

OpenDoors **PRAYER CALENDAR**

February–April 2023



Stand up for the rights of persecuted believers

Christians – primarily men – are falsely accused of committing crimes or insulting the majority religion. This form of persecution knows no age limits. Christians also face being denied citizenship, denied custody of their children, denied the ability to marry a Christian spouse or kicked out of their communities all because they follow Jesus.

Thankfully, a Gift of Hope to stand up for the rights of persecuted believers equips Christians to fight such injustices.

When believers were kicked out of their community in Mexico for their faith, Open Doors was able to assist them with legal help. *“Thanks to your prayers and support, Open Doors has been able to hire lawyers to fight for the rights of these believers,”* said an Open Doors worker in Mexico.

Scan here.





1 North Korea

Christians are viewed as the most dangerous political class of people in North Korea and face extreme persecution for believing in Jesus. Pray that God strengthens the faith of the many secret believers in the country.

2 Somalia

Somalian believers who've converted from Islam are seen as traitors and considered "high-value" targets for killing by groups like Al-Shabaab. Pray for the protection of these believers.

3 Yemen

Yemeni Christians risk banishment and even death for believing in Christ. Pray that God makes way for provision for families in need and those isolated for being Christian.

4 Eritrea

Christians who are not part of the three recognised denominations face surveillance, raids and imprisonment in inhumane conditions by the state. Pray that God will undertake for these believers and that their faith will not be shaken.

5 Libya

Christians in Libya often face immense pressure from families to renounce their faith. Refusing to do so can lead to homelessness and joblessness. Pray for perseverance for these believers and provision for those seeking employment and safe havens.

6 Nigeria

Persecution of Christians is often brutally violent as Islamic militants and armed bandits attack with increasing impunity. Pray that all those affected by violence will be healed of wounds and trauma.

7 Pakistan

There is a silent epidemic of abduction, forced marriages and forced conversion of Christian girls and women to persecute whole Christian communities. Pray for healing from trauma for Christian women who've faced abduction.

8 Iran

Christian house groups comprising converts from Muslim backgrounds are often raided and leaders and members are arrested for "crimes against national security". Pray that the president will honour the rights of Iran's religious minorities.

9 Afghanistan

It continues to be impossible to live openly as a Christian in Afghanistan and persecution has increased since the Taliban took over in 2021. Pray for the safety of Christian converts who could face violent consequences if their faith is discovered.

10 Sudan

Christians are vulnerable to extreme persecution in their public and private lives, particularly if they've converted from Islam. Pray for protection, encouragement and courage for Christians who've converted from Islam.

11 India

The persecution of Christians continues to intensify as Hindu extremists aim to cleanse the country of their presence and influence. Pray that persecuted Christians will be empowered to stand strong.



12 Syria

Christians in Syria, especially church leaders still grapple with daily persecution, despite the public threat from the so-called Islamic State having largely subsided. Pray for peace in the country and for the protection of Christians, particularly church leaders.

13 Saudi Arabia

Christians are forced to live out their faith in secrecy. Female Christian converts risk physical violence, while male converts risk public humiliation, beatings or imprisonment. Pray for secret believers in Saudi Arabia to know that God is close and faithful.

14 Myanmar

Converts in Myanmar continue to experience persecution from their Buddhist, Muslim or tribal families and communities. Pray for the provision of all physical and spiritual needs for these new believers and for their faith to be strengthened.

15 Maldives

Believers in Maldives are forced to keep their faith a secret and can be reported to Muslim leaders or authorities if revealed. Pray that God sustains believers who are in isolation and secrecy.

16 China

Church attendance is rigorously monitored, and many churches are being closed down. Christian leaders are generally the main target of government surveillance, and some have been abducted. Pray that, despite this, faith will flourish in China and for the safe return of abducted leaders.

17 Mali

Violent extremist attacks continue unabated across Mali. Christian missionaries live in constant fear of abduction by extremists. Pray for stability in Mali and that God's peace will reign over the country. Pray that God comforts and provides for internally displaced believers.

