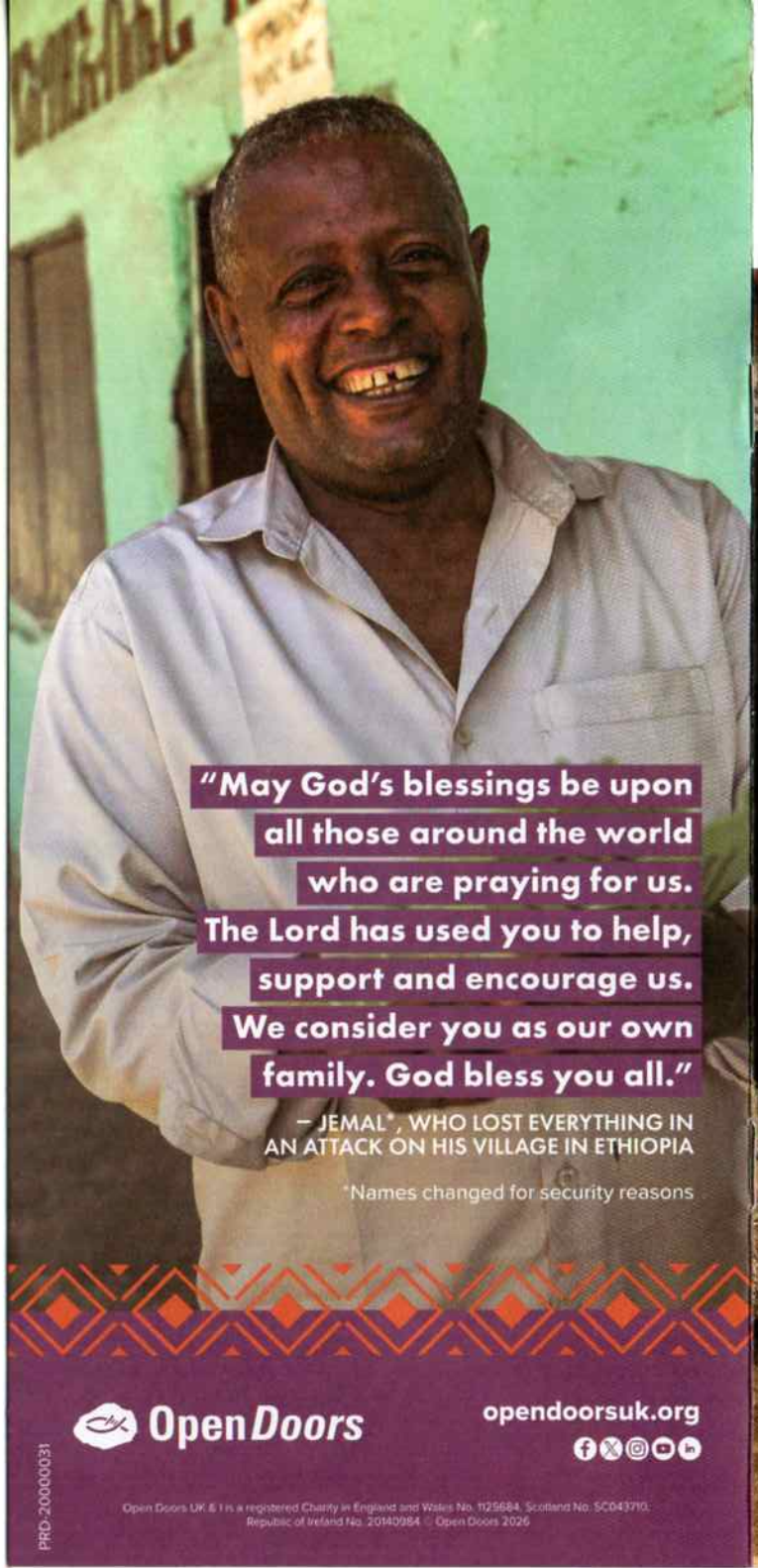

"May God's blessings be upon all those around the world who are praying for us. The Lord has used you to help, support and encourage us. We consider you as our own family. God bless you all."

