

Open Doors

MAGAZINE | September/October 2026
ARISE AFRICA SPECIAL

For Abel.

For Filibert.

For Thomas.

For those who loved them.

In one terrible night in Burkina Faso, Abel, Filibert, Thomas and 28 other Christians were killed by radicalised Fulani militants.

Extreme violence is spreading across sub-Saharan Africa. Each martyr leaves behind traumatised family and friends. Each murder further destabilises the church and threatens its future.

"Untreated trauma is contagious," says Pastor Michée, whose father, brothers and uncles were killed in the attack. "There are a great number of people who are going through trauma. They are in dire need."

Your gift and prayers can help the church to heal, and become resilient, resourceful and influential. Will you give today, in memory of the martyrs?

**STOP THE VIOLENCE.
START THE HEALING.**

Every £32 could help a church leader like Pastor Michée provide vital trauma care to their church community.

Visit opendoorsuk.org/ariseafrica to make your gift today or phone **01993 460015**. Thank you.

**In memory of
the martyrs**
Start the healing in
sub-Saharan Africa





ARISE AFRICA ONLINE - YOU'RE INVITED

WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER | 7.30-8.30PM

Join online on 9 September at 7.30pm for a special prayer event for the African church! You're invited to join with believers across the UK and Ireland to raise your voice in fervent prayer.

You'll have the chance to pray for the hand-in of the *Arise Africa* petition to the UK government in November and its long-term impact, asking the Lord to bring justice and restoration for our persecuted brothers and sisters in sub-Saharan Africa. You will also hear from Tiffany Barrans, incoming CEO, Open Doors UK and Ireland.

Book your place today at opendoorsuk.org/ariseafrica

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

IDOP 2026 1 November

Join with Christians around the world in praying for our persecuted church family. The *Arise Africa* IDOP resource has testimonies, prayers and full instructions to take to your church leader to use in a service.

Order your free IDOP Prayer Pack today at opendoorsuk.org/idop



LEAVE A LEGACY OF HOPE

You can give your persecuted family hope of a brighter future by including a gift to Open Doors in your Will. Your gift will mean a lifetime of support for those who suffer for following Jesus.

If you have not yet made a Will, you can make one for FREE using our partner *Farewill*.

To find out more, go to opendoorsuk.org/legacy or phone 01993 460015.



Open Doors is an international ministry serving persecuted Christians and churches worldwide.

Open Doors supplies Bibles, leadership training, literacy programmes, livelihood support and advocacy services. We also mobilise the church in the UK and Ireland to serve Christians living under religious persecution.

If you have any questions about the work of Open Doors, or would like to reprint any of the articles in this magazine, please do get in touch.

Contact us:

England, Wales and Scotland
PO Box 6, Witney
Oxon OX29 6WG
T 01993 460015

Ireland

PO Box 873
Belfast BT15 1WZ
T 02890 751080

E contact@opendoorsuk.org

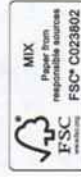
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Open Doors UK & I

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COVER: Nathalie's husband, Thomas, was killed in an extremist attack on his village (see p11)

*Names changed for security reasons

LETTER FROM HENRIETTA

Start the healing

"Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me." PSALM 30:2

I was recently struck by the way an Open Doors partner – a trauma counsellor in Nigeria – described how challenging it was for people to forgive their attackers. She said unforgiveness was like a heavy stone you're always carrying. It's only through time, love and the power of the cross that people can forgive and heal.

Pastor Michée has experienced extraordinary trauma. His dad, brothers and uncles were among 31 killed in a brutal attack on his village in Burkina Faso (see p6). I'm very moved by his journey to forgiveness and healing, and his faith to continue supporting his community who desperately need trauma care. This need is repeated many thousands of times across sub-Saharan Africa, and it's one of the reasons why the *Arise Africa* campaign continues to be crucial.

On a personal note, this will be my final magazine letter.

What an immense gift and privilege it has been to be part of this ministry for eight years! The testimonies of the persecuted church have deeply inspired me, and I've been constantly encouraged by your messages, faithful prayers and commitment to our persecuted brothers and sisters. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

I am sure you will offer the same prayers for my successor. I'm delighted that Tiffany Barrans, former Director of Advocacy at Open Doors International, has been appointed as the new CEO of Open Doors UK and Ireland. She is a dear friend and colleague, with a passion for Jesus and the persecuted church. You can read more about Tiffany in her bio at opendoorsuk.org/MeetTiffanyBarrans.

