



THE Voice OF THE Martyrs

July 2021



MARTYRS AND THEIR FAMILIES

**I WILL LIVE FOR JESUS
OR DIE FOR JESUS**



www.persecutionsa.org

“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them.” Heb 13:3



To Live and Die *For* *Christ*



Bindi met her future husband in 2017, when her father brought a young coworker named Kande to their home in India's Jharkhand state. Among their earliest conversations was a discussion about someone named Jesus, whom Kande was eager for Bindi to know.

"He told me about his life-changing experience with Jesus and the peace he had been experiencing," Bindi recalled. "He helped lead me to accept Jesus as my Saviour."

Although Bindi's parents held animist beliefs, they approved of their daughter's decision to follow Christ as well as her desire to join Kande in marriage. After the wedding, the newlyweds moved into a home Kande had built in a nearby village, where they were the first — and only — Christians in the Hindu community.

As they got to know their neighbours, Bindi and Kande often shared the Gospel with them and

prayed for those who were sick. Soon, however, their Christian faith caught the attention of village leaders. And some in the community started calling them names, eventually leading to threats of violence against the couple. "With prayer and our trust in God, we continued our journey with Jesus," Bindi said.

An Unthinkable Attack

Kande served at his church in a nearby city and, even after a long day of construction work, never missed a prayer meeting or Bible study. Out of obedience to Christ, he also helped the poor in various ways.

But his active faith continued to irritate local leaders, who eventually asked Kande to publicly renounce his Christian faith at a community meeting. In response, Kande gave a thorough explanation of his decision to follow Christ and said he could not reject Him.

Radical Hindus soon visited Kande

▲ Bindi (above left) and Kande (inset) shared the Gospel with their Hindu neighbours despite threats of violence.

at home, pressuring him to participate in a puja ceremony honouring Hindu gods and to contribute to various Hindu causes. When he refused, the radicals threatened to kill him.

Each time Bindi and Kande faced persecution, they prayed for strength to endure the attack. And Kande often read from the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness."

In 2018, shortly after the birth of their first daughter, a group of young men barged into their home, threatening and verbally abusing them for their Christian faith. When Kande responded boldly, the men grabbed Bindi's mother, who was there helping with the baby, took her into the nearby jungle and sexually assaulted her. Four of the men were later convicted and are currently in prison.

Losing Her Pillar of Faith

The violence didn't end with the assault of Bindi's mother or the arrest of her attackers. The family continued to receive threats for refusing to renounce their faith, and on the evening of 7 June 2020, Kande got an anonymous phone call from a man threatening to kill him. Kande told his wife about the call, and they immediately prayed about it.

Then, at about 8pm that evening, during the family's regular prayer time, someone knocked loudly on their door. When Kande looked outside, he saw a group of armed men. "If God is willing to take away my life, it is His will," Kande told Bindi. "If God wants to save me, He will save me. No matter what happens to me, you should not give up your faith in Jesus. In difficulties, you must continue to follow Jesus. Our Lord is able to provide for you even if my life is taken away."

Moments later, one of the men broke down the door and dragged Kande out of the house. Bindi followed the mob, begging them to spare Kande's life. When the men chased her away, she ran to a church member's home, where she spent the night.

The next morning, Kande's body was found on the side of the road leading to his church. His throat had been slashed.

After Kande's murder, Bindi and her two daughters moved in with her parents. Although her father had never objected to her Christian faith and her mother had even come to faith in Christ, Bindi's father suggested that maybe she should stop following Jesus. His wife had been sexually assaulted and his son-in-law murdered, and he simply couldn't handle it anymore. He worried about losing Bindi, too.

But in reply to her father, Bindi repeated something she remembered Kande once saying: "I will live for Jesus or die for Jesus," she said, "but I will never turn back."

Moving Forward in Christ

Bindi has not returned to her home because Kande's killer is still free and she fears another attack. But her husband's murder hasn't deterred her from following Christ. In fact, it has inspired her to do so more faithfully. "I saw a deep love and commitment from Kande toward Jesus Christ," she said. "Kande's life example is helping me to keep following Jesus."