– JEMAL*, WHO LOST EVERYTHING IN AN ATTACK ON HIS VILLAGE IN ETHIOPIA

*Names changed for security reasons

Open Doors

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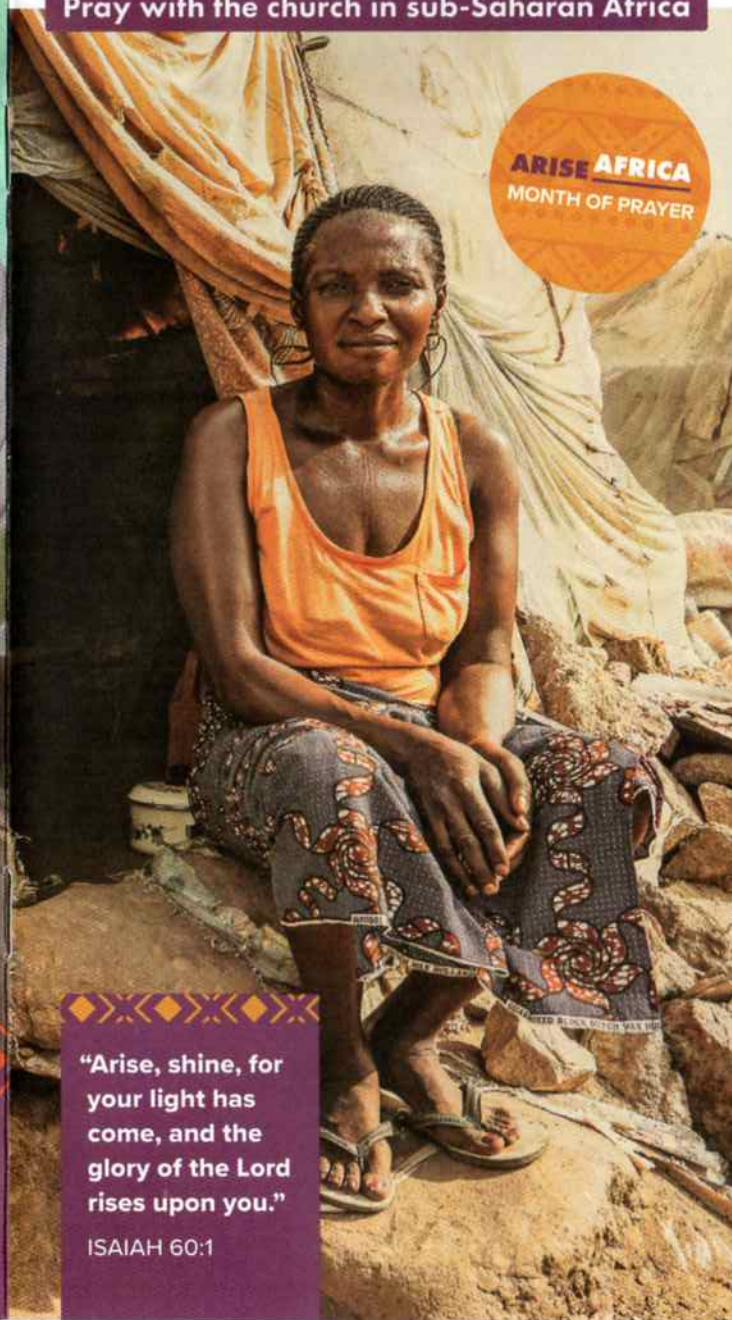
Open Doors

Pray with the church in sub-Saharan Africa



"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you."

ISAIAH 60:1

ARISE AFRICA: MONTH OF PRAYER

Millions of Christians across sub-Saharan Africa have been displaced by violence and conflict. The African church is rising up boldly in prayer against this violence – and they are calling on their global church family to stand with them. Please join with your church family in sub-Saharan Africa, asking God to stop the violence and start the healing.

The displaced

Day 1 (Nigeria)
Tens of thousands of Christians have been internally displaced from their homes because of their faith, with many fleeing to official displacement camps that are unhealthy and unsafe. They are overcrowded, hygiene is poor and food is scarce, and they can be targeted by extremists. Pray that camps will be far better equipped to be havens of safety, provision and care.

Day 2 (Nigeria)
"The food items being given to us show us that Christians all over the world care about us and remember us," says Abraham, chairman of a displacement camp. "That makes us very happy. Open Doors is helping thousands of people in Nigeria, not just me." Praise God for this impact, and pray that local partners will be equipped, empowered and encouraged in their work.

Day 3 (Nigeria)
Praise God that Pastor Barnabas and his family, who lived in displacement for five years, have moved into a new home, thanks to Open Doors supporters. "I have a room for my children. We have a kitchen, toilet and water system. We can cook even when it is raining," he says, "I want to appreciate God Almighty."

Day 4 (Burkina Faso)
The rise in jihadist activities has caused internal displacement to soar, affecting about two million people (ten per cent of the population), many of them Christians. In some places, churches and villages are empty. It's one of the world's severest displacement crises. Ask God to surround the displaced with His peace, presence and provision.

