

30. AFRICA – pray for **Philip and Miriam**, missionaries on staff with VOM who work to serve the emotional and spiritual needs of severely persecuted Christians across the continent of Africa. This trauma is often so severe that it has interrupted activities of faith and other core aspects of healthy living like the ability to eat and sleep. “We come alongside them to help them understand how they can carry out the work of ministry in such circumstances.”

31. Pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters-

Gracious Father, we praise You for caring for Christians who face ongoing emotional pain and spiritual struggle as a result of abuse, assaults and even witnessing the murder of their loved ones – all because of their faith in Christ.

According to Your riches in mercy, we humbly ask that you meet them at their point of need and grant them full spiritual health as well as mental and emotional wellness.

Restore to them the joy of Your salvation. Give them strength and resolve. Supply their every need.

Surround them with a strong local body of believers to provide encouragement, prayer and fellowship.

As they receive complete healing, Lord, may many others in their communities, even their persecutors, recognize that You alone are God and place their faith in You.

In Jesus' Name, Amen

- Voice of the Martyrs Magazine

Yes I am coming quickly.
Amen. Come Lord Jesus.

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all. Amen.

SOURCES:

CHURCH IN CHAINS; CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY WORLDWIDE; CHRISTIAN TODAY; OPEN DOORS; PRISONER ALERT;
RELEASE INTERNATIONAL; VOICE of the MARTYRS; WORLD MAGAZINE; WORLD WATCH MONITOR

HE IS RISEN

And He is coming again to make all things new

STANDING IN THE GAP

for the Persecuted Church

May 2025

- 1. IRAN** – continue praying for **Naser Navard Gol-Tapeh**, 63. He is a Christian convert who has been on a hunger strike in Tehran's Evin Prison for 35 days to protest the continued systemic persecution of Christians in Iran. He recently suffered a stroke. Pray for recovery, strength and healing for Naser and that he will receive the medical care he needs. Pray that he will be released from detention very soon.
- 2. INDIA** – 2024 saw an unrelenting rise in hostility and violence against Christians across India, according to the annual report from the Evangelical Fellowship of India. The report states that there were 640 verified persecution incidents.
- 3. IRAN** – continue praying for **Somayeh Rajabi** who was released from prison in March after submitting bail for 36,000 Euros. Pray for provision, peace and hope for Somayeh and her family who had to raise such a large sum of money for her freedom.
- 4. PAKISTAN** – praise God that 2 of the 3 girls who were abducted in January have been rescued and reunited with their families. Pray for recovery from trauma for **Saneha and Saba**. Pray that **Ariha** will also be recovered.
- 5. CHINA** – pray for **Pastor Wan Changchun** of Cornerstone Reformed Church in Bengbu. He has been sentenced to 5 years in prison. He has already been in detention for 2 years since his arrest. Three church co-workers were given suspended sentences of two years. Pray for encouragement and hope for Pastor Wan following the verdict. Pray for comfort, strength and provision for Pastor Wan's wife and his 4 young children.
- 6. CHINA** – **Bob Fu**, founder and president of *Church in Chains* partner organization *China Aid*, has written an article in WSJ detailing a continuing campaign and threats against him, his family and *China Aid* aimed at stopping their work in highlighting the persecution of Christians in China.
- 7. CHINA** – *China Partnership* reports that although many Chinese Christian leaders have moved overseas due to pressure or persecution, many are deciding to return or remain. Pray for wisdom for these returning and remaining leaders.
- 8. PAKISTAN** – UPDATE: praise God that **Ariha Guizar**, the 14-year-old Christian girl abducted for 11 weeks by a Muslim neighbor, has been reunited with her family. Pray for her healing from the trauma.
- 9. IRAN** – pray for Christian converts, **Mahmoud Mardani-Kharaji**, 56, and his brother, **Mansour**, 50. Both have been sentenced to 4 years in prison for 'acting against national security by participating in a house church'. The brothers were also sentenced to 2 years of internal exile following their release from prison. Pray for hope, strength and courage for the 2 brothers.
- 10. VIETNAM** – continue praying for **Nay Y Blang** who is serving a 4-and-a-half-year prison sentence since 2023. He used his home to hold prayer meetings which is one of the reasons he was sent to prison. Pray for his witness to guards and prisoners. Pray for comfort for his family and church. Pray for religious freedom for Montagnard Christians.
- 11. BANGLADESH** – pray for **Jorina** and her husband who left Islam to follow Jesus. Their family and neighbors hated them and treated them differently and even led a plot to try to murder her husband. Pray that their faith will remain firm.

