2. AFGHANISTAN

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
We estimate that the number is in the thousands, but it’s hard to know exactly how many are in Afghanistan. Many Christians keep their faith completely secret. Afghanistan is a tribal society, and loyalty to your family, clan and tribe are incredibly important. Islam is seen as part of Afghan identity, and leaving Islam is seen as a betrayal by family and community members. It is illegal for an Afghan person to leave Islam. Those who decide to follow Jesus in Afghanistan must do so in complete secret. Those who are discovered may be sent to a mental hospital - their families believe no sane person would leave Islam. They may also be beaten or even killed by family members, or members of Islamic extremist groups like the Taliban.

PRAY THIS
Lord Jesus, thank You that people in Afghanistan are coming to know You despite the extreme persecution they face. Please help believers to shine as witnesses for You in their day-to-day lives. Protect and strengthen those who are facing persecution from their families and communities, and give wisdom to those who are working to support secret Afghan believers. Amen.

3. SOMALIA

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
There are most likely just several hundred Christians in Somalia. Islam is an important part of Somali identity, and for a Somali person to decide to leave Islam and follow Jesus is seen as a huge betrayal. Where the Middle East has the self-proclaimed Islamic State, the Horn of Africa has the militant Islamist group al-Shabaab. This group has stated publically that it ‘wants Somalia free of all Christians’. Most Somali Christians keep their faith completely secret. If al-Shabaab finds someone who has become a Christian, the militants will often kill them on the spot. Despite the risks, Somali people are coming to faith in Jesus in some miraculous ways.

PRAY THIS
Lord Jesus, thank You for the perseverance of our Somali brothers and sisters. Protect those who must keep their faith a secret, and help them to find fellowship with other believers. Soften the hearts of their friends and family, and strengthen them in their walk with You. Amen.

5. PAKISTAN

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
Two million Christians live in Pakistan – less than five per cent of the total population of 210.5 million. Historically, Islam is deeply embedded in Pakistani society and the ruling elite aims to enforce an Islamic regime in the country. There is no freedom of the press and no freedom of expression. In the Nuba Mountains thousands of Christians have been killed and displaced as the government seeks to ethnically cleanse the region of minority groups. In other parts of the country, many churches have been demolished, and church leaders have been arrested for speaking out against persecution. Leaving Islam to follow Jesus is illegal and can be punished with the death sentence, and believers from Muslim backgrounds often keep their faith completely secret.

PRAY THIS
Father God, thank you for the courageous faith of our church family in Sudan. Protect and provide for our brothers and sisters in the Nuba mountains. Change the hearts of the militants who are intent on harming them. Pour out Your grace and strength on those who are under pressure to renounce You. Amen.
WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?

9. IRAQ

There are 814,000 Christians live in Syria. They make up 4.5 per cent of the total population. As the conflict in Syria continues, Islamic extremists still have control over areas of Syria. Anyone who doesn’t conform to their extreme brand of Islam is a target to these groups. In these areas Christians are forced to pay protection money, must follow a strict dress code and dietary rules, and cannot express their faith publicly. In other areas of Syria, the leaders of historical churches are targets for abduction – they are very recognisable because of their clothes. Christians are sometimes kidnapped for ransom. Believers from Muslim backgrounds face pressure from their families, as leaving Islam is seen as a huge source of shame.

PRAY THIS

Lord Jesus, thank You that our brothers and sisters in Iraq are starting to return to their homes. May You encourage and strengthen them as they begin to rebuild and repair what was destroyed. Protect those who don’t have homes to go to, and bring your healing to believers who have suffered greatly for their faith. May Your Holy Spirit be light, life and hope to Iraq. Amen.

10. INDIA

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?

64 million Christians live in India – it sounds a lot, but they actually make up a tiny minority – less than five per cent. The Indian government is led by the Hindu nationalist BJP, who believe that being a Hindu is part of Indian identity, and frequently turn a blind eye to attacks on those of other faiths. One group has said that they want to end India free of Christians and Muslims by the end of 2021. Christians in India face horrific levels of violence from extremists, with thousands of attacks taking place every year. Several states in India have brought in anti-conversion laws - such laws are often used as an excuse to disrupt church services and harass Christians.

