

A close-up photograph of a woman's face, partially obscured by a light-colored, textured fabric covering her mouth and nose. She is looking out of a window, with her eyes visible and looking towards the right. The background is a blurred window frame and light coming through the glass.

Open *Doors*

MAGAZINE

MARCH | APRIL 2026

**IN DANGER
OF BEING
ERASED**

**HELP RESTORE
PERSECUTED
WOMEN**

STRENGTHENING CHRISTIANS WHERE FAITH COSTS THE MOST

www.opendoorscanada.org



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Cover image: Ariana, an Afghan Christian, is in danger of being erased. She's not alone. Persecuted Christian women are in peril – and they need your help. Read more on page 4.

OPEN DOORS MAGAZINE is published 6 times a year to provide concerned Christians with information about events affecting persecuted Christians worldwide. ODC is a member of Canadian Centre for Christian Charities and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. The material contained in this publication cannot be reproduced in any form, including on the internet, without written permission. © 2026 Open Doors Canada.

GARY'S TAKE



Pastor Gary Stagg
 Executive Director
 Open Doors Canada

Dear Friend,

We have known for some time that Christian women endure a unique and often hidden form of persecution that targets their faith and their identity as women. Their suffering frequently occurs in private spaces, within families, or under cultural and social systems that silence their voices and restrict their freedoms. Because of this, their hardship often goes unrecognized and unreported.

Christian women in persecution countries can face intense social pressure, including forced marriage, domestic violence, isolation, or being expelled from their homes for choosing to follow Christ. They may be denied education, employment, or inheritance rights because of their faith. Some face threats, harassment, and physical harm, often without legal recourse, as local authorities may refuse to intervene or may even support their oppressors. Many Christian women also become targets of gender-based violence used as a weapon to break the spirit of Christian communities.

Yet, despite these trials, countless Christian women demonstrate extraordinary courage and faith – like Ariana, an Afghan Christian featured in this issue. They continue to practice their faith, care for their families, and support underground churches. Their steadfastness becomes a quiet testimony—one of resilience, hope, and unwavering devotion.

Their stories remind the world that persecution is not only physical but also deeply personal. And it calls on us to see them, pray for them, support them, and advocate for their freedom and dignity.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Gary Stagg



HELP RESTORE HER

Ariana, an Afghan Christian, is in danger of being erased. She's not alone. Persecuted Christian women are in peril – and they need your help.

The phone call, when it came, was every bit as menacing as Ariana expected...

“My brother called me,” said Ariana*, an Afghan Christian in exile in Central Asia. “He said, ‘I heard you betrayed your religion and became a Christian. If you’re under pressure, I will come and save you. But if not, I am willing to sell the carpet under my feet to come and kill you myself.’”

It’s a chilling, horrible threat which hangs over Ariana, a wife and mother, every day. If she is deported back to Afghanistan (which is not uncommon), Ariana faces certain death.

But the truth is, her brother’s warning is just one part of a campaign to control and silence Ariana. Like so many others, this woman’s freedom, voice and rights have been gradually and persistently eroded ever since she was a young girl in Afghanistan...



RESTRICTED AND PRESSURED

In her homeland, Ariana was not allowed to go to school, work, choose a husband, or even leave home without a male guardian. Since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021, life for women has become incredibly restricted.

Ariana was forced into marriage. But it turned out, her new family were hiding a huge secret: they were Christians.

Following a series of violent attacks – a grenade was thrown into the house at 2am, Ariana’s brother-in-law was brutally murdered – the family fled. In the relative safety of a Central Asia country, they shared their faith with Ariana, and she gave her life to Christ.

“I saw how much oppression and pressure Muslim women lived under – and it helped me see that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life,” said Ariana.

But, following Jesus comes at a high price for an Afghan woman, and today persecution is never far away...

CONSTANT DANGER

One of our partners in Central Asia, who works with Afghan women, says, “Christian women in

Afghanistan are some of the most marginalized people in the world. Even refugee women who follow Jesus are significantly vulnerable. They must keep their faith secret, as they remain in danger for deciding to leave Islam.”