Bindi said one of the things she misses most is Kande's steadfast faith. Family prayer and Bible studies are different now. "I still think of Kande's last words and the way that he remained faithful and trusted the Lord until his last moment of life," she said. "I must also trust the Lord and continue to follow Jesus."

Despite the great loss she has suffered, Bindi said she would try to forgive Kande's killers. "I would dare to tell them, 'My husband is in eternal peace. Why did you do this? Look at these two small girls; they are now fatherless.'"

Bindi said she has learned more about God's faithfulness and purposes since Kande's death. "God

has provided what I need," she said. "God is teaching me to remain strong so I can make other women strong."

Pray

Bindi asks us to pray that she and her daughters will grow in Christ and that God will continue to provide for them. She also asks for prayer that her husband's killer will be brought to justice and come to know the Lord.

▼ VOM has helped Bindi with living expenses and is helping provide education for her daughters and resources to start a business.



A Deadly *Interrogation*



Ali and Dina were well acquainted with suffering for being Christ's witnesses, but Dina was unprepared for her husband's sudden death.

Dina had only five years with her husband, and their children will never know what a patient, forgiving and humble man he was. "I am thankful God gave me such a husband," Dina said. "He was always faithful to God."

Ali was raised as a Christian in an Asian country that had only a few Believers, while Dina, who grew up in a Muslim family, came to know Christ during college in the late 1990s. After she began attending a church where Ali was pastor, they fell in love and planned to marry. At that time, churches still met openly, as the country's government had not yet clarified its position on Evangelical Christians.

Then, one Sunday during service, Muslim extremists detonated two bombs in the church. Dina was in front with the choir when the first bomb exploded near the door. The second

bomb, which was closer, ruptured her eardrum and permanently damaged her hearing. Ali happened to be gone the day of the bombing.

After the explosions, Dina helped put people in ambulances and make sure they were OK. As she and others stood in shock, talking about cleaning up, the police arrived. "We thought they would help us," she said.

Instead of helping, police took the Christians to a police station for questioning. And rather than inquiring about the bombing, they asked Dina things like, "What do you do in church?" and "Why do you go to church?"

Determined to remain faithful, she kept repeating that she believed in Christ Jesus. Then another policeman came in and began to sexually assault her. "We will see how your God will save you," he said.

Praying for God's help, Dina

suddenly shouted, "Jesus, Lord, He is strong!" At that, the policeman pushed her away, saying, "Take her out. She is mentally ill."

Dina was finally taken to a room where the other Believers were being held. And as she listened to the screams of Believers being beaten in nearby interrogation rooms, she started to cry. Then, one of the church leaders, whose skin was blackened with burns, said, "We were all praying for you. Let's pray for the others who are still in there."

A Sudden Loss

As a new Believer, Dina eagerly told her Muslim relatives about Christ, ultimately leading an aunt, uncle and grandmother to the Lord. "When my relatives saw that, they started blaming me," she said. "In my second year of university, my mom kicked me out. My mom actually told me, 'Get

your clothes and go to God. Go to church and your God. You can't stay with me anymore."

After the church bombing, the university also asked her not to return, fearing the stigma of an openly Christian student. "I had nothing," she recalled, "no money, just a bag of books. I started praying, and God gave me strength to persevere. I remembered a verse from the Bible: 'Take your cross and follow me.'"

After Dina and Ali were married, Ali continued serving the church tirelessly. He was imprisoned several times because of his work as a pastor, and police frequently came to their house to threaten him and urge him to leave the country. As Front-Line Workers in a closed country, the couple received regular support from VOM.

In 2011, Ali attended a conference in a neighbouring country. On his way back, he was stopped at the border with his bag full of Bibles. "Nobody could cross the border with a Bible, a Christian book or anything related to Christianity," a Christian leader from the country said. "Even one Bible for personal use was considered illegal. Materials were usually confiscated and people were interrogated."

When border guards told Ali he was going to prison, he pleaded with them, explaining that he needed to get home to his pregnant wife. After being held overnight for interrogation, he was released the following morning and arrived home late that evening.

Ali and Dina stayed up talking until 2am. "I was not afraid of being in jail," Ali told his wife, "but I was afraid for you and the children. I prayed that if I have to die, I would die at home, not there."

