


**ARISE AFRICA**

# Week of Prayer



**Open***Doors*<sup>®</sup>



**"I ASK FOR  
YOUR PRAYERS  
– BECAUSE  
THAT IS WHAT  
SUSTAINS ME."**

GERTRUDE, FROM DRC

Gertrude\* was shot three times when Islamic extremists attacked in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Her husband was killed and her young son taken. Since then, she says, everything is difficult.  
*\*name changed for security reasons*

# PRAY EVERY DAY THIS WEEK

**Stand with your persecuted brothers and sisters**

Across Sub-Saharan Africa, Christians are under pressure like never before. Islamic extremists target believers and want to destroy the church. Murder, torture and kidnapping have become an everyday threat. The very survival of the church is at risk – unless we act.

**Thank you for committing to pray this week. Please use this booklet to guide your prayers.**

- » You will come together with Christians around the world.
- » You will give courage and strength to the church in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- » God will hear and, we pray, we'll see His Spirit move.

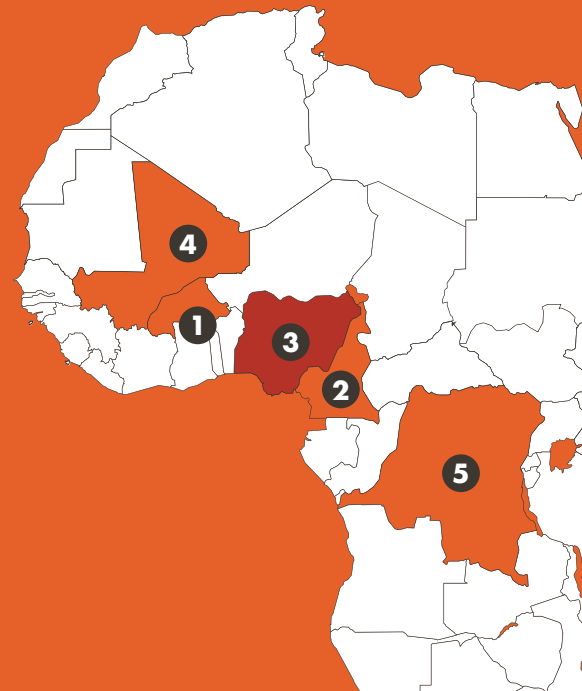
When we pray together, we stand up as one to violent persecution in Africa.

You'll pray for...

- 1 Burkina Faso
- 2 Cameroon
- 3 Nigeria
- 4 Mali
- 5 The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

**"The prayer of a righteous person  
is powerful and effective."**

JAMES 5:16





# DAY 1

## Pray for the persecuted church

*"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." 2 Corinthians 4:8-9*

### SNAPSHOT

Violent persecution in Sub-Saharan Africa is unprecedented.

- » **Burkina Faso:** The expanding influence of jihadist groups is having a catastrophic impact.
- » **Cameroon:** Boko Haram operates with impunity in the north, especially targeting Christians who've converted from Islam.
- » **Nigeria:** More Christians are killed in the northern region than in any other nation. More than 2,500 believers were also abducted last year, because of their faith.
- » **Mali:** Christianity is a tiny minority, and believers face extreme and intense persecution.
- » **DRC:** The threat of kidnapping and violence is commonplace in the eastern part of the country.

Christians are being murdered, raped and kidnapped on a scale not seen before. In lawless, bandit-controlled areas, extremists attack both Christians and Muslims – but followers of Jesus are especially targeted. Violent persecution has become systemic, widespread and brutal.

### PLEASE PRAY

- » For the survival of the church in Sub-Saharan Africa. Pray urgently that Christians will hold on to Jesus, knowing the global church has not forgotten them.
- » That God will heal and comfort believers suffering trauma because of violent persecution.
- » For wisdom and faith as Christians boldly seek to live lives that honour God, even amid growing persecution.

# DAY 2

## Pray for leaders

*"Pray... for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives." 1 Timothy 2:2*

### SNAPSHOT

Sub-Saharan Africa is a region marked by political and economic turmoil.

- » **Burkina Faso:** Instability is rife following military coups and parts of the country remain contested between jihadist groups.
- » **Cameroon:** Fighting continues between government security forces and separatist militants.
- » **Nigeria:** There are multiple challenges to democracy, particularly in the north where banditry is rife.
- » **Mali:** Amid devastating poverty, the government is grappling with France's withdrawal and growing Russian influence.
- » **DRC:** Pockets of instability are concentrated in the east, following decades of conflict and fragile leadership.