Day 5 (Burkina Faso)
"I do believe that we are displaced, but Jesus is not and will never

"No matter the hardships, I will never depart from Christ," says Pastor Soré, here with his family

be displaced from our lives," says Pastor Soré, who lives in a makeshift shelter with his family and 44 other displaced Christians whom he is now supporting. "He is always with us. This truth helps me in this difficult time." He requests prayer for access to food and a clean water supply, for land of their own where they can build a church, and that they will stand firm in their faith.

Day 6 (DRC)
Nearly seven million people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have been displaced by conflict – many of them Christians. The conditions of camps are often horrific, with insufficient shelter, hygiene and food. Pray for better care and aid, and ask God to help churches and local partners as they seek sustainable solutions for people.

Day 7 (Sudan)
The impacts of civil war are still being felt, with 11 million people on the run, and Christians in IDP camps vulnerable to discrimination and neglect. "The situation is deteriorating every day, and there is no response from the world," says Illia Djadi, a senior analyst for Open Doors in the region. "There is a strong feeling of abandonment." Pray that the international community will pay attention to the crisis.

Day 8 (Niger)
There has been a surge in militant attacks, particularly in rural areas of the west and south west. Many Christians have been displaced, bringing multiple challenges, including widespread despondency. Pray for church leaders and local partners as they shepherd believers through the trauma of displacement.

Women, children and families

Day 9
Christian men are often killed to destroy livelihoods and stifle the population growth of Christians. The pressure on widows is immense, as they must find work and take sole care of children – all whilst grieving. Pray that 'the father to the fatherless, a defender of widows' (Psalm 68:5) will comfort families and be their provider.

Day 10
Christian women and girls are highly at risk of abduction. This can lead to sexual violence and forced marriage – often with the aim of breeding the next generation of fighters. Incidents can leave victims stigmatised, which can further weaken Christian communities. Pray for the safety, healing and release of our sisters.

Day 11 (Mali)
"I'm very happy – I've been supported by God," says Hawa* from Mali. Following rejection by her family for her faith, a financial gift from partners enabled her to cover a year's rent, buy medication and food, and purchase fabric and a fridge for her business. "I know that I have true brothers and sisters, who are standing with me in the time of persecution." Pray that Hawa's family will come to know Jesus.

Day 12 (Cameroon)
After attending a self-help group run by Open Doors partners, Auristine started a small group that teaches the Bible and livelihood skills to other women. "We teach the Word of God to women so that they can stand firm in times of adversity," she says. Pray that the group will bear fruit both practically and spiritually.

Local partners provided Hawa* from Mali with fabric and a fridge to help her sell clothes and water

Open Doors supporters paid for Combary's* school fees, school uniforms and other supplies

Day 13 (Cameroon)
Young people – especially in the north, where Islamic extremist ideology continues to accelerate – grow up amidst violence and the risk of abduction and recruitment to militant groups. Many also experience neglect, heightening the danger of radicalisation. Pray for protection, and for good role models and influences in their lives.

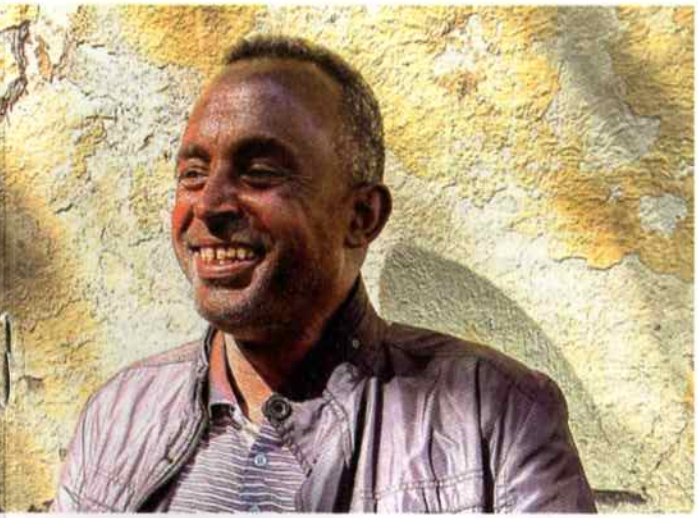
Day 14 (Nigeria)
About 18.5 million children, most of whom are girls, do not have access to education. The numerous attacks on schools by jihadists and criminal gangs in the north have discouraged parents and guardians from sending their children to them. Pray for a climate of safety and peace to enable children to return to school.