Thank you again for your prayers and support over the years, and may our dear Lord bless and protect you.



Henrietta Blyth
CEO, Open Doors UK&I

P.S. The deadline to return *Arise Africa* petition sheets to the Open Doors office is 2 November. We're in sight of the global target of one million signatures – let's unite all our voices for

STOP THE KILLING. START THE HEALING.

"My father was courageous. I have never seen anyone as courageous," says Pastor Michée, walking through his village in Burkina Faso. "He was the second person to convert to Christianity in the village. He was deeply engaged in his faith. He loved his wife and us, his children."

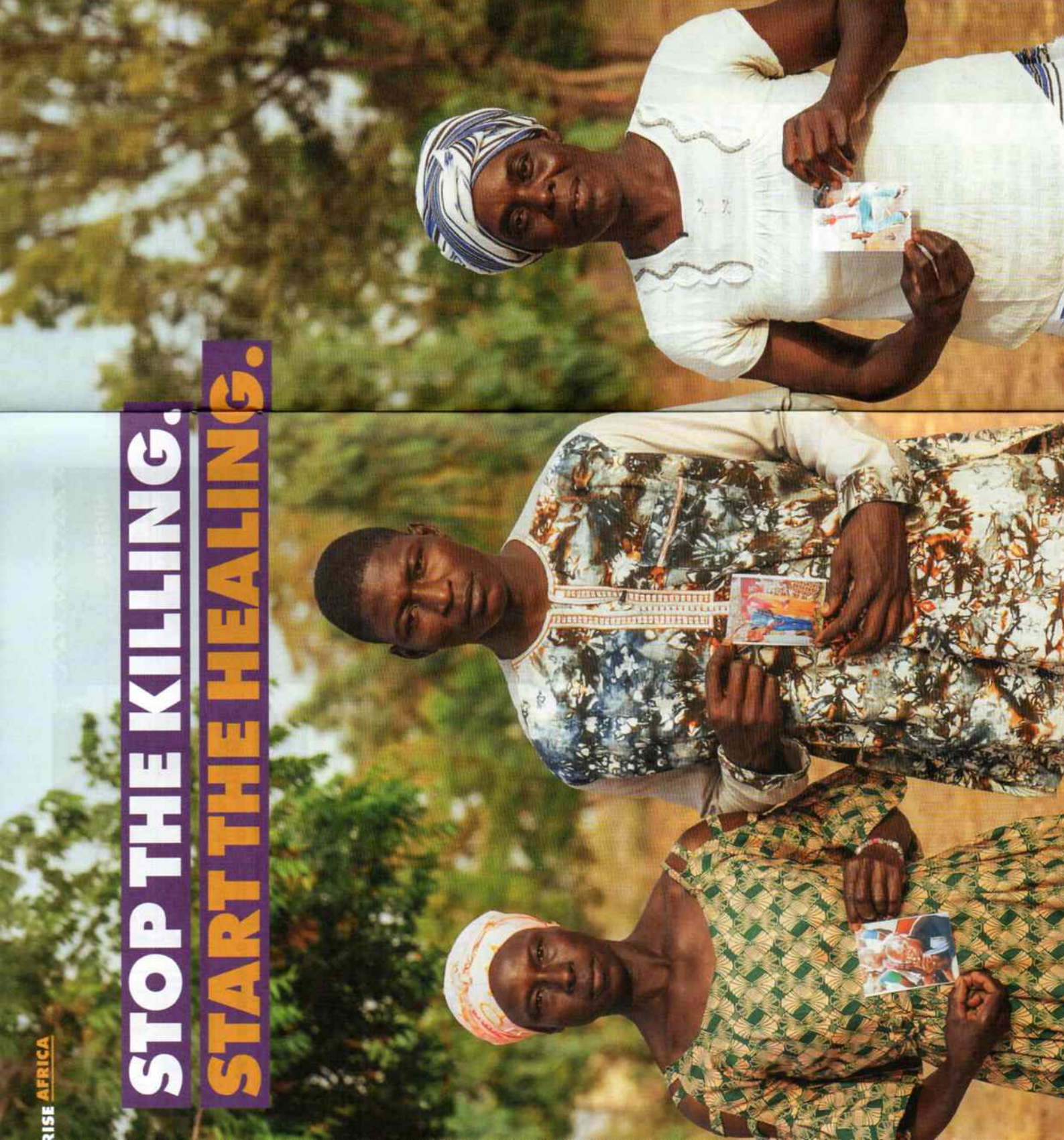
"He was also a songwriter. Everybody was happy when he was singing, and everyone would feel the presence of God. This is how I would like him to be remembered." As he speaks, Michée holds out a photo of his dad, Filibert. In the picture, Filibert is holding Michée's young son, standing alongside his wife and Michée's wife. It's one of only two photos that Michée has to remember his father by.