### PASTOR JEAN: "PRAYER STRENGTHENS ME"



Pastor Jean\* was leading a church in DRC when it was attacked by an Islamic extremist group. Six believers were killed. Pastor Jean and his family survived – but are traumatized. "I could not preach... because I had no strength," he said. Pastor Jean is taking steps back into church leadership, thanks to Open Doors' trauma healing. Prayer strengthens him – and he needs your support.

### PLEASE PRAY

- » For stability amid turmoil, particularly in Burkina Faso and Nigeria. Pray that leaders will create safe places for all people to live, no matter their tribe, religion or gender.
- » For wise leaders to guide nations out of economic crisis, especially in Mali, one of the poorest places in the world.
- » For church leaders like Pastor Jean, who have suffered persecution. Ask God to restore their strength and equip them to lead again.

*\*name changed for security reasons*

# DAY 3

## Pray for young people

*"One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts."*  
Psalms 145:4

### SNAPSHOT

More than 60% of Africa's population is under 25. The church, too, is youthful, dynamic – and growing.

But the violent persecution of Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa is devastating young lives. Girls as young as 13 are raped and forced to marry extremists. Childhood trauma can impact people's futures.

### AYUBA: "MY NAME WAS ON THE KILL LIST"

Gunshots cracked across the sky and news spread: *Boko Haram are coming*. Twenty-year-old Ayuba\* ran for his life. The next morning, returning to his home in northeast Nigeria, he saw three bodies on the ground. One was his father. "I dropped to my knees and prayed," said Ayuba.

But persecution didn't end there. "A few weeks after the attack, Boko Haram sent a list of people they were coming to kill," said Ayuba. "*My name was on it*." For the second time, Ayuba fled. He's now receiving trauma healing and care at the Open Doors trauma centre in Nigeria.

### PLEASE PRAY

- » For Ayuba, that he will heal from trauma and loss, and face the future with hope.
- » For God's protection over young Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa. Pray they have the strength and grace to keep following Jesus despite violent persecution.
- » For Open Doors as we seek to support 42,000 young Christians in Nigeria this year, through trauma care, spiritual aid, and skills and employment training.

*\*name changed for security reasons*

# DAY 4

## Pray for grieving people

*"The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."* Psalm 34:18

### SNAPSHOT

Out of every ten Christians murdered for their faith across the world, nine are killed in Sub-Saharan Africa.

It's a shocking statistic which reveals the scale and horror of violence in this region. And each deadly attack by extremists leaves behind not only a murdered Christian – but a grieving family, traumatized children, loss of income and shaken community.

### GERTRUDE: "WHEN THEY KILLED HIM, I FELT DEAD"

Gertrude lifted her head from where she lay, shot and bleeding, to witness a horrifying scene. Armed men were killing her husband, violently beheading him because of his faith in Jesus. "I lost my remaining strength," she said.

Gertrude is now a widow, with a limited income, permanent injuries and children to care for. Grief sometimes overwhelms her and everything is difficult. "I ask for your prayers – because that is what sustains me," she says.

### PLEASE PRAY

- » For people like Gertrude, in DRC, that Christ will meet them in their grief and bring comfort.
- » For the Lord to intervene to stop deadly attacks, and work in the hearts of militants to turn them from hatred to love.
- » That practical support and care from Open Doors will reach bereaved families who need help the most.

*\*name changed for security reasons*



# DAY 5

## Pray for people forced from home

*"David said to the Philistine, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.'" 1 Samuel 17:45*

### SNAPSHOT

More than 12 million people have been displaced by violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, putting the very presence of the church in certain areas at risk.

Large parts of the DRC, for example, have been stripped of a Christian presence as jihadist groups like Boko Haram, Islamic State and Al-Shabaab seek to expand Sharia law across the continent.

### FATI: "MY FAMILY IS TRAUMATIZED"

Five attacks. That's what it took before Fati\*, a young mother in her 20s, finally fled her beloved village in Burkina Faso. Extremists came again and again, burning homes, killing people, firing bullets and even setting fire to cattle. By the time Fati fled with her husband and children, they had nothing.

"We were empty-handed and traumatized," said Fati. "No food, no home, no money." But thanks to Open Doors, the family is receiving help – and Fati's faith is strong. "Thank you for praying," she said. "You help us carry our burden."

### PLEASE PRAY

- » For Fati and her family. Ask God to fill them with courage and strength to persevere.
- » For wisdom and grace for pastors leading churches in increasingly dangerous places.
- » That the church will remain strong, influential and boldly resilient even as Christians flee the most volatile regions.