Day 15 (Burkina Faso)
Senou* and Combary*, both aged 14, fled with their families when extremists attacked their villages. Both had to drop out of school but, thanks to your support, they've received the funds to resume their education. In 2024, Open Doors helped 3,000 children in high-risk countries like Burkina Faso by paying for their school fees, uniforms and other materials. Ask God to build the students' skills, faith and character, and pray that our partners can reach more children this year.

Day 16 (Mali)
Mali used to be a place of relative religious freedom, but the country's tiny Christian minority are increasingly vulnerable as Islamic militants expand their influence. It's meant that many church-run schools have had no choice but to shut down. Pray for all the children, teachers and leaders affected by these closures, and pray for the schools to be reopened.

*Names changed for security reasons

A water well unites a divided community in Ethiopia



By providing free water, Pastor Eliso's church is bringing peace

Before the water well, life was difficult for Pastor Eliso's* church in Ethiopia. Ethnic conflict and water shortages made matters worse, with churches being burnt and Christians displaced. "Going out and sharing the gospel was prohibited," he says. "Most of the first converts [to Christianity] were imprisoned, flogged and considered criminals."

Thanks to the prayers and gifts of Open Doors supporters, local Open Doors partners met with Pastor Eliso and asked him how they could help. Relations between Christians and Muslims in the community were strained – but they saw a way to bring peace to the community in a practical way.

"Open Doors partners saw that we did not have clean water, and we began talking about the value of a water project and what impact it could have on the persecution situation. If we offered clean water without bias or payment, this water could bring reconciliation."

"A PEACEFUL AREA"

After a month, the well was dug within the church compound – and now around 1,000 households come to collect water, both Christians and Muslims. "I always say this project is a practical collage of empathy and cooperation. Rich and poor, Muslim and Christian now work together and this area is recognised as a peaceful area."

Abdela is a local Muslim man who collects water from the church compound. "Before, our children were sick, we were sick," he says. "There were funerals almost every day, because of how many people died from the dirty water. Now our children are well and the elderly are well because of the provision of clean water."

Around 1,000 households come to collect water from the new well

"The support of this ministry gives us the energy to persevere," Pastor Eliso says. "People's lives have been changed and I would like to say may our heavenly Father bless you for the great support you have given us. It has brought great change!"

PRAY

- For continued improvement in relations between Christians and Muslims
- That Pastor Eliso's community will become more receptive to the gospel
- For local Open Doors partners as they support struggling believers in Ethiopia.

*Name changed for security reasons

The church

Day 17
Fourteen of the countries comprising sub-Saharan Africa are on the Open Doors World Watch List Top 50, making them places of very high or extreme persecution for believers. Pray against the forces of evil that are seeking to stifle the presence and growth of the church in the region.

Day 18 (DRC)
The extreme suffering facing many Christians is leading some to look to other faiths. "Desperation leads people to traditional religions," says Jerome*, who lives in an IDP camp in the Democratic Republic of Congo. "IDPs base their choices on dark powers that promise protection. This has an immediate negative impact on their Christian walk." Pray that believers will know that God will never fail or forsake them (Deuteronomy 31:6).

"Pray for the children," says Jerome* from DRC. "We know they are the church of tomorrow"

Day 19
The violence facing Christians has had a catastrophic impact on the presence of churches in communities. Many church buildings have been destroyed, whilst others lie empty because believers have fled. Even where churches are available, many are fearful to attend. Pray for the safe rebuilding and reopening of churches throughout the region – cities built on hills that cannot be hidden (Matthew 5:14).

Day 20 (Chad)
Malloum* from Chad gave his life to Jesus through a dream and the persistent witness of his grandmother. Despite intense persecution from his uncle, his faith is strong. "I feel so free and at peace," he says. Praise God that, despite persecution, the church in the region continues to grow. Pray for more people to encounter Jesus, just like Malloum has.

Day 21
Church leaders are often targeted by militant groups – be that because they've spoken out against violence, or because it instils fear in the wider Christian community. Those living in areas under the control of Islamic militants are closely watched and face tight restrictions. Pray for protection of leaders, and ask the Holy Spirit to give them wisdom, discernment and courage.

"Despite rejections and torture, I remain firm in my faith," says Malloum* from Chad, here with a local partner

Day 22 (DRC)
"The enemy planned to destroy God's house, but the church has grown," said Pastor Abraham on the anniversary of a bomb attack on his church in DRC that killed 15 people and injured 71. Praise God for this astonishing testimony, and pray that other attacked churches in the region will see the Holy Spirit move in similar ways for them.