Like many people who've lost a much-loved parent, Michée loves sharing stories of his dad and the inspiration he was to his family and many others. But Filibert's death is painful to talk about. He, alongside dozens of other Christians, was martyred in a brutal attack on their village.

A TERRIBLE MESSAGE

"I was in bed when I received a message from a friend," remembers Pastor Michée. "He said: 'The village was attacked today.' I tried to ring my father's number, but it wasn't going through."

(L-R) Deborah, Michée and Nathalie hold photos of their loved ones who were killed in an extremist attack: Deborah's husband Abel, Michée's father Filibert and Nathalie's husband Thomas



He managed to get in touch with his sister, who was hiding in the bush. She explained that Filibert had been handcuffed in front of her and taken away – and she didn't know what had happened to him. "Tears came to my eyes and my heart was deeply in pain," says Michée. "I didn't know what to say."

First thing the next morning, he tried to go back to the

Pastor Michée was away from the village when he heard from his sister that their father had been killed

village, but the military weren't letting anybody in. Somebody managed to send a photograph. "I recognised my father by his shoes," says Michée. That's when he knew for sure that Filibert had been killed.

HARMONY TURNS TO VIOLENCE

The attack on the villagers was a particular shock because the community had

lived for years in harmony. "Before the attack, the village was comparable to a small paradise for us," Michée remembers. "There was joy and a peaceful atmosphere."

"The church, which had started with only one person, had expanded. At the time of the attack, the church had almost 600 members including children, so almost all the people in the village were Christians. We were proud to worship God."

"I recognised my father by his shoes."

"There was an ethnic group called Fulani living with us. We were living together as if we were the same family, and we used to drink tea and play football together."

Things began to change when armed, militant members of the Fulani people group started coming to the village. They began turning the Fulani villagers against their Christian neighbours. "The trust that had been built was getting broken, bit by bit," Pastor Michée remembers.

On the day of the attack, everything happened rapidly. "In a blink of an eye, more than 100 terrorists entered the village," says Michée. "If they caught you, they handcuffed your hands



Pastor Michée holds a photo of his dad, Filibert, standing alongside his wife and Michée's wife, and holding Michée's young son



another group in charge of chasing the animals, and a third in charge of setting houses on fire.

"Some were lucky enough to escape. But the people who were handcuffed were brought to the church and their eyes were covered. They were all shot dead."

In one day, 31 Christian men were killed – including Michée's father, brothers and uncles.

"WE HAVE NOTHING LEFT" In Burkina Faso, and across many parts of sub-Saharan

is increasing. Last year, at least 4,491 Christians in sub-Saharan Africa were martyred for their faith. It is a tide of violent persecution that is threatening the future of the African church.

"The objective was to destroy the future of the village."

As Pastor Michée explains, the persecutors targeted men, but men weren't the only victims. "It was the women too, because the men who gave them

needs were now gone," he explains. "The objective was to destroy the future of the village. They destroyed all our houses. Our possessions and animals were stolen. We had nothing left. The plan was to discourage the Christians in their belief."

And, for Michée, it looked at first like the attack had succeeded. "This had a very negative impact on my faith," he shares. "I asked, 'Why has God allowed this to happen?' For me, that was evidence that God had let us down."

"Prayer was no longer

"Tears came to my eyes and my heart was deeply in pain."





Villagers gather for trauma care, and to share stories of their loved ones

a pastor, I was compelled to do it. But I was just uttering words. Deep down, I was doubting. I had a lot of bitterness in my heart." All Michée could think about was taking revenge.

OPEN DOORS TRAUMA CARE

When Open Doors partner's heard about the attack and the devastation it had caused, they came to offer relief aid and trauma care to the surviving villagers. Michée was among those invited to the trauma care training, and it has had an extraordinary impact on him.

