

## Give thanks for **ANSWERED PRAYER**

We are overjoyed that after eight years in prison on blasphemy charges and another six months in protective custody, Pakistani Christian Asia Bibi has finally been able to leave Pakistan and be reunited with her family.



"This is wonderful news!" said an Open Doors local partner. "We hope there will not be repercussions for the Christians in Pakistan, but that this would in fact make a way for change, hope and reconciliation."

Asia, a mother of five, was arrested in 2009 after allegedly making derogatory comments about the prophet Muhammad. She was found guilty of blasphemy, becoming the first woman to be sentenced to death under Article 295C of Pakistan's penal code, which imposes death sentences for offences of defamation against Muhammad.

In November 2018 she was acquitted and released, but due to mass protests from hardliners she was barred from leaving the country and remained in government protective custody while her family sought asylum elsewhere. And now, at long last, she has finally been able to join them!

Thank you so much for all of your prayers. It has been a long, hard journey for Asia Bibi and her family, and God has been so faithful. Please continue to pray for His blessing and protection on Asia and her family as they begin building a new life together.

### PRAY

- Ask the Lord to heal and restore Asia and her family as they adjust to a new life together after being apart for so long
- For Pakistani believers who are unjustly imprisoned, that God will sustain them and fill them with His peace
- For the four million Christians in Pakistan who continue to face discrimination and oppression for their faith.

## PERSECUTED WOMEN SEE. CHANGE.



**Naomi\* is a pastor's wife from Indonesia, a country with rising religious intolerance. Besides some violent attacks on churches, Christians experience discrimination and verbal abuse. Most of the members of Naomi's church are from a Muslim background, and face oppression from their families.**

"Families who are forced to leave home for accepting Jesus have to live in other church members' houses," she says. "Their relatives only want them back when their economic situation improves. Their children are frequently mocked and intimidated at school. But we stand strong."

As many Indonesian Christians struggle with poverty, Open Doors runs projects to help improve their economic situation. With this support, Naomi is not only investing in new skills for herself, but also passing on what she learns to other women in her church.

*\*Name changed for security reasons*

"Last year, I attended a handicraft workshop held by Open Doors. Then I passed on my new skills to my church members... After the workshop, the ladies were able to increase their income to 20 dollars per month."

Naomi has also been learning tailoring at the Women's Training Centre built by Open Doors. "Every Sunday, I show my work to my church members. I also want to train the youth in my church with new skills. That way they can be economically independent, create jobs and be a blessing in our village. I have many dreams now because of Open Doors. Thank you!"

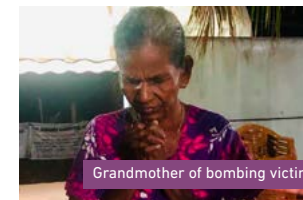
You can watch Naomi's story online at [www.opendoorsuk.org/prayernews](http://www.opendoorsuk.org/prayernews)

Open Doors has launched the *See. Change.* campaign to restore hope, dignity and identity to women like Naomi who are persecuted for their faith and gender. Take action today at [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)



## World Watch List #46 SRI LANKA

Thank you for standing with Christians in Sri Lanka in the wake of Easter's deadly church attacks. Your support is enabling Open Doors to provide support to around 250 families who have lost their breadwinner, as well as long-term trauma care, counselling and persecution survival training.



Grandmother of bombing victim

knelt, stood and sang. They banged on heaven's gates for healing and asked God to help them love and forgive. It was a kind of wailing I have never heard before."

Open Doors has been visiting affected churches to assess how to meet their needs. The team attended a service at the Zion Church in Batticaloa, where 29 people were killed, including 14 children.

"When we stepped inside the church, it was a disarming sight," says Open Doors worker Tala\*. "Hundreds of worshippers filled the hall, their hands thrown to the sky, shouting 'Amen! Hallelujah!'"

"Pastor Roshan read the names of the injured, stopping after every couple of names to give people time to pray. 'They are martyrs,' he said. 'Now they are home with Jesus.'"

"The shrapnel had taken life and limb, but the believers

"The pastor's message was from Daniel 3 – when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown into the furnace, a fourth man appeared, and they emerged from the flames unscathed.

