

26. PAKISTAN – continue praying for **Ashfaq Masih**, 39, who is a Pentecostal Christian from Lahore and has been in prison since 2017 when he was accused of blasphemy after a dispute over payment for repairing a motor bike. He was sentenced to death in July 2022 and accused of blasphemy for ‘disrespecting’ Mohammed when he told the customer that Jesus is the final prophet. Ashfaq is in Sahiwal jail, and his appeal is pending in Lahore High Court. Pray for his wife, **Nabeela** and their 11-year-old daughter. Pray that he will be acquitted on appeal soon. Pray for courage and protection for lawyers and judges. Pray for reform of Pakistan’s blasphemy laws.

27. NORTH KOREA – continue praying for South Korean missionary **Kim Jong Uk**, 61, who was arrested in Oct 2013 after he entered North Korea with Bibles and other religious materials. In May 2014, the Supreme Court found him guilty of spying for South Korea and attempting to start a church. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in labour camp. He is not allowed contact with his family. Ask God to protect him in the camp. Pray for his release. Pray for his family.

28. IRAN – continue praying for Christian convert **Nayereh Arjaneh** from Garmsar in northern Iran who began serving a 10-year prison sentence in Dec 2023. She and her husband, **Qasem Esmaili** were arrested at their home in July 2025 after attending a Christian seminar in Turkey. Following her arrest, Nayereh spent 40 days in detention during which she was subjected to psychological torture. Qasem was sentenced to 3.5 years.

29. IRAN – continue praying for Christian converts and brothers **Mansour and Mahmoud Mardani-Kharaji** who began serving 4-year prison sentences in Dec. The brothers were found guilty of ‘acting against national security by participating in a house church.’

30. MALI – pray for **Pastor Geremi Lassana**. His home serves as a distribution point for Bibles. He knows it is dangerous to provide God’s Word to those in Mali who hunger for it. Islamists control much of the country, attacking villages and government forces in their efforts to establish an Islamic caliphate. Islamists have forced many Malians to leave their homes, killing some before they can flee. “Two of my brothers were killed in 2022,” says Geremi. “And in 2023, my uncle and his 2 sons were killed by terrorists.” Many live in IDP camps now. Geremi often visits these camps to encourage Christians who live among the mostly Muslim population, and he supplies Christians with their most useful weapon- God’s Word.

31. NIGERIA - This February marks 8 years since the kidnapping of 14-year-old **Leah Sharibu** from her school in northern Nigeria. She is currently the only remaining captive from the attack; others were released or escaped or died in captivity. Leah refused to deny Jesus and convert to Islam and has since remained in captivity. Pray that God will release Leah, bind up her wounds, and give her hope. Pray also for **Alheri and Ijefada**, 2 of the other girls kidnapped who escaped, as they receive trauma care.

SOURCES:

CHURCH IN CHAINS; CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY WORLDWIDE; Mission Network News; OPEN DOORS; PRISONER ALERT; RELEASE INTERNATIONAL; VOICE of the MARTYRS; WORLD MAGAZINE; WORLD WATCH MONITOR

We should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, you also joining in helping us through your prayers. 2 Corinthians 1: 9-11