For Ariana, her Christian faith means landlords won’t rent a home to her, her children are at risk, and if she ever mentions Jesus, she could be deported – and executed. “That’s our biggest fear... being sent back. Because everyone knows we have become Christians,” she said.

Persecution is an insidious, cruel presence in Ariana’s life. It has driven her from home, stolen her freedom and stripped away her identity. Now, Ariana is in danger of being erased completely. And she’s not alone.

SILENCED, UNSEEN, SUFFERING

Across the world, Christian women like Ariana are targeted for both their faith and their gender. Many are subject to domestic violence, trafficking and systemic abuse. But even though these women are intensely vulnerable, their suffering is often hidden.

Open Doors vision is to ensure every persecuted woman is seen, valued, and empowered to reach her God-given potential. Recently, Ariana has started sharing

God’s word with other refugee women. Some are Christian, some are Muslim – but they all draw strength from this faithful woman...

“THE PRESENCE OF GOD BRINGS PEACE IN THESE HARD TIMES.”

“They tell me, ‘When you come, we feel at peace,’” says Ariana. “I know it’s not me because I am nobody. It is the presence of God that brings peace in these hard times.”

Your gifts and prayers can help Ariana reach out to more women in Central Asia. Your support can teach our Christian sisters about their value and identity, provide emergency relief where needed, and train women in job-related skills so they can earn money.

Persecuted women are in danger of being erased – but you can restore them. “God’s children will always face persecution and suffering,” says Ariana. “But nothing can separate us from the love of God. He is always with us. This is what encourages us and gives us strength for the hardships we face.”

**Name has been changed for her protection*

Will you help restore Christian women in danger of being erased?

PLEASE GIVE

Every \$33 could give Bibles to two women from a country where God’s Word is not easy to access.

Every \$52 could provide vital food aid to a woman and her family who have fled extreme persecution.

Every \$96 could help give persecution survival training to a vulnerable woman.

PLEASE PRAY

Ariana asks you to pray with her...

- “Pray for women like me, that we will not only survive, but be like Esther – the heroic woman in the Bible who saved her people through her boldness and courage.”
- “Pray for Christian women in Afghanistan, that they will be able to leave and go to another country, to a safe place.”
- “Pray that God touches the heart of every person in Afghanistan, so that they may come to faith and know him.”

PRAY FOR HER

Persecuted Christian women around the world are in danger of being erased. Their voices are silenced, their identities eroded, their rights stripped away. But you can help. Today, will you pray with three persecuted women – to restore them, empower them, and help them reach their God-given potential?

NAME: Carmen*
SITUATION: Converted to Christianity, faces constant rejection
LOCATION: Mexico

First, Carmen was fired from her job. Then, her ex-husband threatened to take away the children. Finally, her neighbours slashed her car tires and her friends stopped calling...

But Carmen, who lives in Mexico's infamous 'Circle of Silence' where Christian persecution is rife, will not give up on Jesus.

"I wish people could understand the rejection we face for following Christ," she said. "It's a constant battle. Physically you lose everything. But spiritually, you gain it all – and that's something no one can take away."

PRAY WITH CARMEN

"Pray for my family, that God gives me strength and helps me overcome every obstacle. Pray that my children never grow weary of following Christ. And pray for peace here, that people would believe in Jesus and be welcomed by God."



NAME: Zaira*
SITUATION: Beaten, disowned and humiliated by family
LOCATION: Asia

Zaira's persecution started the moment she returned from her first Christian gathering, when her brother set fire to a pile of books she'd been given. Since then, this young woman has faced one attack after another...

One day, Zaira was beaten so hard, her teeth were knocked out. Another time, her brother tried to force her to say the Islamic declaration. For five years, her family didn't speak to her.

But Zaira's faith is strong. "You have two weapons: prayer and the Word," she says. "You need to be bold, be courageous and stand firm."

PRAY WITH ZAIRA

Lift up Zaira's son, who has eyesight problems due to the violent persecution Zaira suffered while pregnant. Pray for wisdom for Zaira, and ask the Lord to give her opportunities to share the gospel.



NAME: Ngoc*
SITUATION: Driven out of her home for following Jesus
LOCATION: Vietnam

It's hard to imagine the suffering endured by this small, resilient, grandmother in recent years...

