

**June 2012**

**Eritrea**—The international media rarely covers the ongoing plight of those in this northeast African nation who dare express their freedom of religion or political dissent. This is especially true of Christians, who are seen as a threat and unpatriotic because their highest allegiance is to God. They make up approximately 2,000-3,000 of the 20,000 prisoners, who languish for years in unspeakably harsh conditions. The prisons of Eritrea are notoriously brutal—some consisting of little more than old shipping containers with no facilities, or underground cells. In general, the military government controls every aspect of society and commits daily human rights abuses against its people. Pray for the perseverance of the Church in Eritrea—that they may have a strong sense that, though they are not in the news headlines, they are not forgotten by other believers, and especially not by their Father in heaven. Pray specifically for Haile Nayzgi, Kidane Weldou, and Kiflu Gebremeskel, all of whom have been imprisoned in Eritrea since 2004 and 2005 for their faith in Christ. Pray also for President Issayas Afewerki and for his government that they might come to an understanding of the wrong and injustice they are committing against their own citizens, and that they might come to know the grace of Christ and the love and justice of the Father. (*Christian Solidarity Worldwide; Voice of the Martyrs*)

**Sub-Saharan Africa**—Despite the regular reports of persecution faced by believers in Muslim countries, especially those who have converted from Islam, many continue to find Christ amid these hostile circumstances. Praise God for the news from a church planter that many Muslims are coming to faith in Sub-Saharan Africa! There have been reports that as many as 200,000 individuals have come to faith in Christ in Sub-Saharan Africa, and in some cases whole mosques have come to faith together. Pray that they will share the Gospel with others and that the Good News will continue to spread. (*Compass Direct News*)

**Haiti**—Pray for the thousands of dispossessed Haitians that harvest sugarcane on plantations in the Dominican Republic. In some cases, their treatment is similar to slavery, as they are unable to leave (their Haitian documents are confiscated) and are paid minimally for their long hours of work. They live in unsanitary conditions, and lack clean water, electricity, education, and decent healthcare. In addition, much of the general public discriminates against them because of their ethnicity. The United States purchases 200,000 tons of this DR sugar per year, so pray that our government's current investigations into the human rights abuses, including trafficking and child labor, would result in just treatment in accordance with our fair trade agreement with the Dominican Republic.

**Mauritania**—Muslim protesters in Mauritania have called on the government to investigate all Christians in the country, claiming that Christians were involved in the burning of a Quran after Islamic prayers on Friday, April 27. The protesters said other Islamic books were burned on the same day and that many copies of the gospel were distributed, insinuating that Christians had some part in what they consider one of the worst offenses possible. The protesters called on the government to investigate Christians to determine their part in the event and, if found guilty, to punish them. Desecrating a Quran is punishable by life in prison or even death in some Islamic countries. Voice of the Martyrs contacts in Mauritania ask that believers around the world pray for Christians there. (*Voice of the Martyrs*)

**Honduras**—Pray for human rights journalist Dina Meza, who has dedicated her life and work to exposing the corruption and injustice oppressing Hondurans. In recent months, Dina Meza has received numerous phone calls and text messages threatening death and sexual violence, using vile and offensive language. She and her children have been followed and photographed. And she is not the only victim of this kind of threatening harassment—in 2006, her colleague, lawyer Dionisio Diaz Garcia, was shot and killed while on his way to the Honduran Supreme Court. Those responsible have still not been

brought to justice for his murder. Journalists and human rights activists live under constant threat from powerful people who wish them dead, because they have exposed human rights abuses, corruption, state abuses and the actions of powerful groups. Pray for the protection of those who speak out against corruption in Honduras and pray for a government and ruling class that actually protects its citizenry, as it should, rather than threatens, intimidates, and attempts to silence it. Pray for the work of missionaries in Honduras who show the light, justice, and truth of Jesus to a population living under such corruption and oppression. (*Amnesty International*)