STANDING IN THE GAP

for the Persecuted Church

March 2026

- 1. Yemen (MNN)** — In Yemen, the Islamic militant group known as the Houthis controls approximately one-third of Yemen. Floyd Brobbel with Voice of the Martyrs Canada says reports of persecution of Christians don’t easily get out. Yet a report last week from Human Rights Watch says more than 20 Christians have been arbitrarily detained by Houthi authorities in recent months. Brobbel says it points to Yemen’s religious freedom issues, which other governments should be aware of. Pray for strength for Christians to live for Christ despite hostility.
 - Pray for strength for Christians in Yemen to share the gospel in the midst of hostile and, in many cases, unknown circumstances.
- 2. ERITREA** – praise God that the Eritrean government has released **177 Eritrean Christians** from Evangelical and Pentecostal churches on conditional bail in a series of releases in November and December 2025. Most are believed to be young people, including the Mahalian Praise Group, who have been in prison for between 1 and 3 years and some up to 5 years. Pray for these young people as they seek to resume their lives. Continue to pray for the pastors who have been in prison for over 20 years, that they will not lose hope.
- 3. IRAN** – pray for Iranian Christians who have asked Christians around the world to pray for their country after the violent crackdown on widespread mass protests that have left many thousands dead. Pray for wisdom and courage for Iranian pastors as they lead in difficult circumstances.
- 4. CHINA** – pray for believers associated with **Early Rain Covenant Church** in Chingdu and Deyang. In January, there was a series of largescale arrests similar to those in 2018. Seven church members were arrested and confined, and 5 others were brought in for questioning and then released. Several of those arrested are elders in the church. Pray that they all will be released soon. Pray for their families and children.
- 5. CHINA** cont – pray for **Sister Z** who was taken to jail with her husband. Their 2 children were taken in with them and spent the first night in jail at the police station. Now the children are with their grandmother. Pray for God’s mercy on this family.
- 6. CHINA** cont – pray for a **seminary student** who was arrested and beaten in Chengdu recently. Pray that he will know the presence of the Lord even in his suffering. Pray for comfort and strength for his wife and for him to be released soon.
- 7. CHINA** cont – pray for **Christian lawyers** who represent imprisoned believers. Pray for boldness and peace, and for clear thinking and speaking. Pray that there will be justice for those who have been arrested and mistreated.
- 8. CHINA** cont – continue to pray for **Pastor Wang Yi** who was arrested in 2018 and continues to serve time in prison. Pray for the Lord’s presence to be with him in prison, that he may even be a witness to those with him in jail, and for his family and church on the outside.
- 9. AFGHANISTAN** – pray for **Lala Zeeshan**, a Muslim convert who was helping FMI with an audio Bible distribution campaign when extremists stabbed him repeatedly and beat him because of his involvement in sharing God’s Word. He survived and is recovering in a ministry safehouse and plans to continue his work. Pray for continued healing and boldness.

10. CHINA – pray for **Pastor Du Liang**, a house church pastor in southern China who spent 2 years in prison. He says, “There was no Bible in prison, so all I could do was meditate on whatever Scripture I could still remember from before. At crucial moments, God’s Word comforted me and carried me through the hardest places.” The real reason he was arrested was because of Christian Education. The officials had been watching them closely since they began Christian education 15 years ago and they experienced periodic raids and disruptions. Their goal is to stop Christian educations.

11. NIGERIA – On January 18, a large number of Fulani militants stormed the village of Kurmin Wali in Kaduna state. They targeted 2 Cherubim and Seraphim churches and the Evangelical Church Winning All Church. 166 Christians were abducted from the 3 churches. Pray for the Nigerian authorities as they seek to bring this situation to an end and pray for the safe release of all 166 hostages.

UPDATE: Praise God that on February 5 all 166 hostages were released. Pray that they will each receive the support they need as they recover from over 2 weeks in captivity.

12. CHINA – pray for **Elder Li Yingqiang and Brother Lin** who have been charged with ‘inciting subversion of state power.’ They were among 8 elders, church workers and members detained in the coordinated police raids on Jan 16 that marked the start of a new crackdown on Early Rain Covenant Church in southwest China’s Sichuan province. Pray that the Lord will strengthen these men as they face serious charges. Pray for lawyers and families of the other detainees who are still unable to obtain information regarding the reasons for their arrests.

13. INDIA – On January 4, a mob of 150 Hindu nationalists brutally attacked **Pastor Bipin Bihari Naik**, 35, and paraded him through Parjang village in Odisha state’s Ohenkanal district. They garlanded him with footwear and made him walk on thorns before tying him up at a Hindu temple, forcing him to chant Hindu slogans and trying to get him to drink water mixed with cow dung. Pray for Pastor Naik and his wife, **Bandana**, and their daughters, aged 10 and 13 as they start a new life away from Parjang village. Pray for Christians who remain in Parjang, that the Lord will protect them and provide someone to teach them and care for them.

14. TURKEY – The Turkish government has banned 20 foreign Christians from re-entry into Turkey. The effect of the ban is to separate families, many of them residents in Turkey for many years, from their Turkish communities, and leave local churches without stable leadership, weakening the Christian community that makes up a tiny fraction of the population. The European Court of Human Rights has taken up these 20 cases. Pray that the families can be reunited.

15. CHINA – praise God that 3 Early Rain detainees have been released on bail. Continue praying for **Liang Zhongyan**, who was released Feb 5, **Zhang Xinyue**, released Feb 6, and **Brother Lin**. Pray for the other 4 church leaders who remain in detention.