18 Iraq

Many Iraqi Christians are affected by intolerance and persecution mostly by militant Islamic groups and non-Christian leaders. Pray that the government will protect the rights of Christians and other religious minorities.

19 Algeria

Christians in this country are vulnerable to prosecution under blasphemy and proselytising charges. Meanwhile, authorities continue to systematically close churches. Pray that laws restricting religious freedom be repealed and for the reopening of closed churches.

20 Mauritania

It's illegal to convert from Islam to another faith. Any deviation from Islamic belief is strongly opposed nationally. Pray for courage for secret believers as they seek to worship God and support each other in their walk of faith.

21 Uzbekistan

Believers face increased pressure from their families for becoming Christians. They may be beaten or expelled from their communities for their new faith. Pray for God's protection and provision for Christians who lose their jobs or are expelled from their communities.

22 Colombia

Church leaders are targeted by guerrilla groups because they denounce corruption, defend human rights, and oppose the cartel. They also risk being killed. Pray for the protection of pastors and for their faith to remain strong.

23 Burkina Faso

Believers who've converted from Islam face rejection from family and community members and are constantly forced to renounce their faith. Pray that the Lord will be at work in the lives of these persecuted believers.

24 Central African Republic

Since 2013, the Central African Republic (CAR) has been embroiled in conflict. Christian leaders who publicly denounced the violence are persecuted. Pray for lasting peace and stability in CAR. Pray for guidance as believers live out their witness to Christ, especially pastors and their families.

25 Vietnam

Most Christians belong to Vietnam's ethnic communities and so face social exclusion, discrimination and attacks. Pray that they will know the presence, peace and love of God.

26 Turkmenistan

The government heavily restricts religious freedom, and churches are monitored. Ask God to soften the hearts of those in authority, so Christians will have the freedom to worship and share the Gospel.

27 Cuba

Church leaders or Christian activists face arrest, closure of their churches or businesses, prison sentences, and harassment if they criticise the regime. Pray for resilience and wisdom for Christians and church leaders.

28 Niger

Niger re-entered the top 50 of the World Watch List in 2022, reflecting how the persecution of Christians has continued to increase. Ask God to heal traumatised believers, who've been violently attacked for their faith.



29 Morocco

Both Moroccan and foreign Christians, who talk to others about their faith are at risk of arrest and criminal prosecution. Pray for isolated believers in Morocco who must sustain their faith alone or risk house arrest, physical attacks, and imprisonment.

30 Bangladesh

Christians who've converted from a Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or tribal background suffer the most severe persecution. Pray that Bangladeshi believers will find ways to meet to worship together and find strength in the Lord.

31 Laos

Converts in Laos are deemed guilty of betraying the Buddhist-animist traditions of their community. They frequently face pressure and violence from their families and local authorities. Pray they'll have the strength to stand firm in their faith.

32 Mozambique

Attacks by Islamic militants have killed many believers in Mozambique. Christians who manage to escape the violence often lose their livelihoods and possessions. Pray for healing for families who've lost their loved ones and restoration of their livelihoods.

33 Indonesia

Churches and Christians who engage in evangelism are especially at risk of persecution. Pray that Christians and church

leaders will be given wisdom and boldness as they follow Jesus in a Muslim-majority society.

34 Qatar

Most of Qatar's Christians are migrant workers, who are free to worship but can't share the Gospel with Qatari communities. Pray for opportunities for migrant Christians to share the Gospel with others despite extreme restrictions.

35 Egypt

Churches in Egypt face difficulties when trying to construct new buildings due to state restrictions or communal hostility. Pray for the protection of believers, churches and Christian institutions. Pray that believers will be strengthened and encouraged to stand firm.

36 Tunisia

Believers experience high pressure in every area of life. This is particularly true for believers who've converted from Islam as it's forbidden. Pray for converts to be protected and that God will speak to the hearts of those in authority.