Ali never woke up the next morning. He died of a heart attack, even though he was young, healthy

and had received a heart exam a few months earlier. "People who experienced that border crossing immediately understood what could possibly have happened," the Christian leader said. Administering drugs during interrogation was common.

Walking in Faithfulness

Life has been hard for Dina and her three children since Ali's death. "We don't know the answers to our many questions," she said. "We just have to understand that Ali had eternal life. I miss him."

Since women are considered property in Dina's country, men from the church have to sign rental contracts for her and pay her bills. VOM has been providing rental support. She also has to move frequently, when neighbours find out she is a Christian. At one location, the neighbour kids beat up her children and called them infidels.

Last year, Dina got a job teaching Russian at a university. But within six months, she was told to either give up her church membership or resign.

Dina chose to leave the job.

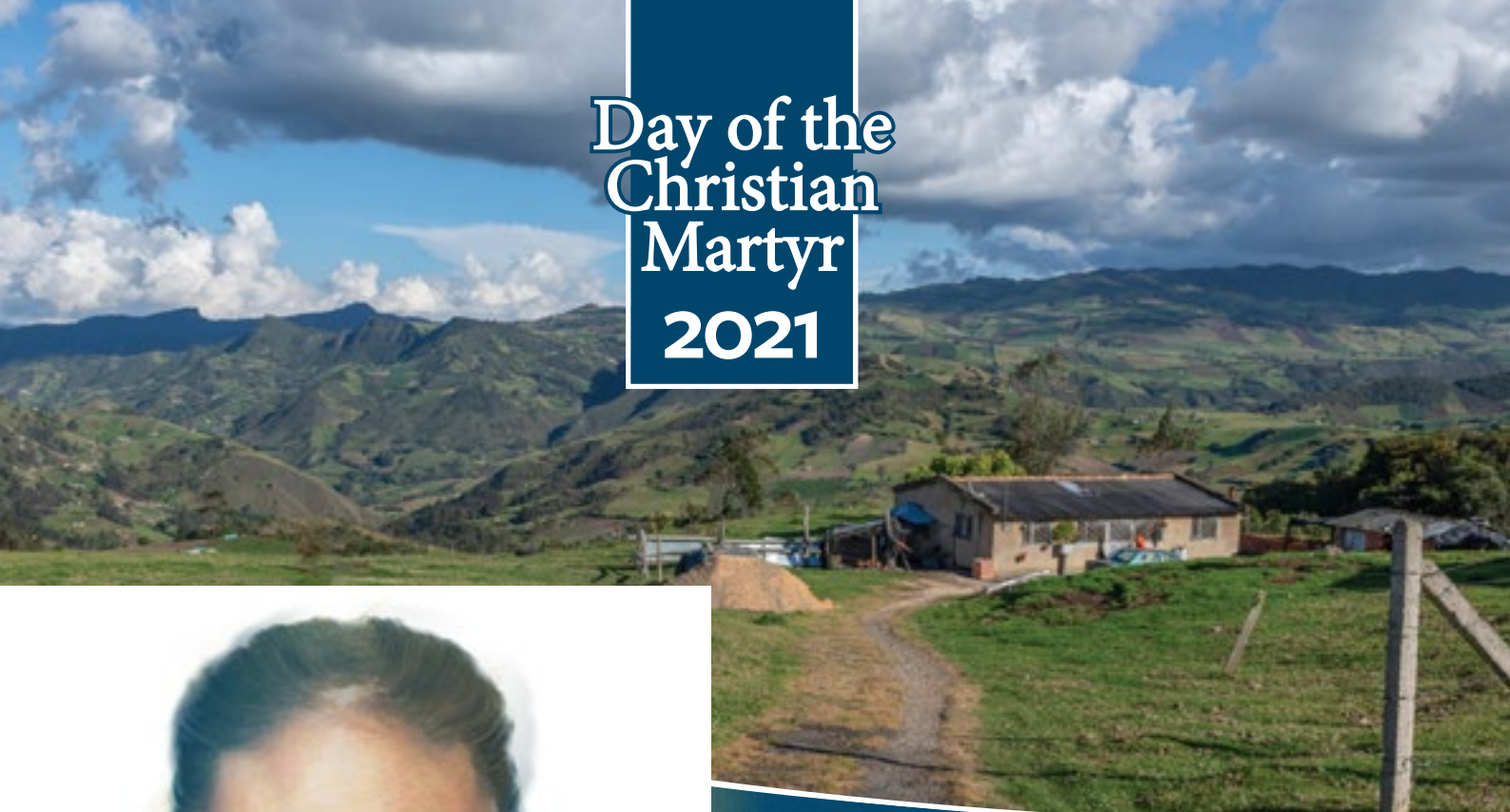
Because the children were very young when Ali died (Dina was pregnant with their youngest at the time), Dina is the only parent they have known. "I want to raise them well, just like their father," she said. "I want them to be faithful to God and serve Him with their gifts."

