

## April 2025 Prayer

*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

—Isaiah 41:10

**Iran**—Abbas Soori, Narges Nasri, and Mehran Shamlou, all Muslim background believers, were arrested from their homes in the fall and have now been sentenced to prison. Narges Nasri is pregnant with her first child and has been sentenced to 16 years' imprisonment. Her sentence is for 'propaganda activities contrary to Islamic law', being involved in a house church, and for social media posts that support the 'Women, Life, Freedom' movement. Pray for her safety and the life of her unborn child. Pray for her miraculous release and the ability to raise her child. Abbas Soori received a 15-year sentence for 'propaganda activities' and for his house church involvement. Pray that he would stand firm in the faith and that God would protect him. Mehran Shamlou was sentenced to almost eleven years for 'propaganda activities' and for house church involvement. Pray that God would sustain him. Praise God that these three former Muslims have found redemption in Jesus Christ, and pray to Him that in the midst of their suffering they would not turn back but that this cross that they bear would strengthen their faith and love for their Savior. Pray that they would lead many to Christ and that this prison would be a mission field for them until their release. Pray for miraculous protection and miraculous reminders of God's presence with them. (*Source: Open Doors*)

**Myanmar**—Already devastated by 4 years of a violent civil war, the genocidal targeting of Rohingya Muslims, and decades of an oppressive military junta, Myanmar now is dealing with the aftermath of a 7.7 earthquake on Friday, March 28, 2025. So far nearly 3,000 people have been reported dead, many more injured, and hundreds remain missing. The ultimate estimate is that the total deaths will be over 10,000. Beyond those immediate losses, buildings and infrastructure have been so decimated that many have been left without homes, businesses, possessions, or livelihoods. Already 20 million (a third of the population) are deemed in need of emergency humanitarian aid. Among those suffering are many Christians—who are among the persecuted minorities in Myanmar, which is number 13 on Open Doors Worldwide Watch List. Recent aggression against Christians include: a February 6 junta airstrike destroying the Sacred Heart Church in Chin State; March 3, a junta bombing raid that destroyed the pastoral center at St Michael's Catholic Church in Kachin State; and on March 16, the killing of at least nine people, including six Buddhist monks, when an airstrike hit a monastery in Shan State. There is a great likelihood that the aid that is provided will be diverted away from minority groups such as the Rohingya and Christians. Pray for the millions suffering in Myanmar, from natural disaster but even more so from evil and repressive actions of those in power. Pray that humanitarian aid will reach all who need it. Pray that the Church in Myanmar would be provided for in miraculous ways and that their faith would be strong and many would come to know Jesus through their witness. (*Sources: World Vision, Open Doors, CSW, Washington Post, AP News, New York Times*)

**Ukraine**—Russians are targeting Christians who are not affiliated with the Russian Orthodox Church such as evangelical congregations, Ukrainian Orthodox, and Catholics. At least 206 churches have been closed or destroyed. Many pastors and priests have been kidnapped, tortured, or killed by the Russian National Guard or police. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Russians have killed more than 70 pastors, destroyed more than 600 places of worship, and at least a dozen religious leaders remain in captivity." Many Russian believers have also faced persecution from their own government, and Christians in the Ukraine are suffering at the hands of their own Ukrainian government, as well. Ukraine's Law 3894 will be enforced on May 24 and will ban the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and any groups that seem to be Russian-influenced. Please pray fervently for the end of this horrible aggression

and the end of such persecution for believers in both countries. Pray that the church would be united and members would love one another and cling to Christ as they share the good news with the many who are suffering around them. *(Source: International Christian Concern)*

**Syria**—Pray for the families and friends of the more than 1,500 people killed in outbreaks of violence in Latakia and Tartus, most of them Alawite people, who are an offshoot of Shia Islam. All were civilians—among them at least 4 were Christians. To add to their challenges, online misinformation has characterized these horrible acts as specifically targeting and “slaughtering” Christians. Open Doors who has staff and many connected believers on the ground in Syria, say this is not only false, it is putting believers in grave danger of violent retribution for these rumors. They are now more concerned than ever—especially because Syria is a very difficult place to be a Christian to begin with. Pray that truth will bear out in all circumstances and all civilians in Syria will be protected from violence. Pray for peace and justice in Syria, with various warring factions vying for control. Pray for the thousands of Christians who have fled Syria and are seeking asylum in other countries, where they are not always welcomed. *(Source: Open Doors UK)*