37 Democratic Republic of Congo

Persecution in the DRC mostly takes the form of violent attacks while Christian leaders who advocate against corruption risk harassment and government interference. Pray that Christian leaders will receive courage, wisdom and compassion as they minister.

Empower women to remain steadfast when persecuted

Persecution of Christian women and girls targets them as sexual objects and vehicles of shame. Sexual violence, forced marriage, and trafficking stalk marginalised Christian women and girls across diverse global regions, often as a means of punishing and shaming Christian families and communities. Through this gift of hope, women and girls are helped to be grounded in their faith and equipped to withstand any persecution.

Scan here.



"My dream is to see all women, especially women in the persecuted Church, well-rooted in the faith and living with hope and dignity. I have a wish to see them equally valued and valuable," says Humaira, Open Doors Women's Ministry lead for Asia.*



38 Mexico

Christians are perceived to be against criminal operations and violence, putting them at constant risk of being targeted for elimination. Pray for Christians who face difficult choices when confronted with organised violence.

39 Ethiopia

Converts to Christianity from Islam and those who join the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) are equally susceptible to mistreatment from families and communities. Pray for strength for Christians forced to renounce their faith.

40 Bhutan

Local authorities often refuse to issue Christians a “non-objection certificate”, which is needed for things such as registering property or applying for jobs, making life extremely difficult. Pray for provision, guidance and discernment for believers in Bhutan.

41 Turkey

Christians experience incredible pressure from increasing religious nationalism in Turkey. The government continues to target Christians even foreign Christians. Pray that the government recognises that Christians are a valuable part of their country.

42 Comoros

Believers are forced to live as secret believers as they risk legal consequences and possibly death for practising and publicising their faith. Pray they're guided by the Holy Spirit as they follow Christ.

43 Malaysia

Converts experience severe pressure from their families and communities to return to Islam – with apostasy legally punishable

by death. Ask God to grant peace and protection to those who choose to leave Islam.

44 Tajikistan

Authorities in Tajikistan put significant pressure on Christians by tightening religious laws and strictly enforcing the ones that already exist. Pray that the Holy Spirit would convict the hearts of Tajikistan's leaders and for believers to find ways to fellowship.

45 Cameroon

In the north of Cameroon, Boko Haram continues to be a violent presence – abducting, attacking or killing Christians. Pray that Christians will remain steadfast on the Lord's promises and for the government to protect vulnerable communities.

46 Brunei

While traditional Christian communities can worship relatively freely, all church activities are monitored, and church leaders are warned against doing outreach. Pray that pastors are granted wisdom and strengthened to serve their congregations.

47 Oman

Christian communities in Oman experience restrictions and surveillance, with proselytisation deemed illegal. Pray that all believers will have access to discipleship and fellowship to remain encouraged in their faith.

48 Kazakhstan

Surveillance, raids on meetings, fines and arrests are part of the Christian life, with the authorities using the threat of Islamic extremism to tighten their control on religious freedom. Pray that our persecuted family will remain strong.

49 Jordan

Muslim background believers who dare to publicly declare their faith can be subject to beatings, imprisonment and even death. Pray for encouragement and endurance of these believers in Jordan.

50 Nicaragua

There is a lack of freedom in Nicaragua with the persecution of believers having risen drastically over the past year. Pray that Lord will undertake for believers and that despite the lack of freedom they will remain in the country to be a light for Christ.

51 Kenya

In Kenya, Christianity is the majority religion, but Christians still face persecution, especially those from a Muslim background. Pray for the Lord's hand of protection and provision over these believers.

52 Kuwait

In Kuwait, conversion from Islam to another faith isn't officially recognised. Pray for the protection of Christians and that secret believers will have opportunities to safely meet.

53 Tanzania

Tanzania's population is one-third Muslim. Pray that God would mightily use the Church and make them a light in the darkness.

54 United Arab Emirates

By law Emirati believers aren't allowed to attend the registered churches of expats living in the country. Pray that those believers will be able to come together to grow in their faith and to experience being a Church.