"Untreated trauma is contagious."

"It really changed my life," he says. "An untreated trauma is contagious. The trauma I was going through almost destroyed my faith in God, my ministry, even my relationship with my family. But after the training, my relationship with God was revived. I re-found hope in God."

The attack on his village had cost Michée nearly everything he held dear. But the trauma care has

near every step of the way, grieving with him and holding him close. "My anger was gone," says Michée. "I lacked forgiveness, I had revenge in mind. All that was gone. I have been renewed."

"One thing that helped me was the sharing of personal stories. That really relieved me. I had the opportunity to cry when I was relating my testimony, and I felt that I got free from the bitterness within me."

Michée knows keenly that this life-changing trauma care is only possible thanks to people like you. "I want to say 'thank you' to those who are supporting us," he says. "It encourages us, it strengthens us and enables us to renew our engagement

NATHALIE'S STORY

Nathalie was an eyewitness to the attack, in which her husband Thomas was killed. She shares her story of hurt, healing and hope.



"I saw two people on a motorcycle coming in the direction of our house. I went straight into the church, knelt down and started praying. I came out and that's when I saw the men lined up near the church. One terrorist asked me, 'So you were praying to your God?' I replied 'Yes.' And he asked, 'Did your God answer your prayer?' I said, 'Yes, I think He will.' And they laughed."

gave us trauma care training. They came to give us peace in our hearts. The trauma care gave me a lot of strength. By the end of the training, our hearts were freed. I am not wondering any more why God let this happen.

"By the end of the training, our hearts were freed."

"Aah, it was very difficult to bear. The terrorists took everything we had and our house was burnt, so how could I take care of my children?"

"My late husband was committed to serving God. He loved worshipping God and he used to sing at church. He took care of me and my children very well. He was such a good person."

"This organisation [Open Doors], through Michée,

"The organisation also gave us some food. When we received the practical support, I felt better. I would like you to pray for me to be able to provide for my kids. Pray for us to keep believing in God. Pray for us to stay healthy and keep worshipping God."



Thomas, Nathalie's husband, was killed in the attack

"I would like us to honour the people we lost in the attack – our fathers, mothers, brothers and children," says Michée. "They died in Jesus' mighty name and they will be rewarded as they deserve. And for that, we must honour them."

"Our people died as strong believers, and we are asking God to help us have the same faith, worshipping Jesus. I am praying for my people to be delivered, consoled and restored."

STOP THE VIOLENCE. START THE HEALING.

You can help bring that deliverance, consolation and restoration to our African church family. Today, will you give and pray to honour the memory of the martyrs? When you pray for, speak

out alongside and support them, please do it for Filibert. Do it for the 31 Christians martyred in this village. And do it for those, like Michée, who loved them.

PLEASE PRAY

Please pray for believers across sub-Saharan Africa to know God's strength and resilience, and for Open Doors partners as they support them. You can join in a special *Arise Africa* month of prayer in your Prayer Diary.

- Pastor Michée asks you to pray: "For me to always be devoted in my ministry until the end."

- "For my community, for the widows and children, that God keeps their faith alive, because they don't have anyone to rely on apart from God."

- "For the church to go on preaching the Word of God, and for the church to support its members so that their faith is accomplished according to the will of God."

PLEASE GIVE

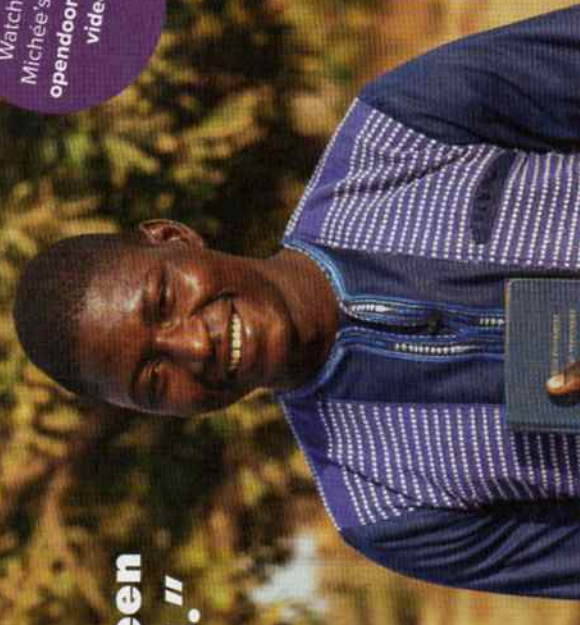
- **Every £24** could provide training for a believer, equipping them with a biblical response to persecution.

