

## February 2024 Prayer

*Behold, I am doing a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert.*

—Isaiah 43:19

**Bangladesh**—Tobibul and his wife, Mahmuda, are Christians from Muslim backgrounds, and neighbors have targeted them in their village. A woman living nearby began hitting their four-year-old daughter and calling her “infidel” when she tried to play with her daughter. When Mahmuda came to protect her daughter, neighbors started hitting her with sticks, injuring her leg badly. Tobibul quickly came to her aid and was in turn attacked. They and the few other Christians in the village all fled when the neighbors threatened to kill them. A week later, officers arrested Tobibul under false claims of blasphemy against Muhammad and he is now imprisoned. Please pray for help for this family, for them to be reunited, and to be kept safe. Pray for Tobibul’s release and for a new home for them. And pray for these neighbors who are so antagonistic to be drawn to the Savior they are so against. (*Source: Christian Solidarity International*)

**Israel/Gaza/Iran/United States**—Pray for some kind of ceasefire in Gaza, for the protection of the Israeli hostage, for the protection of innocent lives in Palestine. Pray that terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah would be thwarted and that they would be convicted of their evil ways. Pray that the nations of Israel, the United States, and Iran would act within the international rules of engagement, would act with restraint and wisdom, even as they pursue justice for those wrongly hurt or attacked. Pray for the families of the Israeli hostages, for the families of the three US troops that were killed in the drone attack, and for all who are mourning the loss of loved ones in Palestine—that all would find healing and comfort. Pray that believers in all these countries—especially those where faith in Christ is a dangerous thing—would be bold, compassionate witnesses. (*Sources: Reuters; AP; BBC; The Guardian; The National Review; The Washington Post; The New York Times*)

**Nigeria**—After 18 months in prison, Rhoda Jatau, a Christian healthcare worker and mother of five, has been released. She was imprisoned for speaking out via video against the lynching of Christian student Deborah Yakubu who was accused of blasphemy. Praise God for her release and protection, as well as her courage in standing up for what is right. The charges have not been dropped so pray for the Lord’s continued protection for her. Pray also that the Nigerian authorities would grant freedom of expression and freedom of religion to its citizens and that Christians there would live in safety. (*Source: Christian Solidarity International*)

**India**—Pray for Christians in Uppaladinni, Karnataka State, India where multiple attacks and incidents of harassment, including death threats, have taken place in recent days. Vijayalakshmi is a 29-year-old healthcare worker who along with her husband was attacked by a mob from their village, because they were angry that Vijayalakshmi is a Christian and came into their homes when going door to door doing healthcare education. The falsely accused her of forced conversion and tried to get her fired. Other families from their church were targeted when their community chief had the local utility company cut off their electricity and water for four days. Pray that all these believers would be strengthened and protected, that Vijayalakshmi will be able to do her job without fear, that justice would be served for the violence against these families, and where there is threat, violence and division, the Lord’s Spirit would bring peace, compassion and healing across the nation. (*Source: CSW*)

**Somalia**—Ayesha came to Christ after a foreigner shared the Gospel with her. As a result, her husband left her and her in-laws treat her with disdain and hatred. They continually try to convince her sons to deny Christ and become Muslim so they will inherit their wealth, but even they remain firm in their faith. One day, after returning home from work, three women stabbed her, and she almost died. Her family members approved of this attack and authorities did not punish the perpetrators. Ayesha confesses that after this suffering, she wanted to forsake Christ, but could not. She said that once she decided to follow Jesus, she couldn't go back. Praise God for her courage and perseverance and that the Lord holds her in the palm of His hand. Praise him also that her children are following Christ instead of worldly wealth. Pray for protection for all of them and for encouragement in a country where meeting as a church is too dangerous. Christians in Somalia are often very lonely as a result. Pray for fellowship for them and a way to meet secretly and safely. (*Source: Open Doors*)

**Turkey**—On January 28 two gunmen—a Russian and a Tajik national affiliated with the so-called Islamic State—stormed the Santa Maria church in Büyükdere, Istanbul, fired into the air and then killed Tuncer Cihan, a regular visitor to the church since December. It is believed this was in response to a call from IS to target Jews and Christians. Give thanks that Turkish authorities acted swiftly, and the assailants were apprehended, and Turkish officials, including President Erdoğan, quickly offered condolences to the Catholic community. Join with Middle East Concern praying “that fear will not prevail among the congregation, that the Christian community in Türkiye will be strengthened and respond in unity and that the God of all comfort will console the family and friends of Tuncer.” (*Source: Middle East Concern*)

**Syria**—A believer named Jacob was kidnapped and the kidnappers contacted his wife demanding ransom money. After raising \$10,000 to pay off the criminals, she found her husband already martyred for his faith, strangled to death by his captors. Please pray for comfort for this dear Christian woman who has experienced such injustice and heartbreak. Pray that the Lord would hold and carry her through this loss. And pray that Jacob's martyrdom, which is such a loss for the Christian community, would not be in vain but would produce much fruit and result in God's name being glorified. (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

**Russia**—Pray for the situation of British-Russian national Vladimir Kara-Murza, a politician, Russian-opposition figure, and former journalist who was arrested for speaking out against Vladimir Putin and the Russian assault on Ukraine. Two attempts to assassinate him in 2015 and 2017, when he nearly died by poisoning, and now he has vanished from the prison where he was being held and his whereabouts are unknown. Kara-Murza obtained British citizenship when he lived in the United Kingdom as a teenager with his mother. His arrest and conviction for treason have been condemned by the British and United States' governments. The US state department described Mr Kara-Murza as "yet another target of the Russian government's escalating campaign of repression." Pray for the protection of Mr Kara-Murza and all the other dissidents, journalists, and government opponents who are routinely targeted with harassment and even attempts on their lives, yet have the courage to speak out against the Putin regime. Pray for increased freedom in Russia and for those who rule through fear and repression to come to an understanding of the wrong of their actions. Pray for the end of the aggression against Ukraine. (*Source: BBC*)

**Ethiopia**—After months of denials, the Ethiopian government has finally admitted that at 400 people have died of starvation in recent months, particularly in the Tigray region that has also been devastated by a deadly civil war. There are increasing fears that the local drought could escalate into a full-scale famine. In Tigray alone, approximately 3.2 million people are at risk and in desperate need of food aid. Yet only 14 percent have received any assistance. Across Ethiopia the number is over 20 million. The

UN and the United States had both paused food aid in mid-March of last year after uncovering a large-scale scheme by the Ethiopian government and military to steal the aid and defraud humanitarian organizations. However, they have been able to bolster measures to track aid and its distribution, and have now resumed distribution due to the urgency of the crisis. Pray for the millions of people in Ethiopia that are on the verge of starvation. Pray that the Ethiopian government would act with integrity and on behalf of their population. Pray that the Lord would miraculously provide for those who are vulnerable and move the hearts of those in more resourced nations to compassion and benevolence. *(Source: AP)*

**Iran**—Last summer, Hakop Gochumyan and his wife Elissa were visiting Iran with their two children when they were arrested while having dinner with friends. Officers confiscated Christian books from them and brought Hakop and Elissa to Evin Prison, where they were subjected to continuous psychological torture and placed in solitary confinement, despite having no official charge against them. In October, Elissa was released on bail and able to reunite with their children in Armenia, but Hakop is still being held in prison. Elissa says that they were not engaged in any illegal Christian activity, so they are still unsure about why they were arrested. While we rejoice that Elissa is home with her children, please pray for Hakop's protection and urgent release. Pray that his faith would remain strong and that God would provide perseverance, comfort, hope, and encouragement. *(Source: Church in Chains)*