Ngoc came to faith only recently, when church became a way to escape her abusive husband's drunken attacks. But local leaders were angry. A mob of 20 people came to Ngoc's home and drove this 63-year-old woman away.

Now, Ngoc (left) lives with one daughter (right) and a granddaughter. "I just know God has a good purpose for my life," she says. "He saved me, so I only trust in Him."

PRAY WITH NGOC

Pray for Ngoc as she settles into her new home. Ask the Lord to protect her and give her peace. Pray for Ngoc's husband and other children, that they would respect Ngoc's new faith in Christ.

**Names changed for their safety*

WRITING A NEW STORY

When Beatriz became a missionary in Mexico's so-called Circle of Silence, she never imagined persecution would strike so fast. Your gifts and prayers sustain her.

Beatriz's* two-year-old daughter laughed as their pet dog licked her face. Moments later, it became clear something terrible was happening...

The dog had been poisoned by a neighbour. The little girl went into anaphylactic shock. And, before she knew it, Beatriz was racing to hospital, urging God to save her daughter's life.

Persecution was striking at the heart of Beatriz's family, just weeks

after they moved to Mexico's infamous Circle of Silence to work as missionaries. In this mountainous, hostile region, following Jesus is dangerous – and communities waste no time in targeting believers.

"My husband said we'd made a mistake coming here," says Beatriz, remembering their conversation at the hospital while their daughter was being treated. "I said, 'Even if our baby dies, we will stay because God called us here.' I don't know

where that strength came from. It had to be the Holy Spirit."

Hours later, Beatriz's daughter was out of danger. "God was faithful," smiles Beatriz.

STRENGTH AND COURAGE

Faced with such a terrifying near miss, many people might think twice about carrying on. But in 2024, Beatriz partnered with Open Doors and since then, your gifts and prayers have strengthened this courageous woman.

Beatriz has undergone persecution preparedness training and receives regular spiritual encouragement. As a result, her ministry with other women is going from strength to strength.

"God showed me that my own wounds could bring healing to others," said Beatriz. "Here, many women feel worthless or unloved. Some are abused or abandoned. So I built friendships with women and told them my testimony. Little by little, God started restoring their lives."

Now, a group of Christian women meet regularly with Beatriz to read the Bible and pray. Your support helps to pay the rent and maintain the space where they gather. Faith is growing – and these women feel seen, valued and empowered.

Together, they're writing a new story of hope within this dark region. "The women are beginning to understand that persecution has purpose, that even Jesus faced it, and that, no matter what happens, our reward is eternal life with him," says Beatriz.

"Thank you for supporting us, and I ask that you keep doing so. Please pray that fear doesn't win, and one day this Circle of Silence will become a Circle of Hope."

**Name changed for her protection*



PLEASE PRAY

- Pray for Beatriz and her family, that God will protect them and give them courage.
- Lift up Mexico's persecuted Christian women before God, and pray for strong faith.
- Only 2% of people in the Circle of Silence follow Jesus. Pray for hope amid darkness.

RESTORED BY YOU

First, they shamed her. Then they rejected her. Finally, they attacked her husband. Persecutors tried to erase Zakie, an Afghan Christian – but your support restored her.

A bottle of soda, poured from an apartment high above, splashed down on Zakie's head as she walked home. She looked up to see a 12-year-old boy running away.

Zakie's face burned with humiliation, and she hurried on. Yet Zakie couldn't shake the feeling of rejection.

It was an upsetting incident. But little did Zakie know, it was just the start of a campaign of persecution

that threatened to erase this young woman's identity, spirit and hope...

Zakie converted to Christianity in Afghanistan after her husband started following Jesus. "In Islam, a woman is always seen as inferior, without rights or privileges," said Zakie. "When I came to faith through my husband, I was freed from those chains and bonds. Peace came into my life."

But while God worked in Zakie's heart, her community saw her

only as 'an infidel' who'd betrayed her family and culture. Soon the other mothers wouldn't let Zakie hold their children, saying "Don't go near her, she is a bad woman". Then, she was excluded from a family funeral.

Zakie's best friend even abandoned her, sending this heartbreaking message: "My husband says, 'If I see you with Zakie again, I will cut off your ears and nose and throw you out.'"