"Why do we have to walk through this fire?" asked Pastor Roshan. 'At this point we may not know why, but God is in the fire with us. God is with us in our suffering. He walks with us and cries with us. He's the fourth man.'"

**Please continue to pray with the church in Sri Lanka - you can download a prayer guide to help you at [www.opendoorsuk.org/srilanka](http://www.opendoorsuk.org/srilanka).**



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# Open Doors

PRAYER DIARY | June 2019



"Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name, you are mine."

Isaiah 43:1

# Persecuted Women

## Saturday 1 June

Praise God that women are coming to faith in Jesus across the Muslim world. Yet for many the personal cost is horrifically high. Ask God to sustain their faith and pray for Open Doors partners supporting isolated women with discipleship training and pastoral support.

## Sunday 2 June

Aizah\* faced violent rejection from her family when she chose to follow Jesus. Yet now she wants to help other women who suffer for their faith and gender. “We want to have a safe house for women who are expelled from home after their conversion,” she says. Ask God to bring her dream to fruition.

## Monday 3 June

Pray for Open Doors partners establishing leadership development programmes for women across the Middle East and North Africa, to help them share the gospel. “Open Doors says they want to stand with women,” says Aizah. “This is very bold: it is pioneering a new thing.”

## Tuesday 4 June – Saudi Arabia

Aasma\* became a secret believer four years ago, but her family have since married her to a Muslim man. She still prays in secret but she has very

few chances to meet with other believers. Ask God to provide ways for her to be encouraged and supported by other Christians.

## Wednesday 5 June – Iran

Nava\* (21) started following Jesus after meeting Him in a dream. She is now boldly sharing her faith with others: “I know I’m risking my safety by sharing my newfound faith. But it doesn’t stop me. I can say wholeheartedly now that I am ready to suffer for Him.” Pray for courage and protection.

## Thursday 6 June – Bangladesh

Mansuri (SEE COVER) was rejected by her family and community after marrying a Christian and becoming a believer, but through her husband’s witness her family came to Christ! She now runs a Bible study group for women after attending an Open Doors Bible class. Pray for wisdom as she disciples these women.

## Friday 7 June – China

Pray for Joyce, a believer from a Muslim background who was imprisoned for her faith in 2017. She has since been released but it is too dangerous for her to connect with other believers. Please pray for the comfort and healing of the Holy Spirit and pray that the joy of knowing Jesus will be her strength.

*\*Name changed for security reasons*

# | India

## Saturday 8 June

Pray for India’s newly elected government, that God will bless them with the wisdom to govern their people with justice and compassion. Pray that they will defend the right to freedom of belief for all Indians so that Christians can exercise their faith freely.

## Sunday 9 June

Pray for Raj (18), who recently attended persecution survival training through Open Doors local partners. When he came to faith in Jesus, some of his relatives accused him of converting for money. “What I learned is that my identity is in Jesus,” he says. “What I reflect is what others will see of Christ through me. I want to be a good example of Christ for strangers.”

## Monday 10 June

Pastor Vikas\* was imprisoned because of his Christian ministry, but Open Doors local partners were able to bail him out of prison and give him training and practical support. He says, “Please pray that God will keep filling me with His Spirit so that I might be able to have more compassion on other people. Pray that I will be free to share the gospel without people opposing me.”

## Tuesday 11 June

Pray for Open Doors partners providing trauma training for persecuted

women. One sister whose husband was almost killed for his faith shared, “I attended a women’s seminar just a month after I went through this persecution. I was crying the whole time during the prayer. We had walked through the valley of the shadow of death and God had preserved us.”

# | Asia

## Wednesday 12 June – Indonesia

Pray for political stability following the recent elections. Pray that the results will be accepted and will not lead to unrest or to attacks by extremist groups on Christians or other minorities.

## Thursday 13 June – Brunei

In April, Sharia (Islamic law) was fully implemented. This allows for severe penalties, such as death by stoning for adultery and amputation of limbs for theft. Pray that Christians will not give in to fear but will continue to be bold in their faith, and ask God to change the heart of the Sultan, who has the power to reverse these laws.

