



THE VOICE OF THE MARTYRS  
DIE STEM VAN DIE MARTELARE

July 2023



# AFRICA NO TURNING BACK

PHOTO ISSUE



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





## Experiencing God's People in Photographs

As an avid reader, one can love words. But one can also deeply appreciate our newsletter's annual photo issue. No matter how well we document the testimonies of persecuted Christians or how carefully we retell them, words cannot convey the experience of looking into the eyes of our brothers and sisters, watching them pray, seeing them gather for worship or witnessing their baptisms. But you can experience all of these through the photographs on this page!

The phrases "God's people" and "the people of God" are used significantly throughout the Old Testament to describe the Israelites. Throughout that portion of the unfolding of God's plan — which in hindsight we see as an earlier epoch of redemptive history — God's dealings focused on one nation. But this was only a foreshadowing of what was to come. The ultimate reality would be found in Christ and in His body, the church (John 5:39). Today, tools like this newsletter mean that we are increasingly able to witness the astonishing grandeur of the people of God who are "a holy nation" that He is bringing forth from every tribe and nation (1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 7:9).

May we never neglect fellowship, the knowledge of and interaction with other members of the global body of Christ. Christians in other nations are not a topic about which we can be uninterested or a cause that we can occasionally champion. They are our family, our brothers and sisters for eternity. With us, they are "*a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;*" (1 Peter 2:9). When we consider this, let us remember with reverence that the price of this possession was the precious blood of Christ Jesus our Lord (1 Corinthians 6:20).



This special photo issue of The Voice of the Martyrs newsletter is filled with memorable photographs. They bear witness to eternal victories resulting from the shedding of Christ's blood and the suffering of His children. May this "great a cloud of witnesses" help each of us to "*let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,*" (Hebrews 12:1–2).





## The Need for God's Word

Miriam and her husband had just finished their evening prayers and turned in for the night when members of the terrorist group al-Shabaab broke into their home in Kenya. The extremists beheaded Miriam's husband and then tried unsuccessfully to force her and her daughter to convert to Islam. Though Miriam and the rest of her family managed to escape, the terrorists stole their livestock and burned their home. During the attack, Miriam drew strength and comfort from Isaiah 54:17 — *"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper."*

When Christians are confronted by Islamic extremists in Kenya, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and elsewhere, God's Word provides strength and comfort.





### Restoring Hope and Refuge

Blessing Andrawus was heartbroken when she learned that her father had been shot and killed by militant Fulani Muslims while conducting an evangelistic outreach in a neighbouring Nigerian village. The 22-year-old considered him not only a good dad but also “a very good friend.” None of her friends seemed to understand her pain, but over time she found comfort and healing through her faith in Christ. “I have a friend,” she said, “a very good friend, and that’s Jesus. He’s the only shoulder I can cry on. He will never disappoint me.”

Militant Fulani Muslims in Nigeria often target Christians’ homes. They burned Ta’azia’s home (pictured) when they attacked her village. Ta’azia has been able to stay in her burned home, but thousands of others have been forced to take refuge in camps designated for internally displaced people.







### A Faithful God Amid Great Loss

Sarah Pam has experienced great loss at the hands of militant Fulani Muslims in Nigeria. The extremists killed her husband during an attack on their village, leaving her children fatherless. And years later, they attacked the village again, killing one of her sons. Displaced from her land, Sarah now provides for her family by farming on borrowed land. She also leads the women's ministry at her church, encouraging women to put their faith in God. Despite all she has lost, Sarah has forgiven her family members' killers. "In all the difficulties, in all the problems I have been through, God has been faithful to me," she said.

Attacks on Christians have left thousands of women in Nigeria without husbands and homes. Like Sarah, many express great joy in knowing the global body of Christ is praying for them and helping meet their needs.



## Equipping Labourers for the Harvest

Few Christian workers venture into this area of Kenya (pictured), where the nomadic people are deeply rooted in a traditional culture that is mostly opposed to the Gospel. Recently, however, Front-Line Workers have distributed Christmas Care Packs — including a copy of the Bible with each pack — to children and have provided evangelism and discipleship training for 200 youth. As a result, some young people have been encouraged to continue their biblical studies and to serve as Front-Line Workers themselves. Pray earnestly *“to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest”* (Matthew 9:38).







### **Growing Radicalism, Growing Outreach**

The radicalization of Muslim populations has affected African countries like the Central African Republic, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, where little persecution or terrorism had previously existed. But with great foresight, Front-Line Workers are taking action. Churches in Uganda have implemented a strategy to advance the Gospel despite ongoing persecution: They use apologetics and Christian literature to teach foundational truths needed to combat radical Islam, they train church members to proclaim the Gospel effectively in an Islamic context, and they teach local pastors how to care for Christian converts from Islam who have been rejected by their families.



## The Deep Wounds of War

"Itoro" (pictured below) and his family were hiding in their church in the Central African Republic (CAR) when rebels entered the building and killed his wife, two children and brother. In the chaos, Itoro managed to escape, but his family members' murders continued to replay in his mind until he eventually received help in healing from the trauma. "My thoughts and orientation in life are toward God and the cross of Jesus," he said. "And in my heart, I have been able to forgive those perpetrators totally. I now help other people in the church who have been traumatized."

In African nations like the CAR, which is embroiled in a civil war, Christian families and pastors are targeted and displaced because of their Christian witness. Front-Line Workers respond by providing material aid and other forms of assistance to encourage our persecuted brothers and sisters during their time of great need.