*\*name changed for security reasons*

# DAY 6

## Pray for abused women

*"When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze." Isaiah 43:2*

### SNAPSHOT

The persecution of Christian women is hidden, complex and often violent. Women suffer rape, forced marriage and sexual abuse.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, we often hear of girls and women kidnapped from villages and subjected to sickening abuse. Girls may be forced to marry their attackers. Or families are blackmailed with exorbitant ransoms which leaves them destitute.

### MARY: "I DREAMED OF WHAT HAPPENED TO ME"

For 54 days, Mary\* was held captive by extremist Fulani militants in northwest Nigeria. She was raped, repeatedly. Mocked for her faith. Forced to cook for her captors while she had only animal food to eat.

Even after her release, 20-year-old Mary was traumatized. "Every night, I dreamed of what happened to me," she said. Mary came to Open Doors' trauma care centre where she started to heal. But sadly, this faithful young woman recently died from complications relating to surgery. Her family wanted her story to be heard – and we remember Mary's words of hope in her final interview with us: "I thank God for the peace He brings."

### PLEASE PRAY

- » For Mary's family as they grieve her loss.
- » For other young Christian women in Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali and DRC, who live with the trauma from sexual violence. Pray for healing, restoration and safety.
- » That Christian women will hold firm to Jesus in threatening times, secure in their identity as God's children.

*\*name changed for security reasons*



# DAY 7

## Pray for 'Arise Africa'

*"We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."* Romans 8:37

### SNAPSHOT

Arise Africa is a four-year campaign to unite Christians like you with our brothers and sisters in Sub-Saharan Africa, to stand up to violent persecution together.

By 2027, Open Doors aims to:

- » Support four million Christians in sub-Saharan Africa, spiritually, physically and emotionally.
- » See the global church awakened and actively praying, giving and speaking out about what's happening.
- » Campaign for change, on the ground, to counter extremist ideology and rampant violence.



### PLEASE PRAY

- » That God will show you your role in Arise Africa – whether through ongoing prayer or other support.
- » For the Lord to stir the church to action, in unity with our African brothers and sisters. Pray that Christians around the world will be convicted to pray, speak out and give.
- » For the Lord's protection over our Open Doors partners in Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Mali and DRC, as they travel to remote and hostile regions to minister to believers.
- » For governments and leaders to engage meaningfully with the issue of violent persecution, and act to bring change and peace.

# DAY 8

## Pray for God's light

*"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*  
John 1:5

### SNAPSHOT

We – the global church – won't stand by while thousands of our Christian family are killed, kidnapped, traumatized and driven from their homes. We won't look away while the very survival of the church is under threat.

Open Doors has a long-term presence on the ground in Sub-Saharan Africa, so we are uniquely positioned to strengthen the church in crisis. When we stand in unity with our brothers and sisters, and with God on our side, nothing is impossible.

### PLEASE PRAY

- » Against extremist ideologies and rampant violence which cast a dark shadow over Sub-Saharan Africa. Pray for stability and security in volatile regions.
- » For God to break the chains of Christians held in trauma and fear because of violent persecution.
- » For wise leaders of integrity and faith to shine a light in places of power across Sub-Saharan Africa. Pray their authority will grow and their influence will spread.
- » For sufficient rain for Christian families who live off the land in places like Cameroon and Mali, so poverty does not add to their vulnerability and suffering.
- » For an end to devastating violence in Sub-Saharan Africa. Pray that the extremists encounter Jesus and His saving grace.

Pray with unwavering courage, because God is powerful, He loves His church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

# WHAT NEXT?

Thank you for praying this week. Thank you for uniting with your brothers and sisters in Sub-Saharan Africa to stand up to violent persecution.

**Now, will you help create a Tree of Prayer in Nigeria?**

This is a Camphor tree, the national tree of Nigeria – and at Open Doors, it's become a symbol of the persecuted church in Sub-Saharan Africa.



The camphor tree in Nigeria	The church in Sub-Saharan Africa
Large evergreen tree which can reach heights of 30 metres	There are more Christians in Africa than anywhere else in the world
It grows in scrubland on roadsides when other trees have wilted and died	The church is resilient in the face of violent persecution
Its glossy leaves release a smell of camphor when crushed	Under extreme pressure, Christians continue to follow Jesus with faith and hope
Its roots go deep and it offers shade to many	The church goes deep and wide, sharing God's love across many nations