55 Nepal

Most Christian persecution in Nepal comes from radical Hindu groups who want the country to return to Hinduism. Pray for believers who've been rejected by their Hindu families because they've chosen to follow Christ.

56 Djibouti

In Djibouti, the Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, but Islam is the state religion, and the government doesn't protect Christians. Pray for the Lord to work in the hearts of the government to allow for religious freedom.

57 Palestinian Territories

Many Palestinians lose hope because of the political and economic situation, including Palestinian Christians. Pray that the churches continue to be places where people find hope.

58 Azerbaijan

The government monitors the activities of religious groups closely, even though it's supposed to be tolerant of religion. Pray Christians will have the courage to share the Gospel with their communities despite this.

59 Kyrgyzstan

There is rising Christian persecution and leaving Islam brings oppression, because it's seen as going against the country's culture. Pray that Christians will boldly live out Christ despite these difficulties.

*Name changed for security purposes.



Help believers heal from the trauma of persecution

Persecuted believers who've faced life-altering experiences due to persecution suffer trauma. They're sometimes forced to suppress their emotions and pain because of those around them. They also find it hard to make sense of the hurt they feel when experiencing things such as the loss of loved ones, homes and even dignity and so find it difficult to express what they're feeling, which is why the need for trauma care and support remains vital.

Restoration and healing happen when these believers have access to trauma support and counselling. Tirham*, an Open Doors trauma care worker, shared the following on seeing the healing that happens through trauma workshops:

"The way trauma healing works, it's just a miracle. It's like offloading a burden in their hearts. You can see it from their faces. They start smiling and laughing, and you know they're able to sleep well."

Scan here.



APRIL

1 Secret Believers

Pray for the scattered groups of secret believers in Muslim countries. Pray that they remember their family in faith as they remain prayerful and hopeful in the Lord. Pray that they will be a witness to God's grace and love in the way they live their lives.

2 Palm Sunday

As some Christians commemorate Jesus's arrival in Jerusalem, where many waved palm branches, let us reflect on His life, death, and resurrection. Pray that persecuted believers may be encouraged in their faith by the sacrifice Jesus made for them and us.

3 Church Leaders Worldwide

Pray for resilience and strength for church leaders worldwide as they lead God's people under various circumstances including persecution. Pray for wisdom and discernment as they lead their congregations through the ups and downs of life.

4 Persecuted Men Worldwide

As protectors, persecution of Christian men and boys aims to remove them from the picture, leaving their families and communities vulnerable. Pray that God will protect, equip and grant men wisdom so they can protect the vulnerable among them.

5 Persecuted Women Worldwide

Christian women are targeted to punish or harm the wider Christian community. As Christians and women, they're seen as being

of lesser value. Pray that as the nurturers of the future generation, they would realise their worth in God and be protected by Him.

6 Persecuted Children Worldwide

Persecutors seek to influence and hinder children's adult identities and futures, with education being a key tool to persecute Christian children. Pray for healing for children who've had to endure persecution for their faith and the faith of their parents.

7 Good Friday

Today we commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Praise God for giving His son to die for our sins. Pray and think of those in our family of faith who also have to take up their cross for Christ as they endure persecution for His name's sake.

8 Believers Worldwide

Pray that believers worldwide remain steadfast in their faith. Pray that we will step out in faith and obedience to God amid challenges, knowing we can trust His promises. May we not be swayed in our faith by challenges we may face this year.

9 Easter Sunday

Praise God for the life that is Jesus and the eternal life we have been blessed with through His death and resurrection! Pray for persecuted believers who patiently wait for the day they will be reunited with Christ, freed from the persecution they endure.

10 Family Day

Many of our persecuted brothers and sisters have been ostracised by their families or have lost loved ones through death because of their faith. Pray that they're reminded that as believers of One Body, they have a family in Christ who pray for and love them.

11 Displaced Believers

Pray for believers who've had to flee their homes and abandon their livelihoods and everything they know because of war and persecution. Pray that God provides for them, restores what they've lost and blesses them as they seek to build new lives.

