



# Prayer for the Persecuted Church for September 18, 2020

from ICC:

<https://bit.ly/2Rww6Vj>

## Boko Haram Is Recruiting Young Children in New Drive

09/15/20 Nigeria (ICC)

Boko Haram continues to plague Nigeria and the Lake Chad region with extremism and violence. Recent research has shown that the group is increasing its efforts to recruit children. They recruit younger children to act as suicide bombers, and older children, many of whom are already victims of the group's violence, as soldiers or suicide bombers.

- HOW TO PRAY: Pray for protection for vulnerable children in this region.
- Pray for Boko Haram leaders to come to know Christ.
- Pray for protection for local Christian communities from attacks.

## False Charges Used Against Son to Disband Pastor's Church

09/14/20 India (ICC)

A pastor in India was forced to sign an agreement to halt all worship services and to not share his Christian faith with anyone. This agreement was signed after local police told the pastor they would imprison his teenage son on false criminal charges. The police reportedly arrested the pastor's son after a Hindu falsely accused him of sexually harassing young women in the village.

- HOW TO PRAY: Pray for protection for this family against false accusations.
- Pray for their church to be able to gather again.
- Pray for those who filed false charges to be held accountable.

## Chinese Gov't Manipulates Christian Business Owners

09/14/20 China (ICC)

According to Bitter Winter, Wenzhou province is known as "China's Jerusalem" because of Christianity's large presence. Here, many Christians are entrepreneurs who build churches and direct religious activities. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) targets these business owners, forcing them to resign in order to protect their businesses.

- HOW TO PRAY: Pray for provision for Christian business owners in China.
- Pray for their rights to operate more freely.
- Pray for the CCP to respect the rights of Christians and other religious minorities.

## Three Iranian Christians Flee the Country

09/13/20 Iran (ICC)

Three Iranian Christian converts have fled Iran following the rejection of their appeals. Kavian Fallah-Mohammadi, Hadi Asgari, and Amin Afshar-Naderi were facing a combined 35 years in prison for their faith. Their flight comes just weeks after two other Christians fled the country after also having their appeals rejected. The five cases were among the most publicized in Iran's Christian community.

- HOW TO PRAY: Pray for protection for Christian converts in Iran.
- Pray for any prisoners being held under unjust charges to be released.
- Pray for the Gospel to spread throughout Iran's prisons.

<https://bit.ly/33Ad0It>

## U.S. Senators Call for India to be Designated a "Country of Particular Concern"

09/17/2020 India (International Christian Concern)

Fourteen U.S. Senators have signed onto a letter asking Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to consider the U.S. Commission for International Religious Freedom's (USCIRF) recommendation to designate India a Country of Particular Concern (CPC). The Senators went on to demand that "targeted sanctions" be imposed against Indian agencies and officials responsible for escalating religious intolerance and violence.

According to USCIRF, violations of the religious freedom rights of minorities have reached a level that India should be considered amongst the world's worst violators. In USCIRF's most recent Annual Report, India's violations were placed on par with countries like China, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Burma.

The Senators went on to request the Secretary of State provide Congress with its reasoning if the USCIRF recommendations are not followed and India is not designated a CPC.

“There is strong bipartisan Congressional support for holding India accountable for its escalating violence against its principal minorities, the Muslims and Christians,” the Coalition to Stop Genocide in India explained. “The U.S. Government must designate India a CPC.”

Since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) took power in 2014, religious intolerance and anti-Christian violence has surged across India. In 2014, the Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) documented 144 violent attacks on Indian Christians. In 2019, the latest data available, the number of attacks has more than doubled with EFI documenting 366 violent attacks.

*From Open Doors*  
<https://bit.ly/2Q0MqQK>

## Christians' homes destroyed in Laos

Recently, three Christian families in northern Laos woke up to the voice of the village chief. As he stood outside their homes, he announced that he and the entire population of the village were there to destroy their houses. That day, these families lost their homes and their community because they left the tribe's religions to follow Jesus. Days later, the villagers also destroyed the makeshift shelters these families had “built” in a rice field.

After being displaced for a third time because of their decision, they were able to find a home to rent from a believer named Phong\*. Open Doors is supporting these families as they continue to live out their faith.

### September 18

- Pray that God will be ever-close to these families and that He will frustrate any of Satan's future plans.

### September 19

- Pray these believers' faith would grow even stronger, deeply rooted in their love for Jesus.

### September 20

- Pray that the villagers who have persecuted these families will come to know the love of Christ

### September 21

- Pray against the spiritual forces that rule over the villages in Laos and hold people captive.

### September 22

- Pray that as Open Doors walks with these families, they would have strength and courage to share their faith with others.

### September 23

- Ask God to bless Phong and his family for providing a home for these displaced believers.

### September 24

- Pray for the many other believers in Laos who have lost their homes and communities because they chose to follow Jesus.

*From Voice of the Martyrs*  
<https://www.icommittoprayer.com>

*Sep. 17, 2020 | Mozambique*

## Islamists Displace Thousands

Islamic insurgents seek to establish a caliphate in East Africa, rendering life in the northern coastal regions impossible and severely affecting Christians. Islamists have been active in the region for the past three years, but a group has now launched attacks on villages from the north, displacing thousands into other parts of the country. Many are affected by the insurgents, but the situation for the Christians who encounter them is especially dire. VOM partners report beheadings and incinerated churches; schools, clinics and police stations have also been destroyed. As VOM partners provide comfort to believers, they are also providing food aid and Bibles to the displaced, giving them opportunity to hope in Jesus.