Governments

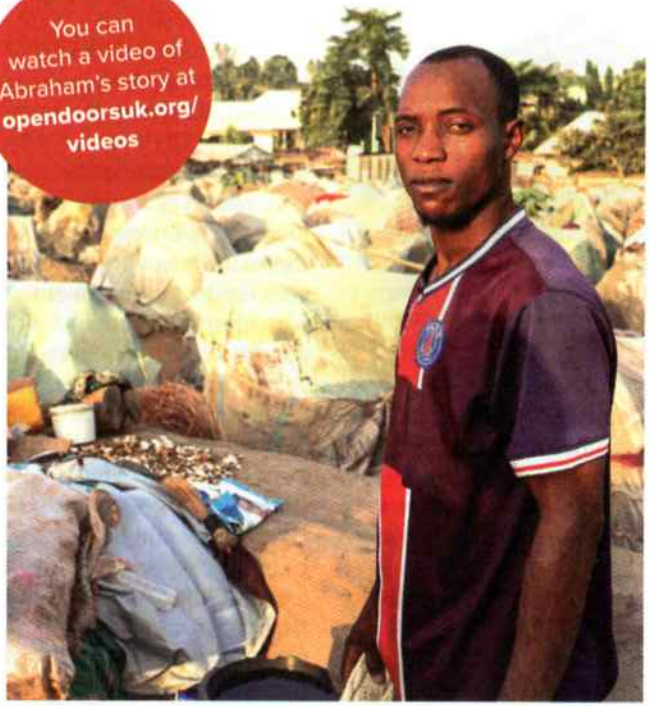
Day 23
In places like Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Mozambique, Sudan and Somalia, military coups and other fractures in governance and security have enabled Islamic militancy to flourish. Because of their faith, Christians are disproportionately affected. Pray for an increase in strong, democratic governments, with leaders who govern with integrity, justice and compassion.

Day 24
Governments in affected countries often do not do enough to protect Christian communities or bring perpetrators to justice. Pray for Open Doors partners seeking to create awareness of the impunity that allows violence to continue unrestrained, and to engage with key role players in finding remedies to counter this sad reality.

Day 25 (Nigeria)
When Bola Tinubu became president in 2023, he said his priority was decisive action against perpetrators of violence. He has since replaced security chiefs in a major reshuffle, establishing a better balance between Muslim and Christian officials. Praise God for these positive steps, and pray that President Tinubu will not give up on efforts to protect all Nigerians.

*Names changed for security reasons

You can watch a video of Abraham's story at **opendoorsuk.org/videos**



"You always ask us if we are okay and what our problems are," says Abraham, chairman of an IDP camp in Nigeria. "That alone makes us very happy and know that God is helping us."

Persecutors

Day 26
Abraham (ABOVE) and his family were forced to flee their home six years ago because of an attack by Fulani militants. "They want to capture Nigeria and capture other parts of Africa according to their agenda," says Abraham, now chairman of a displacement camp. "They have started by capturing the Christian parts." Ask God to thwart the plans of extremists and expose the lies that drive them.

Day 27
After a brutal attack on his community in northern Nigeria, Pastor Elisha was broken by the evil he witnessed. He spent time at the trauma centre run by Open Doors partners, which enabled him to forgive his enemies. "Honestly, when I forgave them, I felt happy," he said. Ask God to give believers the strength to forgive those who've hurt them.

Day 28
"I also started praying for their repentance," adds Pastor Elisha, heeding the words of Jesus: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). Join with our brother's prayer that Fulani militants and other extremist groups will have encounters with Jesus. Pray for Damascus Road experiences that transform their lives – and the lives of many others.

Global campaign

Day 29
The Open Doors *Arise Africa* campaign aims to raise global awareness of the extreme and targeted violence facing millions of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa. Pray that governments, the media and churches worldwide will be receptive and responsive to this urgent issue, and recognise the crucial role they can play in bringing change.

Day 30
Arise Africa also aims to encourage and equip the church in sub-Saharan Africa to persevere by being resilient, resourceful and influential. Pray that more Christians from the UK, Ireland and around the world will become aware of the plight of their persecuted family and be moved to give, pray and speak out to stop the violence and start the healing.

Thank you for standing in prayer with our persecuted family in sub-Saharan Africa. Your prayers are a powerful sign to them that they are not alone. For the latest prayer updates and testimonies from the region to inform and inspire your prayers go to opendoorsuk.org/ariseafrica