**Nepal**—In this country where only 2% of the population identify as Christians and 23% of adults are illiterate, the word of God is spreading through audio Bibles. Pulmaya was a Hindu witch doctor, but when her grandson started attending church, she was curious about his joy. He read the New Testament to her for a year before she went to church, and there she found Christ. She now listens to her audio Bible multiple times throughout the day. Praise God for her salvation. Pray for her protection as her brothers and community members have rejected her because of her faith, and pray that she and her grandson would be a witness to those around her. Pray that these audio Bibles would continue to reach the lost in Nepal and that the evil one would not be able to thwart the spread of the Gospel. *(Source: Global Christian Relief)*

**Vietnam**—On March 27 Venerable Kim Som Rinh, Thach Nga and Thach Xuan Dong were all charged with “abusing democratic freedoms” for their work seeking religious freedom and the preservation of their cultural identity as part of the Khmer Krom people—an ethnic group from a part of Vietnam that was previously part of Cambodia. Venerable Kim Som Rinh is a Buddhist monk who was recently defrocked by the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha for calling for religious freedom. This is all a part of Vietnam’s systematic repression of dissent and the use of Articles 117 (formerly 88) and 331 of the Vietnamese Criminal Code to punish religious actors and human rights activists. Pray for the protection and release of these three men, and give thanks for their courageous work calling for religious freedom and human rights in Vietnam. Pray that Vietnam will adhere to the commitments they made as members of the United Nations Human Rights Council. Pray for the safety, encouragement, and strengthening of the Church in Vietnam, which is also under continual pressure and persecution from the Vietnamese government. *(Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide)*

**China**—Ma Yan was sentenced to nine months in prison for hosting an illegal gathering — a house church meeting. Lu Chenhui and her husband, Chang Yuchun, were sentenced to seven years in prison for printing Christian materials. Lu has been experiencing fainting spells, headaches, and dizziness, but the prison authorities are not giving her any medical attention. Long Kehai has been arrested multiple times and served several prison sentences, only to be arrested again for his continual house church activity. Children are still prohibited from attending Christian services, and gatherings are often raided to be sure they are not present. Please pray for the dire situation in China, where religious freedom seems to be getting even more restricted. Pray for the body of believers there to remain strong, for their endurance amidst persecution, and for their testimony to be shared with many who don’t know Christ. *(Source: China Aid)*

**Democratic Republic of Congo**—On March 8, nine people were killed, their village decimated, and all the villagers displaced when militants from the Allied Democratic Forces attacked with machetes and guns. This farming community in North Kivu was defenseless and now is another casualty of the ongoing chaos and violence tearing DRC apart. We join International Christian Concern in praying “for provision for the many families that were displaced. Pray for comfort for all those who lost loved ones. Pray for healing for anyone injured during the attack.” (*Source: International Christian Concern*)

**Nicaragua**—Despite the freedom of religion and belief that Nicaragua claims to uphold, many Christian leaders are now subject to weekly questioning and surveillance and must seek permission from the government to leave their towns. Public religious activities are banned, and they are warned about speaking about specific topics even in private. For example, praying for persecuted or imprisoned leaders, preaching about justice and unity, and speaking out about human rights can be perceived as criticizing the government. As a result, some religious leaders have been forced to leave the country or have been detained in inhumane conditions and prevented from having a Bible in prison. Bank accounts have been frozen and religious organizations have been closed. As persecution and the loss of freedom grows in Nicaragua, please pray for wisdom for the believers there. Pray that they would not compromise the truth and their faith out of fear, as you pray also for their protection. Pray that the government would uphold freedom of religion and belief and treat its citizens with justice. (*Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide*)

**United States**—In 2022 Cesar and Norelia, along with their three children sought asylum in the United States after fleeing Venezuela. Despite adherence to proper channels, being granted valid Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and their currently pending asylum applications, they were arrested for “illegal entry.” On February 27, 2025, a Texas judge filed criminal charges against the parents. They were released on March 28, but Texas authorities are still prosecuting them even though punishing asylum seekers for how they enter the country violates international law. The United States is signatories to the 1967 Protocol of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which guarantees legal rights to those seeking asylum, including entering a host country and requesting asylum. Pray that this family and the many families like them will be protected and treated justly and legally. Pray that we as a human community would be tenacious in addressing evil and injustice and respond to others with the same compassion and love with which Christ responds to us. (*Source: Amnesty International*)