16. IRAN – Although protests in Iran have been brutally suppressed, Edwin Abnous of *Heart4Iran* says the real battle for Iran’s future is far from over. He hears stories where the darkness has turned entire families away from empty promises to hope in Christ. Pray for courage for the underground church and for the gospel to reach all of Iran.

17. UGANDA – pray for **Biira**. She was in a difficult marriage to an older Muslim man that her parents had arranged for her to marry. She became a Christian when a local pastor shared the gospel with her. When her husband discovered her new-found faith, he beat her severely even though she was 7 months pregnant. After being rushed to the hospital by her neighbors and undergoing multiple surgeries, both she and her baby survived. Biira’s husband cut her off because of her conversion. The local church provided shelter for her and her children after she was released from the hospital. VOM provided a new home for them, and Biira is actively serving her local church. She requests prayer for healing and strength to care for her children.

18. CHINA – *China Partnership* asks for prayer for **Pastor S** who has been in prison since 2023. His wife, **Sister J**, says that during his first year in prison, his hands, feet and ears were all frostbitten. Pray that God will protect him physically and mentally, provide what he needs daily and keep him safe from harm. Sister J asks for prayer that he will be light and salt in prison and live out the likeness of Christ. She is thankful that her business can provide living expenses for her and her child, but also asks for prayer for improved health for her child.

19. IRAN – continue to pray for **Mehran Shamloui**, 44, an Iranian Christian convert who was sentenced to 10 years in prison in March 2025 for his house church activities. He is being held in Evin Prison, and the Supreme Court has rejected his application for a retrial. Pray for protection and good health for him in prison and that God will bless his witness to guards and prisoners. Pray that he will be granted early release.

20. COLOMBIA – Unidentified hit men shot and killed Pentecostal Pastor Jose Ortega in January during a family reunion in the northwestern department of Magdalena. Ortega’s death marks one year of increased persecution against religious and community leaders in Colombia after failed peace talks between paramilitary groups and the national government.

21. UNITED STATES – praise God that Massachusetts state officials adopted a policy change last year that removes a gender ideology mandate from foster care licensing. Two religious families, aided by *Alliance Defending Freedom*, filed a federal lawsuit in Sept 2020 challenging the state policy excluding them from fostering children because of their beliefs about sexuality. Pray for **Nick and Audrey Jones and Greg and Marianelly Schrock** who together had provided homes to over 35 foster children. ADF attorney **Johannes Widmalm-Delphonse** hopes the state will abide by its assurances that the 2 couples can continue to foster while staying true to their religious convictions.

22. CHINA – pray for **Pastor Yang Rongli**, 69, co-founder of the Linfen Golden Lampstand Church in Shanxi province along with her husband **Wang Xiaoquang**. She is serving a 15-year prison sentence for ‘fraud’ for collecting offerings and is not due for release until 2036. Her husband is serving a 9-year prison sentence. Pray for their son, **Wang Yunxiang**, and grandson, **Ya Lun**. Pray that Pastor Yang will receive the necessary medical care for diabetes. Ask God to sustain the Golden Lampstand Church network.

23. ERITREA – continue praying for **Pastor Kidane Weldou**, in his early 70’s, and has been in prison for 21 years with no release date set. He was senior pastor of the Full Gospel Church in Asmara and was an executive member of Gideons International in Eritrea. He was involved in ministry among students and professionals from various churches. He disappeared in March 2005 and is believed to be in the maximum security Wengel Mermera Central Investigation Center, a labyrinth of dungeon cells where many political and military prisoners are thought to be incarcerated. Pray for his wife, **Tirhan** and their 4 daughters who have never been permitted to visit him. Pray for adequate medical care for his diabetes and eyesight.

24. VIETNAM – pray for **Y Pum Bya**, 61, who is a house-church leader from Vietnam’s Central Highlands and is serving a 14-year prison sentence for promoting religious freedom and rights for his fellow Montagnard people. He ministered in an unregistered house church, and its members have suffered police raids, detention, interrogation and pressure to renounce their faith. After his arrest in April 2018 when armed police raided a church gathering, he was beaten and shocked with electric batons. Pray for his wife, **H’Bleng Nie** and their 7 adult children. His wife and youngest son, **Y An Dri Nie**, have been monitored and interrogated since his arrest.

25. CHINA – pray for **Elder Ding Zhongfu, and Pastor Zhou Songjin**. They are leaders of Ganquan Church in Hefei, capital of Anhui province, and they have each been given 4-year prison sentences for ‘fraud.’