- **Every £32** could help equip a church leader like Michée with the skills needed to provide trauma care to their church community.

- **Every £49** could help give a believer short-term relief, medicine and shelter, and long-term support through an income-generation project.

Watch Pastor Michée's story at opendoorsuk.org/videos

"I have been renewed."



You can give to support Christians like Michée in sub-Saharan Africa at opendoorsuk.org/ariseafrica

PLEASE SHARE

On the weekend 30 October - 1 November, please join a digital swell of thousands sharing the stories of our African church family in solidarity for *Arise Africa*. Find out more and get ready by following Open Doors social media @opendoorsuk on Instagram, X and Facebook.

ARISE AFRICA PETITION

"Listen! Thousands of Christians are being killed across Africa," says Pastor Michée. "We are talking about it. Will you join us?"

There's still time to answer Michée's call and sign and share the *Arise Africa* petition.

You have until 2 November to add your voice, and share the petition with friends and family. Send in the enclosed petition sheet or sign at opendoorsuk.org/ariseafrica. Thank you!



Current signatures: 731,517
Target signatures: 1,000,000

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU SIGN THE ARISE AFRICA PETITION?

Your signature, along with hundreds of thousands of others from around the world, will be presented to the UK government in November 2026. The *Arise Africa* petition will also be taken to the UN, EU and many national governments. The global target is for one million names joining with the African church in calling for protection, justice and restoration. Together, we can show how important this issue is, and the scale of the problem.

On the day, two believers from sub-Saharan Africa will be among the group presenting the petition to 10 Downing Street. Our prayer is that Open Doors representatives and these spokespeople will be able to meet with the Minister for International Development and share some key recommendations:

Recommendation #1: For humanitarian actors to promote among staff an understanding of religious vulnerabilities to prevent discriminatory

treatment that violates fundamental humanitarian principles.

Recommendation #2: For the Nigerian government, in collaboration with the international community to include local faith leaders and organisations in the decision-making and coordination of the humanitarian response.

Any petition with more than 100,000 signatures is guaranteed a debate in the House of Commons. Please join us in praying that this is just the start of the impact the *Arise Africa* petition will have for vulnerable Christian communities in sub-Saharan Africa.

Please pray for crucial conversations with government ministers, for the parliamentary debate and for the long-term impact of the petition in effecting policy change. "Your prayers are highly important to us," says Pastor Michée. "It will encourage us to keep on being hopeful and continue our journey with God."

ARISE AFRICA ONLINE - YOU'RE INVITED

WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER | 7.30PM

You're invited to join a special time
of prayer online for our brothers and
sisters from the African church!

After four years of advocating and petitioning with the church in sub-Saharan Africa, we are so thankful for all your support and prayers for the *Arise Africa* campaign. Your prayers have helped us reach this crucial moment as we look to present the petition and its recommendations to the UK government in November.

Your prayers and action are reminding our brothers and sisters affected by violence and injustice in sub-Saharan Africa that their suffering is not going unnoticed. People like Jemal* from Ethiopia have had their hope and their lives renewed because of your support.

Take this opportunity to live out our unity as one body and one church, standing for justice, protection and restoration for all those affected by violence because of their faith in Jesus.

"I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one - I in them and you in me - so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." (John 17:22-23)

STAND IN THE GAP

Your prayers are deeply appreciated and still needed - which is why you're invited to *Arise Africa* Online on 9 September, joining believers across the UK and Ireland to pray for the petition hand-in and for continued global momentum in advocating for persecuted believers in sub-Saharan Africa. We will also be joined by Henrietta Blyth and Tiffany Barrans, Open Doors' incoming CEO.

Join us at 7.30pm
on Wednesday
9 September by
booking online at
opendoorsuk.org/ariseafrica

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

THREE REASONS TO PRAY WITH THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Why pray for the persecuted church?
When you speak to persecuted Christians, prayer is the first thing that they ask for. It is as fundamental to their existence as food and drink. It changes things.

"Don't think your prayers are not being felt - they are," he says. "Through them, I have understood the love of believers. Prayers reach anywhere. There is power in prayer."