### To Every Nation ... and Village

Sani, from Niger, first heard the Gospel when Front-Line Workers showed the JESUS film in his village. When he and other villagers became Christians, Muslim leaders tried to persuade them to stop following Christ. But Sani was undeterred. "My family and I will follow Christ," he told them. And Sani remained faithful when the Muslim leaders continued their threats, isolated Sani and the other new Believers from the community and even beat them. "We keep on sharing the Gospel," he said.

New Christians in African countries like Niger, Sierra Leone and Benin are often shunned and persecuted by family members, fellow villagers and sometimes Islamists. Like Sani, they are determined to follow Christ at any cost.





## Standing Stronger on the Frontlines

"I have decided to follow Jesus; no turning back, no turning back."

The words of the familiar hymn drifted through the air as Christians in a remote part of Sierra Leone sang and held their new Bibles. They had just made a public declaration of their faith through baptism, and many had paid dearly for following Christ. In another village, Front-Line Workers baptized more than 120 new Believers, some of whom had walked more than 25km to receive baptism. They, too, received new Bibles. One Front-Line Worker marveled at how God is working in that unreached area — an area where human and child sacrifices are practiced.

Christians throughout Africa know their faith in Jesus Christ may be tested by fire and machete. The world is behind them, and the cross is before them. And though none go with them, they still will follow ...

*"We are standing stronger, knowing that even if we are being persecuted or oppressed, God is still in control!"*

—Pastor in the Democratic Republic of the Congo



# Prayer Diary

July/August 2023

## JULY

S	16	IRAQ	<b>Pray for the courage of new Christians who are often persecuted by Muslim family members.</b>
M	17	NIGERIA	Pray that nominal Believers will repent and trust Christ.
T	18	MYANMAR	Pray that Buddhist monks involved in persecution against Christians will come to know Christ.
W	19	MALI	Pray that every Christian will have access to the Bible in his or her native language.
T	20	TURKEY	Pray that a policeman "protecting" a pastor during church services will be touched by the Gospel.
F	21	JORDAN	Pray that Christians will receive approval to open church facilities and meet without surveillance.
S	22	NEPAL	<b>Pray that persecution will embolden Christians to continue their witness for Christ.</b>
S	23	COLOMBIA	<b>Pray that churches closed by paramilitary groups will find ways to gather for worship.</b>
M	24	TANZANIA	Pray that God's Word will speed ahead of Christians working in dangerous areas (2 Thess. 3:1-3).
T	25	LEBANON	Pray that the economic crisis will give Christians opportunities to share the hope of the Gospel.
W	26	MALDIVES	Pray that God will call more labourers to the harvest fields in this Islamic stronghold.
T	27	KYRGYZSTAN	Pray for Christians in Kyrgyzstan, using Ephesians 6:19-20 as a guide.
F	28	BURKINA FASO	Pray for churches in the north whose congregations fled after recent Islamist attacks.
S	29	CUBA	<b>Pray for the peace of those who have been denied education and jobs for following Christ.</b>
S	30	UGANDA	<b>Pray for Christian converts receiving vocational training after being rejected by their families.</b>
M	31	NORTH KOREA	Pray that God will sustain the estimated 30,000 Christians imprisoned for their faith.

## AUGUST

T	1	VIETNAM	Pray that Front-Line Workers will have the necessary tools and training for ministry.
W	2	NEPAL	Pray that Christians involved in political change will keep the kingdom of God foremost.
T	3	COMOROS	Pray for non-Western missionaries working to proclaim the Gospel.
F	4	MOZAMBIQUE	Pray that displaced Christians who receive audio Bibles will be encouraged by God's Word.
S	5	OMAN	<b>Pray that local Believers will live boldly for Christ despite the cost.</b>
S	6	IRAQ	<b>Pray that Christians will remain faithful and withstand threats under daily oppression.</b>
M	7	CHINA	Pray for the successful distribution of Bibles in every part of China.
T	8	AZERBAIJAN	Pray that church leaders will build up Believers to be bold in faith.
W	9	ERITREA	Pray that Christian radio broadcasts will encourage Believers and draw others to Christ.
T	10	NORTH KOREA	Pray that government workers who receive Bibles will come to faith in Christ.
F	11	QATAR	Pray that the expatriate community will find creative ways to share Christ's love.
S	12	TURKMENISTAN	<b>Pray that the government will legally recognize the Turkmen-language Bible.</b>

Subscribe to our FREE monthly Newsletter. Go to [www.persecutionsa.org](http://www.persecutionsa.org)

**TO DONATE to Christian Mission International, please use one of the following Banks details:**

**Nedbank**

Account no.: 1925-024946 (Cheque)

Branch Code: 192505 (Bedfordview)

**Standard Bank**

Account no.: 02-249-5592 (Cheque)

Branch Code: 018305 (Bedford Gardens)

**ABSA Bank**

Account no.: 909-861-7711 (Savings)

Branch Code: 632005 (Bedford Centre)

CMI | P. O. Box 7157, Primrose Hill, 1417 South Africa | **Tel: 010 777 0114** (8am-1pm) | **Cell: 076-022-3336** (8am-5pm)  
E-pos: [cmi@vomsa.org](mailto:cmi@vomsa.org) or [bianca@vomsa.org](mailto:bianca@vomsa.org) | Website: [www.persecutionsa.org](http://www.persecutionsa.org) | Facebook@cmivomsa | Instagram@cmi - vomsa

**Directors: Mr A.B. Illman (Executive); Pastor R. Marsh; Mr R. Keir;  
Pastor J. Tucker; Mr D. Kirton; Mr C. Hutchinson**

© Permission to reprint any portion of this newsletter must be obtained from Christian Mission International.

[www.persecutionsa.org](http://www.persecutionsa.org)