PRAY THIS

Heavenly Father, have mercy on our brothers and sisters in India. May they know You as their Rock, their Protector and their Defender. Provide for those believers who have been cut off from their friends and family for Your sake, and turn the hearts of Hindu extremists, that they would be overwhelmed and transformed by Your love. Amen.

11. SYRIA

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?

As the conflict in Syria continues, Islamic extremists still have control over areas of Syria. Anyone who doesn’t conform to their extreme brand of Islam is a target to these groups. In these areas Christians are forced to pay protection money, must follow a strict dress code and dietary rules, and cannot express their faith publicly. In other areas of Syria, the leaders of historical churches are targets for abduction – they are very recognisable because of their clothes. Christians are sometimes kidnapped for ransom. Believers from Muslim backgrounds face pressure from their families, as leaving Islam is seen as a huge source of shame.

PRAY THIS

Lord Jesus, thank You for the courage of my brothers and sisters in northern Nigeria. Please provide protection and provision for them. May Your love shine through Nigerian believers, giving them grace to witness to those around them in this country, so that Christians may be free to worship you. Amen.

12. NIGERIA

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?

91 million Christians live in Nigeria – they make up around 46 per cent of the total population. The majority of Christians live in the south of the country, and their rights to religious freedom is less than in the north. But in the north of Nigeria and the ‘Middle Belt’, where Christians are in the minority, they face horrific levels of persecution at the hands of Islamic extremists. The militant group Boko Haram have abducted and killed those who refuse to conform to their extremist brand of Islam. Attacks by armed groups of Muslims have resulted in the killing, maiming, dispossession and eviction of thousands of Christians. Twelve of the northern states are under Sharia (Islamic law), and Christians in these states face discrimination.

PRAY THIS

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your love. Amen.

13. IRAQ

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?

814,000 Christians live in Syria. They make up 4.5 per cent of the total population. As the conflict in Syria continues, Islamic extremists still have control over areas of Syria. Anyone who doesn’t conform to their extreme brand of Islam is a target to these groups. In these areas Christians are forced to pay protection money, must follow a strict dress code and dietary rules, and cannot express their faith publicly. In other areas of Syria, the leaders of historical churches are targets for abduction – they are very recognisable because of their clothes. Christians are sometimes kidnapped for ransom. Believers from Muslim backgrounds face pressure from their families, as leaving Islam is seen as a huge source of shame.

PRAY THIS

Heavenly Father, we ask for Your peace in Syria. Bring an end to war and violence there, that Your people may flourish. Be with all those who have no place to call home. Strengthen Your church, our family, that they may continue to bring Your hope to their communities. Amen.

14. MALDIVES

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?

A few thousand Christians live the Maldives, but they are almost all expatriates. Maldivian Christians must keep their faith completely secret, making it hard to know how many there are. The constitution of the Maldives states that the nation is ‘100 per cent Muslim’. Leaving Islam is seen as blasphemy, and some religious scholars have said that those who do should be killed. Maldivian Christians keep their faith completely secret. There have been cases where spouses have only discovered after years that both of them were active Christians, as they had hidden their faith from one another. If they are discovered, they will lose their citizenship. Even owning a Bible can result in imprisonment.

PRAY THIS

Lord Jesus, please strengthen our brothers and sisters in the Maldives. Give people dreams and visions that reveal who You are, and how much You love them, that they might come to know You. Protect believers who meet in secret, and help them to remain true to You in the midst of their trials. Amen.

15. SAUDI ARABIA

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?

There are 225,000 Christians in Iraq. They are a tiny minority, making up less than one per cent of the total population of 39.3 million. Islamic extremism is still a problem in Iraq. Although the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) have lost territory in Iraq, their ideology remains. Many of the militants have simply blended back into the general population. Many families who were forced to flee their homes by IS have been able to return to the Nineveh Plain and begin to rebuild their lives and communities. However, violence against Christians continues – attacks, abductions, and even murders are still taking place. Some of the houses of those who fled to escape IS have been illegally occupied.

PRAY THIS

Lord Jesus, thank You that our brothers and sisters in Iraq are starting to return to their homes. May You encourage and strengthen them as they begin to rebuild and repair what was destroyed. Protect those who don’t have homes to go to, and bring Your healing to believers who have suffered greatly for their faith. May Your Holy Spirit be light, life and hope to Iraq. Amen.