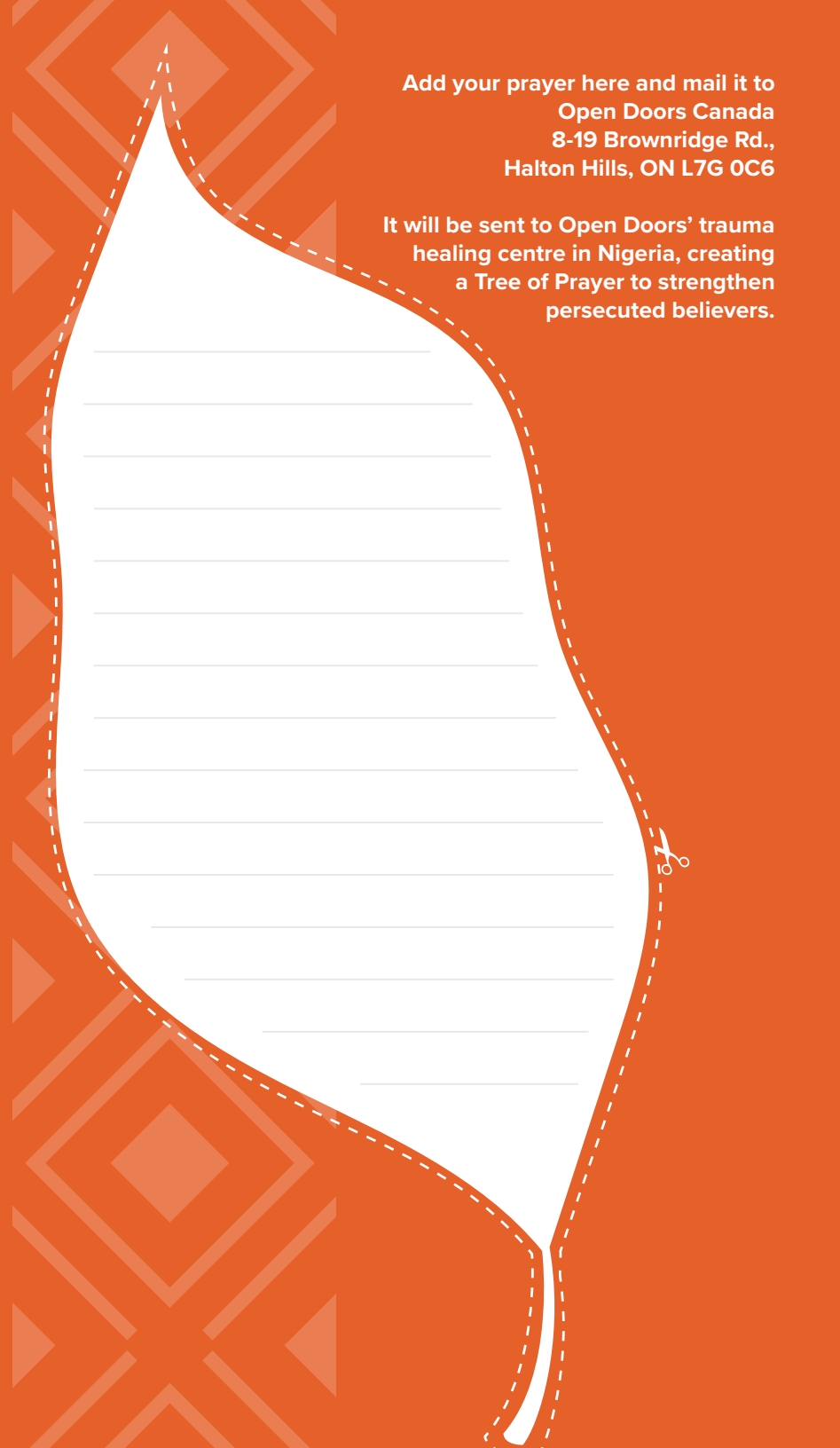
You can help create a Tree of Prayer, based on the camphor tree, at Open Doors' trauma healing centre in Nigeria.

## YOU NEED TO:

- » Add your prayer for persecuted believers to the camphor tree leaf on the opposite page.
- » Cut out the leaf and mail it back to Open Doors Canada.
- » Your leaf will be delivered to Open Doors' trauma healing centre in Nigeria, where our partners will hang it, with other leaves from around the world, on a Tree of Prayer.
- » Your prayer will strengthen the faith of our brothers and sisters, and they will know they are not alone.

Add your prayer here and mail it to  
Open Doors Canada  
8-19 Brownridge Rd.,  
Halton Hills, ON L7G 0C6

It will be sent to Open Doors' trauma  
healing centre in Nigeria, creating  
a Tree of Prayer to strengthen  
persecuted believers.







# **Open*Doors***

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