

Prayer Items July 2016

Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts; his name is the Lord; exult before him! Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.

—Psalm 68: 4-5

Chad—Though it has taken decades to bring him to justice, on May 30, 2016, a special tribunal of the African Union sentenced Hissène Habré, the former president of Chad, to life in prison for crimes against humanity. Hissène Habré came to power in 1982 through a US-backed coup and spent the next 8 years ruling through terror. The crimes he was convicted of included summary executions, forced disappearances, torture, and rape. Give thanks that even though it took many years to bring this former leader to justice, he finally has been tried and will pay for his crimes. Pray for the entire continent of Africa where many leaders abuse their powers and commit human rights violations against the people they are meant to protect. Pray also that a motion by the African Union to grant immunity to current government officials will be reversed. Pray that countries in the West who have been involved in actions and policies in Africa will continue to be involved with growing integrity and interest that extends beyond our own borders but seeks the well-being of populations in those countries as well. (Source: Washington Post)

International—In recent years the news has been filled with the tragic events and horrific struggles facing refugees around the world. However, amid this bleak and ongoing crisis, we praise God and give thanks for a new development in international recognition of refugee communities. In the Rio Summer Olympics, ten refugees will compete for the first time as their own team. These refugees come from Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. Pray that their presence as a team at the Olympics would help heighten the world's awareness of the more than 59.5 million people currently forced to flee their homes because of persecution, oppression, and violence. Pray also that it will help the world remember the humanity of the individuals who are among these millions. Give praise to God that amid the horrors they are being recognized for their God-given gifts and pray that this will be an opportunity to motivate the world to address this growing crisis. (Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

Eritrea—The end of May marks the 14th anniversary of the closure of Eritrea's Protestant churches. This move ushered in an era of incredible repression and persecution of the Christian community within Eritrea. Thousands over the years have been illegally detained and held indefinitely without trial under horrific conditions such as shipping containers. They have endured torture and other human rights abuses. In the face of such ongoing atrocities many have attempted to flee their home country for a safer and better life. In a world where so many are being displaced from their homes, pray that the Eritrean government would become convicted of the wrongness of their actions towards minorities within their borders, change course, and that this era of repression would be ended. Pray that Christian Eritreans might be able to continue to live in their country and worship freely with safety. Pray that the many prisoners who have languished in prisons would finally be released and be reunited with their families. (Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

Syria/Iraq—Pray for brave Christians in Syria and Iraq who continue to face religious and ethnic persecution within their country. Pray for young women like Mayss, who was a teacher in a largely Muslim area of Syria. This Christian woman was in the school compound when gunmen burst in demanding that she be handed over. Quick-thinking Muslim friends helped her escape and finally flee Syria where she continues to share her story and urge the international community to act on behalf of believers in these regions. If the UN declares these acts of violence as genocide, the international community would be legally obliged to take action. Pray that activists and

organizations such as Christian Solidarity Worldwide would be effective in convincing UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to formally call the atrocities in Syria and Iraq genocide. Pray that this will force the international community to act and thereby save countless numbers of lives of believers in this region. (Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

China—Please continue to pray for imprisoned Christian political activist and human rights lawyer Gao Most recently we give thanks and praise that a 446 page book written by Gao Zhisheng describing his time in prison from 2009 to 2014 has made its way out of China and has been released in Taiwan. The book details the abuse he suffered while in prison for his legal work defending ordinary people against the abuses of the government, such as defending farmers from land seizures, suing police for abuse, as well as advocating for Falun Gong practitioners. The book also is a critique of the communist government in China and predicts its downfall. Pray for God to sustain and protect him, as he may face severe repercussions from the release of this book. Despite this almost certain threat, Gao refuses to leave China and insists on remaining to hold the Chinese government accountable. Pray for his rapidly deteriorating health including his teeth falling out and living on an only liquid diet. Pray that he will be upheld and be able to persevere whatever the consequences. Pray that he might experience the peace and comfort of the Holy Spirit in remarkable ways. And pray for his family who has not seen him since 2009 but continue to speak up on his behalf and promote the cause of justice in China from abroad. Pray that they too might know Christ's peace and comfort amid the separation from their husband and father. (Source: New York Times)

Laos/Vietnam-- Hian and Phung were arrested while transporting Bibles in Vietnam, a Communist country, and sent to jail in Southern Laos. There motorcycles that they use in their evangelistic work were also confiscated by Vietnamese authorities. Please pray for safety and freedom for Hian and Phung, and other persecuted believers in Vietnam. (Source: Open Doors)

Iran- Maryam (Naseem) Naghash Zargaran, a believer with a Muslim background, has been in Evin prison for three years and has been suffering from multiple health issues. She was continually denied medical treatment, and eventually went on a hunger strike. Praise God that she has finally been granted temporary release to receive medical treatment. Please pray that she is able to recover well and pray for her to be fully released from her prison sentence. Pray that this time to heal would be a blessed time with her family. We pray that Iran would ensure basic human rights and discontinue its persecution. (Source: Middle East Concern)

Haiti- Please pray for the impoverished people of Haiti, where routine medical care and basic education have become a luxury. Begging in the streets has become commonplace as 80% of the population lives under the poverty line. 62,000 people live in the 36 internally displaced people camps. Praise God that He is using believers to minister to the very needy through much-needed speciality hospitals where patients are treated gently and with dignity and are prayed for. (Source: Mission Network News)

Indonesia- Praise God that a new airstrip has been completed in Tibul, Papua, Indonesia that can service about twenty small villages of 200 people each. The airstrip will allow access to education and medical care in this very remote jungle region. As schools are built, more missionary families are willing to move to these underserved areas. Please pray for God to provide pastors or missionaries to these areas to share the truth of the Gospel and to disciple the people there. Because they have only a very rudimentary knowledge of the Word of God, witchcraft is quite rampant. Pray for the church to grow significantly. (Source: Mission Network News)

Mexico- Pastor Guillermo Favela was stabbed near his church in Tijuana last month after being threatened. His attacker demanded that he pay 30,000 pesos each month as protection money for his church and then threatened to cut off one finger for each time the pastor failed to pay. Pastor Favela refused to pay him and his assailant stabbed him under the arm and ran. The pastor was not seriously injured, and the attacker was caught, questioned, and then released. Churches and church leaders have been repeatedly threatened and attacked by intolerant and violent groups (twelve priests and two pastors have been killed or disappeared in the past four years) and too often the perpetrators are met with no punishment or deterrent. Please pray that Mexican authorities would fight these issues of crime and protect its citizens. Please pray that the church would be bold in the face of opposition. Thanks be to God that Pastor Favela is healing well and was not hurt worse. Pray for his protection in the future. (*Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)