16. EGYPT

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?

10 million Christians live in Egypt, making up 10 per cent of Egypt’s population. Egypt is a strongly Islamic nation. In rural and impoverished areas in particular, radical imams and less tolerant brands of Islam are growing in prominence. The self-proclaimed Islamic State has vowed to wage war against Christians in Egypt. Egyptian Christians are often victims of social exclusion, and face constant discrimination in areas such as justice, education and basic social services. In rural areas, Christian women have been targeted for abduction and forced marriage. Believers from Muslim backgrounds face pressure from their families and communities – they may be beaten or expelled from their homes.

PRAY THIS

Lord Jesus, thank You for our brothers and sisters in Egypt. May You comfort and provide for all those who have been attacked, or lost loved ones, in recent years. Help Christians who come under attack in their schools, their workplaces, and their family lives to flourish, that others may see Your light and love shining through them. Amen.
20. VIETNAM

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
There are 8.6 million Christians in Vietnam. They make up 8.9 per cent of the population. The majority of the population are Buddhist. The Communist government maintains Christian activity at a high level of pressure on all Christians. Tribal leaders will often exclude Christians and new converts from the community, seeing them as traitors of their culture and identity. Believers from ethnic minority groups face the greatest persecution, which includes harassment, violent attacks and social exclusion. Villagers collide with local Communist authorities, beating believers, kicking them out of their villages and stoning places of worship during meetings.

PRAY THIS
Lord Jesus, please protect those who follow You in Vietnam; especially those from ethnic minorities like the Hmong. Move the hearts of government leaders by Your Holy Spirit to loosen restrictions on Christian minorities, and help Open Doors workers to distribute Bibles safely to believers. Amen.

19. LAOS

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
There are currently around 225,000 Christians living in Laos - they make up just over three per cent of the population. Laos is ruled by the Communist party, and while Buddhism is an accepted religion, other religions are seen as a threat. Christianity is seen as a western ideology, and therefore hostile. Christians must take extreme caution to stay on the good side of the Communist authorities. House churches are considered ‘illegal gatherings’ and must operate in secret. Believers from Buddhist backgrounds bear the brunt of persecution as they are considered to have betrayed their Buddhist-animal community. They are frequently put under pressure by their own extended families.

PRAY THIS
Lord Jesus, protect and strengthen our persecuted family in Laos by Your Holy Spirit. Enable and embolden them to share their faith wisely. Please shield Christian children from any injustice they may face at school and transform the attitude of those in power and in government in Laos, that they would allow freedom of worship. Amen.

22. ALGERIA

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
Christians are considered enemies of the state because they dare to believe in a higher authority than the Kim family. The North Korean regime demands absolute loyalty and obedience, and the Kim family are worshipped like gods. Portraits of the Kim family must be hung in all homes and schools. The first words parents must teach their children are ‘Thank you, Father Kim Il-sung’. 

PRAY THIS
Lord Jesus, please protect those who follow You in North Korea; especially those who suffer in labour camps and prisons. Protect Open Doors secret workers as they smuggle in vital support. Please work in the heart of North Korea’s leader, Kim Jong-Un, and give him revelations of You. Lord, please break the power of evil they have over the people of North Korea. Amen.

18. MYANMAR

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
43 million Christians live in Myanmar – they make up just over eight per cent of the total population. The majority of the population are Buddhists. Anyone deviating from the Buddhist heritage of Myanmar is regarded as an outsider and potentially dangerous. Leaving the faith of your tribe is seen as a betrayal, and can lead to social isolation or house arrest. Areas with a high percentage of Christians are deliberately disadvantaged through poor infrastructure and health care. Over 100,000 Christians have been forced to flee their homes, and are living in camps where they are denied access to food and healthcare. Churches are monitored and church leaders are targeted. Christians often meet in homes or business places because land grabbing from Christians is a problem.