**Bhutan**—Pray for a pastor in Bhutan who was sentenced to three years in prison for showing the Jesus film. This pastor, whose name was not shared for security reasons, walked two days carrying a generator and a projector to interior villages of this southeast Asia nation, wedged between China and India, in order to share the gospel with his fellow countrymen. For this he was charged with “attempting to promote civil unrest.” Despite this persecution, he is sharing his faith while in prison, so pray that this time will be fruitful. He has even shared New Testaments with other inmates. Bhutan's constitution allows its citizens religious freedom as long as they are not coerced into faith, but Christians are sadly often persecuted for evangelizing. In fact, despite the appearances of freedom, Buddhism plays a central role in the lives of most in Bhutan, dictating how they live and how they govern. Pray for this Buddhist country, that many would see the truth and be saved. (*Gospel for Asia; Reuters*)

**Syria**—The Syrian government's belligerence in the face of international outcry at the atrocities it has committed against its own people continues to reach new lows. On Friday, May 25, government forces shelled innocent civilians in Houla, as well as carrying out door-to-door raids. In all, 108 people were killed—34 of them women, a stunning 50 were children. This was followed on Wednesday, May 30 by the discovery of the bodies of 13 men all bound and shot in the head at close range, even as former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has recently met with Syrian President Bashar Assad in attempts to broker a peace plan. Pray for the country of Syria, suffering so much as its population calls for freedom. Pray for the mourning families of the victims of Houla and the numerous others atrocities. Pray influential leaders on all sides of the conflict, such as Kofi Annan, President Assad, the UN Security Council, and especially Russia, that wisdom, reason, and justice might prevail as they attempt to resolve this conflict. Pray that many might be compelled by the contrast of Christ's example to love and forgive as they endure these horrible circumstances. (*Amnesty International; The Los Angeles Times*)

**Sudan/South Sudan**—Please pray for the people in Sudan and South Sudan as they struggle in a hunger crisis. Unlike the famine devastating the Horn of Africa, the food crisis in Sudan and South Sudan is largely man-made—a result of conflict, displaced populations, and people unable to plant crops due to the instability. Humanitarian agencies warn that the coming seasonal rains will make some roads impassable, and the conflict between the two countries already limits access to aid. Pray particularly for safety and food for the children who are so vulnerable, for the fighting to stop, for protection from waterborne illnesses, and for a chance for people to plant their crops for the coming season. Pray for the estimated 151,000 refugees of this crisis, who are arriving in refugee camps—where there are insufficient supplies—already malnourished and dehydrated. Pray that other African nations, as well as the international community, will hold Sudanese president, Omar al-Bashir responsible for the genocides he has committed and continues to commit in multiple regions of his country—including the persecution of Christians in the Nuba Mountains. (*All Africa; Refugees International; Voice of the Martyrs*)

**Iraq**—The turmoil of recent years in Iraq has resulted in a crisis of internally displaced people within

the country. An estimated 1.5 million people have been displaced from their homes and communities, and as many as 500,000 are living in refugee camp-like conditions, without electricity, plumbing, and other key components of infrastructure—not to mention the security and stability that allows for individuals and families to reestablish livelihoods and normal existence. Pray for the peace and rebuilding of this nation. Pray for its young government to become increasingly equipped to provide stability and protection for its population. Pray that the United States will continue its relationship with Iraq with integrity—especially in the distribution of aid to these displaced populations. Many of those affected by the turmoil are Christians—who have faced increased danger and persecution since the Iraq wars. Pray for believers such as “Kameela,” whose husband was murdered by his family after sharing the gospel with them. Despite his violent death, and the clear risk that she faces, “Kameela” continues to lead discipleship meetings in Baghdad, through which 4 women recently came to know Christ. Pray for these 4 women, for their protection and the growth of their young faith, and that many others might come to faith through them and “Kameela.” (*Refugees International; Voice of the Martyrs*)

**Uganda**—Please pray for the children of Northern Uganda, where a fatal and incurable disease called Nodding Syndrome has devastated thousands of young lives. The Center for Disease Control is at a loss as to what causes this disease, which manifests itself with head-nodding seizures (when the children begin to eat or feel cold), physical and mental disability, and permanently stunted growth. Pray for healing, prevention, and comfort. (*BBC News*)