One day, the persecution reached a terrible climax...

IN DANGER

"My family and I had gone to our relatives' house," remembers Zakie. "When we came out, a motorcycle stopped on the road, a man got off and he shot my husband. That same night, we fled from Afghanistan."

The decision to leave was agonising. Zakie was caring for a baby and her wounded husband, but staying was too dangerous. The family took refuge in Central Asia.

Now, your support is reaching Zakie – and your love and prayers help her minister to other Afghan women.

"I do discipleship with women, because there are many women who have experienced trauma,"

says Zakie. "I share the Word of God and the love of God with them."

Thanks to your kind gifts, persecuted women in Central Asia are receiving training, literature and practical help. Your support restores these women, and empowers them to fulfil their God-given potential.

"Jesus is everything to me," added Zakie. "What gives me hope is that I have found the living God, and I have a close relationship with my God. This brings me joy. In every situation, God is with me."

*name changed for her protection



WWL
10

PLEASE PRAY

- Ask God to fully restore Zakie, and use her powerfully to reach other Afghan women.
- Zakie says, "Pray for my ministry, for a place we can gather to worship, and for Bibles."
- Pray for the Christian women who are still in Afghanistan, following Jesus in secret.

GOOD NEWS

PRAYERS ANSWERED: NICARAGUAN PASTOR FREED AFTER SIX MONTHS IN PRISON



Analysts link the decision to free Pastor Rudy to tensions following the capture of former Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro by U.S. forces, which reportedly unsettled Nicaragua's leadership.

Rudy Palacios, a Protestant pastor detained by the Nicaraguan government for more than six months, was released on January 10, along with 29 other political prisoners, according to human rights organizations. Pastor Rudy was arrested last July after publicly denouncing state violence during the 2018 protests. Although released, Pastor Palacios is not fully free. He remains under house arrest and constant surveillance. Continue to pray for healing, protection, and peace for Pastor Rudy, and for release for those who remain unjustly imprisoned.

YOUR GENEROSITY ALLOWED CHURCHES IN CENTRAL ASIA TO REACH OUT DURING CHRISTMAS



These children were among those who attended Christmas outreach events, designed to show Christ's love to those who had never heard it.

Thanks to your gifts, Christians in Central Asia had the means to put on Christmas programs designed to reach out to their community. One church leader said, "For many of these children, this was the first time anyone had brought them gifts and a celebration... Your support means more than just a holiday for these families—it is a sign that someone cares, that they are not forgotten. Many of these communities have been abandoned by local authorities because they live in disadvantaged areas. Through your kindness, you give children the chance to hear something new and offer hope where there was none."

CHURCH WITH NO HOME

TOUR

Join us for this in-person event to hear stories that will help you connect with your brothers and sisters who have sacrificed everything to follow Christ.

OTTAWA, ON

Monday, March 23 - 7:00pm

Woodvale Pentecostal Church
205 Greenback Rd
Ottawa, ON

GATINEAU, QC

Tuesday, March 24 - 7:00pm

Église Nouvelle Alliance
116 rue est
Gatineau, QC

**presentation will be in English*

MISSISSAUGA, ON


Sunday, April 26 - 7:00pm

Portico Mississauga
1814 Barbertain Rd
Mississauga, ON



More dates coming soon!
Visit www.persecutedchurch.ca or scan the QR code to see all upcoming events.



A woman wearing a grey headscarf is shown in profile, looking out a window. Her right hand is raised, with fingers spread, as if in a gesture of prayer or pleading. The background is a bright, hazy window.

SHE HAS A NAME AND A VOICE. BUT FOR HOW LONG?

**Will you help restore Christian women in
danger of being erased – before it's too late?**

Ariana*, an Afghan Christian, knows her brother will kill her if she ever returns home.
Why? Because she follows Jesus.

Ariana is not alone. Christian women around the world are at risk of being erased. Silenced. Dehumanized and persecuted. They need you – to see them, value them and empower them.

EVERY \$96 could help give persecution survival training to a vulnerable woman.

Give now at www.opendoorscanada.org or call (905) 636-0944. Thank you.

*Name changed for her protection.

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