PRAY THIS
Lord Jesus, we lift our church family in Myanmar to You. Please protect and provide for all believers who are displaced. Refresh and restore the vision and futures of the young people there. Help Your church to stand firm amidst the turmoil, and bring peace to Myanmar. Amen.
26. TURKEY

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
94,000 Christians live in Turkey. They're a tiny minority. The majority of the population are Muslims. Missionaries and Christians in Turkey are expelled, including thousands of refugees from Iraq and Syria. There are between 5,000 and 7,000 believers from Muslim backgrounds in Turkey. It is widely believed that a true Turk must be a Sunni Muslim. Christians from Muslim backgrounds often hide their faith. If they are discovered, they will face pressure from their families – leaving Islam is seen as a betrayal of their Turkish identity and a source of shame to the family. Those from ethnic minorities such as Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Syriac Christians experience discrimination in the workplace. Religious affiliation is recorded on ID cards, so it is easy to discriminate against Christian applicants.

PRAY THIS
Holy Spirit, keep your church alive in Turkey. Give peace to those who are forced to keep their faith secret. Protect and provide for those who are discriminated against in the workplace and give wisdom and courage to churches who want to share the good news about Jesus. Amen.

27. CHINA

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
97.2 million Christians live in China. Despite their large numbers, they are in the minority in China. The goal of the Communist Party of China is to maintain its power through national unity – including the control of all religions. Christians from Muslim or Tibetan Buddhist backgrounds also face rejection and attack by their communities. Churches are monitored, and some have been attacked by the security forces or closed down. Church leaders are detained. Children under 18 are banned from attending church. Believers from Muslim or Tibetan Buddhist backgrounds often keep their faith a secret. They may hide their Bibles, and it can be difficult for them to meet with other believers safely.

PRAY THIS
Lord Jesus, thank You for our Chinese brothers and sisters. Strengthen those from Muslim and Buddhist backgrounds who face expulsion from their communities. Please convict those who are tightening restrictions on churches of the importance of religious freedom. May Your light shine through believers, that others may come to know and serve You. Amen.

28. ETHIOPIA

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
64 million Christians live in Ethiopia. They make up almost 60 per cent of the population, most of the rest being Muslims. Christians in Ethiopia face persecution from local and national Islam, the government – and sadly, even each other. Islamic extremism has spilled over into parts of Ethiopia from Somalia, and in rural areas where Christians are a minority, they may be denied access to communal resources, or even violently attacked. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church considers itself the only true denomination, and those who move to other denominations have been socially excluded or beaten. All Christians face certain levels of restriction from the government. For example, setting up religious broadcasting services and teaching about religion in schools has been banned.

PRAY THIS
Holy Spirit, unite our brothers and sisters in Ethiopia as one body. Help them to stand firm against the persecution they face. May You provide for believers who are denied access to communal resources, or who face exile from their communities. Amen.

29. TAJIKISTAN

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
There are 61,700 Christians in Tajikistan, making up 0.7 per cent of the total population. Sunni Islam is the official religion of Tajikistan, and Islam is seen as part of the Tajik identity. Leaving Islam is seen as a betrayal. All Christian activity is monitored by the government. Christians who share their faith and Christians from Muslim backgrounds face constant scrutiny. The small number of believers from Muslim backgrounds often hide their faith for fear of punishment. Church groups must be registered and sermons must be approved. Those under 18 are forbidden from taking part in religious activities.

PRAY THIS
Lord God, protect every family that follows You. Give confidence and grace to children who know Your love when they are humiliated by teachers and pupils at school. Protect them as they attend summer camps. Give safely to believers who reach out to others with the good news of Your love. By Your Holy Spirit, fill each church with Your presence so that they can face restrictions - and even raids - with wisdom, courage and faith. Amen.

30. INDONESIA

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
There are 32.4 million Christians living in Indonesia. They make up 12.1 per cent of the total population. The majority of the population are Muslims. Islamic extremist groups are becoming more influential. Some regions of Indonesia already operate under Islamic law (Sharia), which poses a threat to Christians and other religious minorities. Believers from Muslim backgrounds often face persecution from their families and communities. Churches are hard to build. Children of Christians often face verbal abuse; they are called infidels and are sometimes made to sit at the back in class. In 2018, 18 Christians were killed and many more wounded in a co-ordinated suicide bomb attack on three churches in the city of Surabaya.