For years, Dina's relatives told her that her Christian faith was to blame for all of her difficulties. They told her she was cursed and deceived. But their opinion of her has softened as they have watched her over time. One uncle, a strict Muslim, admitted that he admired her perseverance. "You are some woman," he said. "You are not broken in spite of this problem. You are pure and not spoiled. I can see that God is doing something in your heart."

Dina is still walking the long path of suffering toward her eternal hope. She has seen God's faithfulness and power in the past, and she knows He will always be there for her, no matter what she encounters.



► VOM workers pray with Dina.



Day of the Christian Martyr 2021



HONOURING
THE FAITHFUL
WITNESS OF
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FROM COLOMBIA

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ON HER DOORSTEP BY MARXIST GUERRILLAS
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Prayer Diary

July/August 2021

JULY

S 18	BURKINA FASO	Pray for internally displaced Christians who have suffered tremendous loss for the sake of Christ.
M 19	MAURITANIA	Pray that persecuted Christians will persevere and remember the hope they have in Christ.
T 20	SYRIA	Pray for those ministering to persecuted Druze people in Suwayda.
W 21	VIETNAM	Pray that pastors and church leaders will continue to receive training and material support.
T 22	CUBA	Pray for pastors pressured to provide the government with information about church leaders.
F 23	LAOS	Pray for ongoing evangelistic and discipleship efforts among the majority Khmu people.
S 24	TAJIKISTAN	Pray for Pastor Bakhrom Kholmatov who was released from prison in December 2019.
S 25	ISRAEL	Pray for Believers from Muslim backgrounds in Palestinian areas, especially those who have lost jobs.
M 26	CHINA	Pray for Front-Line Workers seeking to bless persecuted Christians.
T 27	TURKEY	Pray for ministries focused on the discipleship of Turkish Christians.
W 28	IRAN	Pray for those smuggling print and digital Scriptures to Believers in Iran.
T 29	OMAN	Pray for Joseph who lost all of his worldly possessions because of his faith in Jesus Christ.
F 30	AZERBAIJAN	Pray that churches will be able to safely acquire government registration.
S 31	NEPAL	Pray for Christian widows in Nepal who suffer severe discrimination.

AUGUST

S 1	INDONESIA	Pray that the government will control those inciting social unrest, especially against Christians.
M 2	CAMEROON	Pray for tribal Christians in the north whose villages are routinely attacked.
T 3	EGYPT	Pray for Gada and her daughter who had to flee because of their faith.
W 4	ETHIOPIA	Pray for Believers who are persecuted by Orthodox Christians in northern Ethiopia.
T 5	MALDIVES	Pray that more Christian workers will choose to minister in this Islamic stronghold.
F 6	SOMALIA	Pray for Somali Christian leaders who risk their lives to share the Gospel throughout eastern Africa.
S 7	SUDAN	Pray for hospital chaplains in the Nuba Mountains as they comfort patients in Jesus' name.
S 8	SAUDI ARABIA	Pray for the health of a Saudi Believer forced to flee the country.
M 9	QATAR	Pray for local Believers who are persecuted for their faith.
T 10	CHINA	Pray that Front-Line Workers will trust God for financial provision.
W 11	UAE	Pray for the encouragement and courage of local Believers worshipping in secret.
T 12	IRAN	Pray for Christian prisoners who were released from jail last year at the outset of the pandemic.
F 13	TURKMENISTAN	Pray that Believers will maintain a courageous witness despite intimidation.
S 14	KYRGYZSTAN	Pray that churches will be able to help those who have lost income.

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