## Friday 14 June – Maldives

“There is no hope for my country unless the Bible is translated,” says a Maldivian believer. So far only some Bible books have been translated into the Dhivehi language. Pray for the full Bible to be translated so that secret believers can meet God in His Word.

## Saturday 15 June – Malaysia

The Human Rights Commission has released its findings that abducted Pastor Raymond Koh and Shia Muslim Amri Che Mat are both victims of enforced disappearance by the state. “Please continue to pray for action to be taken by the relevant authorities to set up a new task force to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators,” says Pastor Raymond’s wife, Susanna. “May truth and justice prevail.”

## Sunday 16 June – Bangladesh

Pray that Open Doors persecution survival training taking place this month will help believers to stand strong. One participant, Alomgir, says, “[This course] has strengthened my faith again. Please pray that I can stand strong in my faith in Jesus until I die.”

# | Arabian Peninsula

## Monday 17 June

Ask God to encourage believers who live in isolated areas. Pray for opportunities to connect with other believers online, as well as for retreats where believers can come together to learn and to pray for one another.

## Tuesday 18 June

An Open Doors worker who recently visited partners in the region shared that many seem tired and burdened. Only few report visible fruit

to their work. Ask God to refresh these builders of God’s kingdom with new hope, joy and persevering faith, and pray for fruit to come from their ministry.

## Wednesday 19 June – Saudi Arabia

Pray for a brother who has been in prison for a number of years in Saudi Arabia. Ask God to keep him physically and spiritually safe. Physically, because there is a lot of abuse among the prisoners. Spiritually, as lack of hope for a release is wearing him down.

## Thursday 20 June – Saudi Arabia

Give thanks for the increasing pressure that is being put on the Saudi Government by the UN and the wider international community to release imprisoned human rights activists. Ask God to use this pressure to also bring freedom to Christians who are in prison for their faith.

## Friday 21 June – Yemen

Children of Yemeni believers don’t have access to Bible story books or Sunday school. Pray that parents will find creative ways to share stories from God’s Word with their children, so that they can grow up ‘in the training and instruction of the Lord’ (Ephesians 6:4).

## Saturday 22 June – Yemen

In a country without religious freedom, parents must guide their children in how to be careful about what they say about Jesus outside

the safety of their own homes. Pray that they will have discernment, wisdom and courage.

## Sunday 23 June – Kuwait

Most Christians here are migrant workers. Pray for Christian female workers, who are often vulnerable to sexual abuse. Ask God to protect His daughters, and pray that their protection will be enshrined in law.

## Monday 24 June – United Arab Emirates

Opposition from family members and the local community makes it almost impossible for converts to reveal their new faith. Pray for wisdom and boldness for Christian converts who are afraid to share their faith.

# | Hope for the Middle East

## Tuesday 25 June – Syria

With your help, Open Doors supports 16 centres of hope across Syria, keeping people’s hope alive with food aid, children’s and youth activities, English lessons and discipleship courses for new believers. Pray for strength for the many volunteers who serve in these centres.

## Wednesday 26 June – Syria

Pray for Open Doors staff coordinating the work in Syria through local partners. The needs remain huge – pray for wisdom to know where best to invest

time, energy and funds.

## Thursday 27 June – Iraq

Over 70 per cent of the infrastructure and buildings in the Christian towns were damaged or destroyed in the IS occupation. Pray that international organisations will provide more rapid support to reconstruct destroyed communities, to help speed up the return of Christians to their former homes and encourage them to not leave their country.

## Friday 28 June – Iraq

Over 100 people from different countries are going on prayer trips to Iraq this year. Pray for God’s wisdom and direction so that they reach and encourage many people.

## Saturday 29 June – Lebanon

In many towns and villages refugees outnumber the local population two to one, which can create tensions. Pray that the church will play a key role in helping people to live together in peace and in rebuilding hope for the future.

## Sunday 30 June – UK and Ireland

Give thanks for the many churches around the country who partner with Open Doors to support our persecuted family. Pray that they will be inspired to be more courageous in their own witness as they connect with persecuted Christians across the world.