PRAY THIS
Lord Jesus, we lift to You our brothers and sisters in Indonesia, and in particular we ask for Your blessing on those who are still healing from the effects of the recent natural disasters. Grant them Your peace and Your love, and bring healing and restoration to Your church. Give Your people courage to stand up for You in the midst of such dangerous circumstances. Amen.

31. JORDAN

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
130,000 Christians live in Jordan, making up just over one per cent of the population. Most Christians in Jordan belong to the Orthodox or Roman Catholic denominations. Jordan is a strongly Islamic society, and Christians from Muslim backgrounds face the worst persecution. Leaving Islam is seen as a source of shame to their families and communities. Christians from Muslim backgrounds often keep their faith a secret, and meet together in underground churches. However, these churches are often monitored by the government. Churches involved in evangelism are monitored by the government and pressured to stop.

PRAY THIS
Father God, thank you that your church in Jordan is growing, despite the persecution faced by our brothers and sisters. Please protect Christians from Muslim backgrounds, and help them to find safe ways to meet with other believers. Give your people boldness in sharing your love with those around them. Amen.
34. KAZAKHSTAN

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
4.6 million Christians live in Kazakhstan, making up almost a quarter of the total population. The Kazakhstan government is constantly working to increase its control over the whole of society, and no religious activities beyond state-run and state-controlled institutions are allowed. Members of Protestant churches are particularly targeted, since they are regarded as a foreign influence aiming to destroy the current political system, and that needs to be severely controlled. Churches are monitored by the state. Unregistered churches are frequently raided and fined. Christians from Muslim backgrounds often keep their faith secret, as they face huge pressure from their families and communities. Some converts are locked up by their families for long periods.

PRAY THIS
Powerful God, we lift to You those who are persecuted in Kazakhstan. Protect your church meetings, Sunday School groups, youth activities and summer camps. Build your kingdom, regardless of restrictions in the law. Comfort and strengthen those who have been beaten and imprisoned for following You. Amen.

35. MOROCCO

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
There are currently 220,000 Christians in Qatar – the majority of these are expatriates. They make up 8.2 per cent of the population. The state religion is a conservative form of Islam, and nearly all Qatari citizens are by definition Sunni or Shia Muslims; leaving Islam is illegal. Qatar is an absolute monarchy, and the local community and even family can be dangerous for Christians, especially for converts from Islam to Christianity. There are currently many Christian migrant workers in Qatar helping the country to prepare for the 2022 World Cup; they live and work in poor conditions, but these Christian communities are growing.

PRAY THIS
Father God, please be with our brothers and sisters in Qatar who are following You in secret today. Give them safe ways to find fellowship with others. Please provide places and times for them to meet safely, to gather for worship and state-controlled institutions. Amen.

36. BRUNEI

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
There are 57,400 Christians in Brunei. They make up 13.2 per cent of the population of 434,000. The Sultan of Brunei is seen as the protector and defender of Islam. As a result of his influence, policies that favour Islam over other religions are legally executed and enforced by all government officers. All churches, including registered ones, are monitored and restricted by the authorities. Non-traditional Christian communities cannot register as churches, but must register as secular organisations. Conversion is considered illegal, and believers from Muslim backgrounds come under intense pressure to return to their original faith.

PRAY THIS
Father God, thank you for the faith of our persecuted church family in Brunei. Give them wisdom and boldness in sharing the gospel, and open doors for them to do so. Comfort and strengthen secret believers, and give them discernment to know who to trust. May believers experience Your joy and peace, and may they shine as a light in the darkness. Amen.

37. TUNISIA

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
There are 31,400 Christians living in Tunisia. They’re a tiny minority, making up 0.2 per cent of the total population of 11.7 million. Tunisia is a strongly Islamic society. While the more urban north of the country tends to follow a more moderate form of Islam, the more rural south remains conservative. There is a noticeable growing influence of radical Islamic teachings, and Islamic militants spread fear throughout the country. Tunisian believers all come from Muslim backgrounds, and will often keep their faith hidden. If their faith is discovered, they may lose their jobs, be rejected by family and friends, and face verbal and physical abuse.

PRAY THIS
Lord Jesus, protect our brothers and sisters in Tunisia from violence. May You provide places and times for them to meet safely, to gather for worship and fellowship, and may they be encouraged and strengthened by Your Spirit. Amen.

