us on 011 888 9341.

Thank you for your compassion, prayers and generosity in helping us serve the persecuted Church!

2018–2019



GLOBAL SUMMER OFFENSIVE

Advancing God's Kingdom Where Faith Costs the Most



WORLD WATCH UPDATE: LIBYA

www.opendoors.org.za/wwl



RANKING **#4** | WWL SCORE **87** | **LIBYA**

Region North Africa

2019 World Watch List Position #4 in the top 50 countries

Leader Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj

Population 6 409 000 (0.7% are Christians)

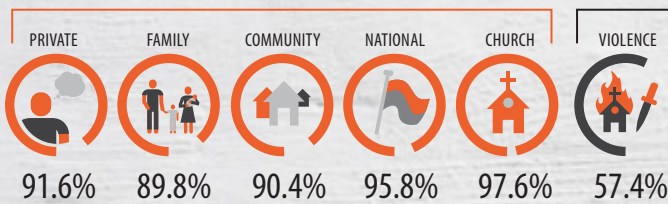
Main Religion Islam

Government Transitional Government

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Pressure

Violence



The small minority of Christians in Libya consists of indigenous Believers from a Muslim Background and migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa seeking work or entry to Europe. Those from a Muslim background face particularly violent and intense pressure to renounce their faith. The state of anarchy and civil war has allowed organised criminal groups to engage in human trafficking, and Islamist militant groups to attack Christians with impunity. These groups consistently kidnap Christians, and there have also been instances in which Christians have been killed, often in a very brutal and shocking manner. Christian migrants also experience intolerance, as well as racial and religious prejudice from indigenous peoples. All believers who share their faith publicly risk arrest, violence and even death.

PRAY

- + That many would hear the Gospel through Arabic satellite and web broadcasts.
- + That God will build up the faith of isolated believers, His growing Church and those scattered throughout Europe by persecution.
- + For the severely opposed but growing number of Christians from Muslim backgrounds – that through them the Church in Libya will grow.

SPECIAL PRAYER FOCUS



Pray for our family in India

Now more than ever, Christians in India need your prayers. Persecution has increased dramatically in the last few years, as Hindu nationalist movements are intensifying their campaign against Christians and other religious minorities, so they can forcibly make India a Hindu country.

That's why we're calling on faithful friends like you, and other believers who share your heart for the persecuted Church, to join us in praying for our brothers and sisters in the month of March.

You'll find enclosed with this newsletter, a 31-day prayer calendar to help direct your prayers as you lift up our family in Christ in India. As persecution in India has reached an all-time high, we are asking you to stand in the gap for our brothers and sisters there.

This year we're also launching a focussed campaign for prayer and support for the Church in India. Go to OpenDoors.org.za/impactindia to stay up to date and see how you can be part of this vital campaign to support believers in India who are facing severe pressure for their faith.

Thank you for standing with our brothers and sisters in India! 🙏

FROM JAN'S PERSPECTIVE



Dear Friend of the persecuted Church,

While on a visit to a country in the Gulf, a pastor introduced me to his "apprentice". I looked up the word and found the following: "one who is learning by practical experience under skilled workers in a trade, art or calling".

This got me thinking about Luke 14:12-14, where Jesus, who's the best "skilled worker" we can learn from about our faith, placed a high priority on showing hospitality to strangers.

Indeed, the Greek word for "hospitality" is *philoxenia*, which is literally translated as "friend to the stranger". And that's exactly what you are for so many persecuted brothers and sisters through your love, prayers and gifts!

Thank you for being a friend to our persecuted family through your gifts and prayers for our *Global Summer Offensive* campaign. As it comes to an end this month, if you haven't become a part of this campaign yet, I urge you to prayerfully consider helping us reach our goal of R11 742 442 by 28 February.

It would mean so much to those fighting on the front lines of our faith, like Nadia (see page 1), and those displaced by the Muslim Fulani herdsmen (see page 2).

Together, we can be a channel through which the love of Christ flows to those living in some of the darkest places on earth!

Together in His service,

Jan Gouws
Executive Director
Open Doors Southern Africa



Open Doors

Serving persecuted Christians worldwide

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