12. **CHINA** – *China Partnership* asks for prayer for the city of **Shenzhen**. One pastor says, “Our church shut down in 2019. After dispersing, our church experienced 130% growth each year.” Praise God for the revival and growth of some of these churches as they meet in smaller groups.
13. **NIGERIA** – Waves of recent attacks by Muslim Fulani militants on mainly Christian villages in Bokoos County have left over 130 Christians dead, hundreds of homes destroyed and an estimated 3,000 people displaced.
14. **CHINA** – On April 10, family and church members finally received the verdict of the lengthy trial against **Wang Honglan** and 8 other Christians charged with ‘illegal business operations’ for buying Bibles from the officially recognized Three-Self Church and reselling them to fellow Christians at a lower price. They were arrested in April 2021 and during detention, they all suffered degrees of torture and forced confessions. Wang was considered the ‘ringleader’ of the group and was sentenced to 5 years in prison and fined the equivalent of 120,000 Euros. Wang, a 70-year-old grandmother who previously spent 5 years in prison and one year in a labor camp on separate charges, will be due for release in Feb 2026.
15. **CHINA** – pray for **Rose** and her church in Northwest China. “About 10 worship team members were gathering and learning about music,” Rose recently shared. “Suddenly, local authorities broke in and accused us of having an illegal gathering.” The authorities pointed to their hymn books as evidence of illegal religious activity. All the worship team members were jailed, some for up to 15 days, and fined up to \$140.
16. **HOSTILE AREAS** – VOM’s frontline workers know of 450,000 Christians in hostile and restricted nations who need Bibles. Pray for these Christians who take great risks to get Bibles into the world’s most difficult and dangerous places:
17. - **CHINA** – pray for 4 employees of a company that produced digital Bible players and were arrested and charged with ‘illegal business operations’ for their roles in the production and distribution of Bibles.
18. – **IRAN** – It is illegal to own, print, import or distribute Farsi Bibles in Iran. A Bible smuggler was killed while bringing God’s Word into the country, and Christians have been imprisoned there for printing and distributing Bibles.
19. – **CUBA** - Bibles are sometimes scarce, and even when available they can cost one-third of a Christian worker’s monthly income.
20. – **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO** – Bibles are often destroyed during Islamist attacks, or left behind when Christians are forced to flee their homes.
21. – **NEPAL**- Christians have little access to Bibles, and distribution can be difficult in remote areas.
22. **BURKINA FASO** – pray for **Salamata** who became a Christian more than 50 years ago and longed for a Bible. In March 2023, front-line workers delivered print and audio Bibles to Salamata. After 50 years of waiting, she is grateful for the knowledge and wisdom she finds in her Bible. “I am really happy to have it in my heart,” she said. Burkina Faso has seen a sharp rise in Islamist activity since 2016. More than 1600 churches have been closed and as many as 10,000 Christians have fled their homes because of threats and violence.
23. **BURKINA FASO** – pray for **Issaka**, who has been blind since birth. He too has longed for a copy of God’s Word since leaving Islam to follow Christ. He received an audio Bible. “The Word of God is power and you forget your suffering. You can leave it all on the altar,” says Issaka. He now shares Bible stories from his audio Bible with others in Muslim areas. He says many have come to know Christ.
24. **VIETNAM** – pray for **Khoi**, a 95-year-old widow who has served Christ faithfully for 65 years amidst Communist oppression and opposition from her village. Her husband, Nhat, a pastor, was arrested by the communist government for his Christian activities in 1975, and she never heard what happened to him. Together they had planted churches and orphanages and by 1975 an estimated 3,000 members of their people group had come to know Christ. Since then she has struggled to provide for her family, but has remained a faithful servant of God. “God is my Shepherd,” she says. “He takes care of me and protects me.” She joyfully teaches others the hard-earned lessons she has learned through persecution and perseverance.
25. **ETHIOPIA** – pray for **Damitu**. She and her husband, Bikila, left their traditional belief system, Waqaqeffanna, the traditional Ethiopian religion, and became Christians. Their neighbors rejected them and eventually beat Bikila and forced him off his land. But the couple persevered and started a church in their new home. The church had grown to almost 200 members. The members of the community viewed the growing church as a threat to the tribe’s traditional beliefs and shot and killed Bikila. Damitu continues to be faithful and minister to those who opposed their ministry. Now the church has over 400 people. Damitu asks for prayer that her children will remain faithful and complete their education. “We will all go one day,” she says, “and death is just the part that gets us home. Bikila just went home earlier than most.”
26. **SOMALIA** – pray for **Halima**, a widow and former refugee who now proclaims the gospel among the thousands of displaced Somalis in East Africa, often entering small shops to speak with Somali women who work there. Halima says the number of displaced Somalis has increased significantly in recent years because of the attacks by al-Shabaab. “I think clinging to the Lord is the best thing to survive,” she says.
27. **UNITED STATES** – In 3 cases decided between 2017 and 2022, the US Supreme Court concluded that it is unconstitutional to exclude schools from funding based on their religious character. Yet some states still exclude religious pre-schools outright, including Oregon, Colorado and New York. *Alliance Defending Freedom* is representing **Darren Patterson Christian Academy** in Colorado after the state stipulated that in order to receive funding, they must implement transgender policies and hire teachers who do not share the school’s religious beliefs. The school won an injunction last summer and is receiving funding for now. Attorney Jake Reed says a final verdict on the case could come at any time.
28. **COLOMBIA** – pray for **Liliana**. Her father was murdered by FARC, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, when she was 13 because he was a pastor. Liliana has sensed God calling her to be a missionary and is completing a degree in psychology. She requests prayer for her mother, who is being treated for cancer, and for her own studies and spiritual growth. “More than anything, pray that I remain firm in my belief in God.”
29. **INDONESIA** – pray for **Fenny Suryawati**. In May 2018, suicide bombers from ISIS killed 15 people in 3 churches in Surabaya, Indonesia’s second largest city. Fenny’s daughter, Clarissa, was injured by shrapnel and Fenny was severely burned over 85% of her body. She has received ongoing medical treatment and rehabilitation services with support of the global body of Christ. Fenny was able to meet some of the former terrorists who have repented of their action. “I did not want revenge,” she said, “because I know God had a plan.” Attacks like the Surabaya Church bombings have led many of Indonesia’s 200 million Muslims to question Islam and to become more receptive to the gospel. Fenny has responded to their openness, eagerly telling them about Christ when they ask about her scars.