- Pray that many will gain hope and eternal life through this experience, and pray that the violence stops.

*Sep. 17, 2020 | Laos*

## A Living Understanding of the Scriptures

A pastor's teaching on suffering was timely for a young woman attending a discipleship seminar. Sei Wang, 20, gave her life to Christ earlier this year, unbeknownst to her husband. One Sunday morning in June, he followed her to church and discovered her new faith. He berated her and hit her, but Sei Wang refused to leave because she deeply wanted to worship the Lord that day. A few weeks later, Sei Wang got up early to attend a Christian seminar. She was surprised when her husband handed her a bag with her clothes in it. He told her she could go to the seminar but could not return home. He also told her that if she continued to go to church, he would beat her. Sei Wang was not scared, however, and after the pastor leading the conference shared on suffering from 1 Peter 4:12-14, she stood up and gave her testimony.

- Pray for her husband to come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Sep. 17, 2020 | Cuba

## Communist Officials Seek to Close Church

A legally registered church in central Cuba is being forced to close after three years in existence. The house church of 60 in Holguin was established with the proper paperwork in 2017. In 2019, however, various government agencies began restricting the church's activities. "They did not want them to continue holding services in this place and they did not give any option or negotiation," a VOM contact wrote. The church submitted another permit application to the Ministry of Justice that year but received no response. In the meantime, inspectors have continually visited the church, and Communist Party officials have repeatedly summoned the pastor for questioning. After pleading with officials, members have no other option but to close the church.

- "Pray for these pastors," a VOM worker said. "They are very young but they are firm in their faith and work for the Lord."

*From Voice of the Martyrs Global Prayer Guide*  
<https://bit.ly/2DNZoeN>

## Global Prayer Guide: COLOMBIA

### OVERVIEW:

Many Christians in Colombia are taking great risks to share the gospel with those living in some of the most dangerous places for Christians on earth. Taking the gospel to these hostile areas often results in persecution from armed guerrillas and paramilitary forces. After voters rejected a peace agreement with the Marxist Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebels in 2016, the government approved an agreement with the insurgents without public approval in 2017. Because of the agreement, various paramilitary groups in rural areas in the north and west have grown more active and violent.

### MAJOR RELIGIONS:

Most Colombians identify as Christian. The vast majority are Roman Catholic.

### PERSECUTOR:

Marxist (atheistic Communist) guerrillas and paramilitary groups persecute Christians.

## WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN

### COLOMBIA:

Pastors in Colombia's "red zones" (areas controlled by militant groups rather than the government) say the peace treaty with the Marxist guerrillas exists in name only. While the guerrillas may have taken off their uniforms, they continue to oppress Christians and remain involved in the drug trade. Christians are targeted because obedience to God's Word will not allow them to join the violent factions (guerrillas or paramilitary groups) in their areas. In order to worship or travel, Christians in red zones must have permission from whichever group is currently in charge. Worship, evangelism and travel are dangerous.

### ACCESS TO BIBLES:

Bibles are available, but the remoteness, difficult terrain, poor security and lack of public transportation make it difficult for Christians in red zones to obtain Bibles. Give Bibles

### VOM WORK:

VOM supports front-line workers with ministry tools and responds to violent persecution in the red zones. Give to VOM's Global Ministry

### PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Pray for the safe passage of "red zone" pastors traveling to attend training.
- Pray for the strength of those who minister in the "red zones."
- Pray that Christmas Care Packs will bless the children who receive them.
- Pray that "red zone" churches stand strong amid restrictions and threats.
- Pray for evangelists who travel into the jungle to share with the various armed criminal groups.
- Pray that Bible distributors will remain undetected in dangerous places.
- Pray for pastors, widows and orphans in Colombia's red zones.

*From Mission Network News*  
<https://bit.ly/3iFnLdK>

## New survey reveals 1 million Iranian Christians

*By Kevin Zeller September 9, 2020*

Iran (MNN) — We've previously reported about the explosive growth of the underground church in Iran. How big is this church exactly? A new survey gives some stunning results.

Mike Ansari of Heart4Iran says, “For the first time, a secular organization has come up with unprecedented data to back up the claim of the missionaries. It is very exciting to know that the number of Iranians that are self-identifying to be Christian is about 1.5% [of the population], which is roughly one million inside the country of Iran.”

Heart4Iran provides satellite tv to connect Christians to the teaching and fellowship of other believers.

Despite the massive number of conversions, Ansari says the Church in Iran faces several obstacles, including limited access to teaching and to each other.

Heart4Iran works through satellite tv to bring Christians together, but Ansari says, “As good as satellite TV is, it will never replace face-to-face fellowship. That is where the growth of the church happens. The vast majority of Iranian believers are new converts living in isolation due to severe persecution. Isolation is the biggest enemy of church growth.”

### ***Changing demographics in Iran***

Most people in Iran identify as Muslim, though many only hold to it as a national identity. Iran holds many atheists and Zoroastrians as well. As more Iranians support freedom and democracy, many have become attracted to Christianity, associating it with Western ideals.

Ansari talks about these shifting demographics. “Roughly 32% of those surveyed inside Iran identified themselves as Shiite Muslims. Officially, Iran says that this number is about 95%.” More and more Iranians are abandoning Islam, finding it unable to answer the questions they have.

You can help the growing church in Iran by supporting Heart4Iran’s satellite tv that brings them into the teaching and fellowship of the Church.

- Pray also that as more and more people in Iran reject Islam, many would turn to Jesus as their King.