

God, our hearts are burdened by the stories of persecution that your followers around the world face.

Lord, see how my enemies persecute me! Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death (Psalm 9:13)

We lift in prayer those whose governments have created laws that make it easy for the state to oppress, abuse, and even kill those who belong to religious minorities. We lift in prayer those who are taxed or fined by their government for following their faith. We pray for those who are the victims of terrorism around the world.

How long must your servant wait? When will you punish my persecutors? The arrogant dig pits to trap me, contrary to your law. (Psalm 119:84-85)

We pray for the millions around the world who have fled their homes because their religion puts them under threat. We grieve the places on the globe which where our faith was born that are now practically emptied of a Christian presence. We lift up the millions of people who are without homes, traumatized, and grief-stricken in the wake of violence and terrorism. We lament that there are so many communities which have been fearful, slow, or outright unwilling to show hospitality to these desperate refugees. Lord, how long will they wait? Come quickly to rescue them.

Princes persecute me without cause, But my heart stands in awe of Your words. (Psalm 119:161)

We pray for those who will be killed if they remain in their homes, and so they flee. We lift in prayer Christians threatened by Boko Haram attacks in Africa or severe state pressure in Iran and Saudi Arabia. We lift in prayer those in Syria whose communities have been decimated, who have no home to which to return. We also lift in prayer the terribly oppressed Rohingya people of Myanmar. We pray for people who must crowd onto boats that are not safe for travel, but for whom the risk of death by leaving outweighs the risk of death by staying.

Remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering. (Heb. 13:3)

We pray for those who have remained in their homelands -- living under unstable or unfriendly governments. We think of church leaders who are placed under house arrest, detained, fined. We think of recent converts who are estranged from their families and unfairly accused of crimes. We remember those who cannot count on protection from hate groups or terrorists because of their minority faith. We remember those for whom faithfulness looks like living in the shadows. Give them courage, Lord. Protect them.

“...we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.” (2 Cor 4:8-12)

We pray for faithful people in countries that are more stable, but still not free, who face discrimination or oppression. We pray for their strength as they commit to the difficult and faithful work of making change. We pray for advocates and organizers and prayer warriors who are working toward freedom in their countries.

“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:44-45)

God, we lift in prayer those who threaten, oppress, and even kill those who follow you. We pray for their hearts of stone to be turned to hearts of flesh. We pray that your image within them might be made visible. We pray that they set aside their evil ways, and come to know the saving truth and the renewing hope of the good news of Jesus.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” (Romans 8:35)

Nothing can separate us from your love. In this strong hope, we offer our prayers.