12 Christianity in Schools

Many schools worldwide have banned Christianity. Pray for Christian teachers and children to boldly live out their faith and not be ashamed of the Gospel and that through this, many of their peers will come to know the love of God.

13 Governments of Persecuted Countries

Pray that the Holy Spirit convicts the hearts of the governments in countries where Christians are persecuted by their families, communities, and governments. Pray they will show mercy towards Christians and other religious minorities in their countries.

14 Communication Channels

Pray for more ways to communicate about the persecution of Christians so that more awareness about their situations can be created. Pray for courage and protection of those who create awareness about the reality of Christian persecution.

15 Natural Disasters Worldwide

Pray for the provision and the restoration of livelihoods for many persecuted believers who've been affected by natural disasters in the past year. Pray especially for those who've been refused emergency aid from authorities because of their faith.

16 Places of worship

Aside from churches, many persecuted believers must be creative in where they

come together to worship God. Ask God for protection over their places of worship. Pray for courage and wisdom for those overseeing these places of worship.

17 War-torn Countries

Pray that God works in the hearts of leaders of war-torn countries and grants them wisdom and means to restore peace to their countries. Pray for strength for Christians who are caught in the middle of some of these wars.

18 Persecutors of believers

Pray for the Lord to break down the walls of hatred of persecutors and for God to convict them for persecuting believers. Pray that a mighty work will take place in their lives, so many of them will come to repentance.

19 Trauma Care Workers

Pray for our trauma care workers who have to sometimes deal with second-hand trauma from the stories they hear. Pray that as they hear the traumatic experiences of persecuted believers, God will strengthen their hearts as they help believers work through their pain and suffering.

20 Centres of Hope

Give thanks for churches and community centres acting as Centres of Hope in the Middle East. Pray that persecuted believers are encouraged to remain faithful as they receive support and training from these centres.

21 New believers

Pray for new believers who must endure persecution while still growing in their faith. Pray that God would surround them with godly people to help them grow and endure persecution.

22 Open Doors Ministry

Pray for Open Doors as we continue to raise awareness and encourage prayer and support for our persecuted family. Pray that we remain attentive to the Holy Spirit's leading in serving them for God's glory.

23 Open Doors Leadership

Ask God to grant continued wisdom to the leadership team as they work together to lead their teams in their respective fields. Pray they remember the reasons they're called to serve the persecuted Church.

24 Open Doors Partners

Pray that as Open Doors partners, you will be encouraged as you bring about change in the lives of our persecuted family through advocacy, prayer and donations. Pray that God will bless each of you tenfold as you bless persecuted believers through your support.

25 Open Doors Local Partners

Pray for the many local partners stationed in countries where it's most dangerous to follow Jesus. Pray for protection and provision for them and their families as they carry out God's command to "strengthen what remains and is about to die" (Rev 3:2).

26 Prayer Ministry

May God bless you, who stand united in prayer for our persecuted family. Pray that each of you will be strengthened and encouraged to continue being prayer

warriors as you pray for believers who are persecuted, our ministry and each other.

27 Freedom Day

Today as we celebrate and commemorate our freedom as South Africans, let's think of those believers captured, kidnapped, or imprisoned for their faith. Pray that God grants them peace and that they'll remember the true freedom they have in Christ.

28 Travel Ministry

Pray for our partners travelling to countries where persecution of Christians persists. Pray that they're encouraged in their faith as they meet and encourage our persecuted family. Pray for protection for them as they visit these countries.

29 Open Doors Volunteers

Pray for believers who dedicate their time to raising awareness about our persecuted family. Pray that the Holy Spirit guides their thoughts and words as they speak to audiences.


30 Letter Writing Ministry

Pray for believers who take the time to pen words of encouragement to our persecuted family. Pray they may be rooted in the Word of the Lord as they write to persecuted families.

*Name changed and representative images used for security purposes. All information correct at time of publishing.



OpenDoors

Persecuted  But never alone.