38. QATAR

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
There are currently 220,000 Christians in Qatar – the majority of these are expatriates. They make up 8.2 per cent of the population. The state religion is a conservative form of Islam, and nearly all Qatari citizens are by definition Sunni or Shia Muslims; leaving Islam is illegal. Qatar is an absolute monarchy, and the local community and even family can be dangerous for Christians, especially for converts from Islam to Christianity. There are currently many Christian migrant workers in Qatar helping the country to prepare for the 2022 World Cup; they live and work in poor conditions, but these Christian communities are growing.

PRAY THIS
Father God, please be with our brothers and sisters in Qatar who are following You in secret today. Give them safe ways to find fellowship with others. Please provide places and times for them to meet safely, to gather for worship and state-controlled institutions. Amen.

39. MEXICO

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
There are 125.3 million Christians living in Mexico. They make up over 95 per cent of the total population. There are high levels of organised crime and corruption in Mexico. Christians who stand against this are seen as a threat by criminal gangs. Around 21 per cent of Mexico’s population is made up of indigenous groups. Some of these groups follow a form of Christianity mixed with traditional customs. If a member of the group decides to follow another form of Christianity this is seen as a huge betrayal, Christians, their leaders and their church buildings have become targets for attacks. This is happening with increasing frequency all over the country and not just in those states known to be the most violent.

PRAY THIS
Lord Jesus, thank You for the bravery of our sisters and brothers in Mexico. May You turn the hearts of those involved in organised crime to You, that they may know Your love. Protect and provide for all believers who find themselves displaced for their faith, and strengthen the churches, that they may continue to share Your love in their communities. Amen.
42. MALAYSIA

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
There are 2.9 million Christians in Malaysia – they make up just over nine per cent of the total population. The country is composed of ethnically Malay people as Muslims, and leaving Islam is illegal in almost every state. The government favours Malay and indigenous people in terms of housing, schooling and tax benefits. If a Malay person becomes Christian, one of their privileges is withdrawn. Christians from Muslim backgrounds often hide their faith and meet together in secret. If discovered, they could face rejection from their family. Occasionally they may be sent to a re-education camp, or simply ‘disappear’. Churches are monitored by the government, and it is illegal to share the gospel with Malay Muslims.

PRAY THIS
Lord Jesus, please guide those who follow you in secret to communities where they may have fellowship with one another. Provide for believers in Malaysia who find themselves without communities and homes. Comfort and strengthen Christians who are treated as inferior citizens in their daily lives, that they would know their worth and value is found in You. Amen.

43. KUWAIT

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
436,000 Christians live in Kuwait, making up just over ten per cent of the total population. Most of them are migrant workers – migrants make up over half of the population of Kuwait. Islamic extremist groups, who want to rid the country of Christians, are a growing influence. Christian migrant workers are free to worship informally, but their churches face many restrictions. Evangelism is strictly forbidden, as is Christian education and religious literature that is considered offensive to Islam. Kuwaiti believers from Muslim backgrounds face pressure from their families to deny their faith. They also risk discrimination, harassment, police monitoring and intimidation by vigilante groups.

PRAY THIS
Father God, thank You for the witness of our brothers and sisters in Kuwait. Give new boldness and wisdom to all believers – especially those from a Muslim background to share the light of Christ with those around them. Bring true freedom of religion to the country, and bless the churches, that they would be places of safety and refuge for all. Amen.

44. OMAN

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
198,000 Christians live in Oman, making up just over four per cent of the total population. Most of them are migrant workers. Oman is an absolute monarchy – its citizens are kept under strict surveillance. Islam is the state religion and legislation is based mainly on Islamic law. Leaving Islam is seen as a betrayal to the tribe and family. Believers from Muslim backgrounds experience unwavering pressure to return to Islam. Believers can lose family, homes and jobs. In this highly conservative society, it is especially difficult for Muslim women to choose to follow Christ. Christian migrants are able to meet together to worship, but their meetings are monitored. It is illegal for them to share their faith with Muslims.

PRAY THIS
Lord Jesus, pour out Your Spirit on Christians in Oman. Preserve the peace and stability of their nation. Strengthen those who feel alone and fearful, especially Christian women. Give wisdom to new Christians, that they may be able to share with Your families and communities. May Your Spirit’s power bring increased freedom for churches and individuals to express their allegiance to You. Amen.

45. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
Most of them are migrant workers. Migrants make up over half of the population of the United Arab Emirates (which is made up of seven states). Christians make up 12.8 per cent of the total population. Islam dominates private and public life. The country is ruled by a dynasty that exerts pressure on society and does not allow any dissent. Christian foreign workers are free to worship in private, but preaching, praying and evangelising in public are banned. Believers from a Muslim background endure the most persecution as they face pressure from family members and the local community to recant their Christian faith. This makes it almost impossible for converts to reveal their new faith.

PRAY THIS
Lord Jesus, thank You for the faith of our brothers and sisters in the UAE. Strengthen and encourage believers from Muslim backgrounds, and soften the hearts of their families and communities. Please give the UAE government wisdom and increased tolerance, so that citizens would be allowed to change their faith, and pour out Your Spirit on Your church there. Amen.

46. SRI LANKA

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
There are 869,000 Christians in Sri Lanka, who make up 9.4 per cent of the population. Sri Lanka is a majority Buddhist nation, and so while Christians from more historical churches enjoy a little more freedom in expressing their faith, believers from Buddhist backgrounds are treated as second-class citizens and can face slander and attacks. They are pressured to recant their new faith, as conversion is regarded as a betrayal of their ethnicity. The majority of state schools do not teach Christianity as a subject, so Christian schoolchildren are forced to study Buddhism or Hinduism. Churches in rural areas have been attacked or closed, and Christians have been assaulted.

PRAY THIS
Father God, thank You for our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka. Protect them from attacks on their communities and churches, and give them greater wisdom in knowing how to respond. Give them the strength and grace to forgive, and raise them up to be a light in the darkness, that others may be drawn to Your love and compassion. Amen.

47. COLOMBIA

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
47 million Christians live in Colombia – they make up almost 95 per cent of the population. Criminal groups still control entire regions of Colombia. Christians and church leaders who stand against their activities are seen as a threat to these groups. Christians who stand against criminal gangs and guerrilla groups suffer harassment, abduction, and extortion – some are even killed. Christians from indigenous groups may face imprisonment, physical abuse, have their property confiscated, or be denied access to services such as education and health care.

PRAY THIS
Lord Jesus, please change the hearts of those involved in criminal organisations and gangs in Colombia. Help Christians to stand strong, especially when pressured to leave their faith by their communities. Comfort and heal those who have suffered violence, and give them the grace to forgive. Help us as part of the body of Christ to continue to uphold our brothers and sisters in prayer. Amen.
49. PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
There are 44,600 Christians living in the Palestinian Territories. They make up 0.9 per cent of the population. Palestinian society is conservative, and due to close links between family and religion leaving Islam is difficult. Islamic extremist militants are also present in the West Bank, causing Christians to fear being attacked. Christians are caught in the crossfire of the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Their ethnicity means many restrictions from the Israeli side while their faith makes them a minority in the Muslim-majority Palestinian community. Converts from Islam bear the brunt of persecution but even changing your church denomination is controversial. The Christian population is shrinking rapidly.

PRAY THIS
Father God, have mercy on believers in the Palestinian Territories, and bring Your peace and reconciliation to the land. Protect and strengthen Christians who have converted from Islam, and help them to find communities where they are accepted and can grow in faith. Embolden and encourage Christians to minister to their communities and share Your love with those around them. Amen.

50. AZERBAIJAN

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED?
There are 321,000 Christians in Azerbaijan. They make up just over three per cent of the total population of 9.9 million. Most of the Christians there are from a Russian or Armenian background, but there are around 10,000 Azeri Christians. Azeri Christians are considered traitors, betraying not only Islam but also their country. Most of the persecution of Christians in Azerbaijan comes from government officials at various levels - no religious activities beyond state-run and state-controlled institutions are allowed.

PRAY THIS
Heavenly Father, please strengthen and comfort our brothers and sisters in Azerbaijan who suffer for you. Give them wisdom, by Your Spirit, to know whom to trust, and patience and courage as they live for You. Endow them with creativity and faith to overcome the obstacles of meeting together and sharing You with others. Amen.