2. Prayer is connection.

Through prayer, we enter into the lives of our persecuted church family. We become connected. Your IDOP pack can make that connection even more personal: each pack has "I'm praying for..." cards with the names of real, displaced Christians in sub-Saharan Africa for people to take home and keep praying.

A CRUCIAL MOMENT OF PRAYER

"I am pleading and praying that you keep on supporting through your prayers and help," says Pastor Josiah. We pray, above all, because our persecuted church family ask us to. So please join us this November to connect with our family, to stand against the powers of darkness, and to change the world.

3. Prayer is resistance.

Prayer is an act of sacred resistance. Through prayer, we speak out against the powers of hate and darkness. Prayer cannot be kept out by guards or shot down by

1. Prayer is powerful.

In the pack, you'll find stories of our brothers and sisters - such as Pastor Josiah from Nigeria. His community is one of many attacked by Islamist extremists (see p18).

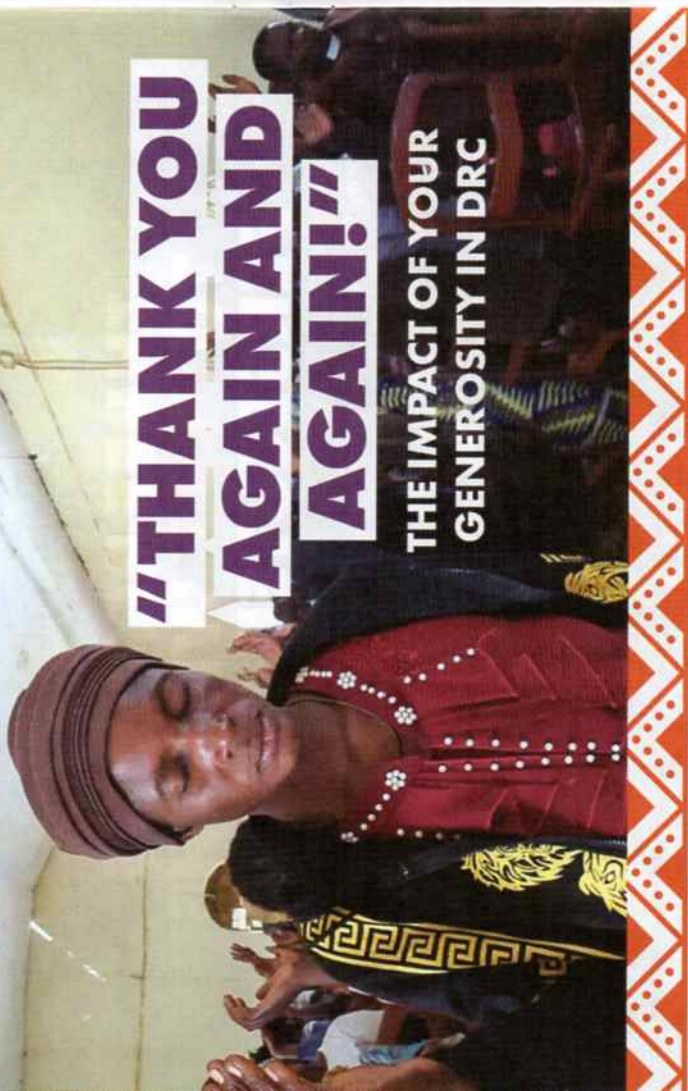
Order your free
IDOP Prayer Pack
to take to your
church leader at
opendoorsuk.org/idop



Jemal is filled with joy thanks to

"THANK YOU AGAIN!"

THE IMPACT OF YOUR GENEROSITY IN DRC



Countless lives have been upturned by extremist violence in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). But, with the help of your support and prayers, families are seeing hope in their futures once again. **Thank you!**

Thousands displaced, homes destroyed and livelihoods stolen – this has been the traumatic experience of countless families across DRC since last year. For many, life has become a question of surviving the day ahead, relying upon a small amount of money from harsh labour or the hospitality of others to get by.

Despite the efforts of the national military to combat the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), who have been carrying out the brutal attacks, the extremist group has continued its territorial expansion in eastern DRC. Many families cannot return home for fear of further assault. Their futures seemed precarious – until, by the grace of God, you stepped in.



Christians in DRC worship the Lord and are thankful for your help

"I thank the brothers and sisters who supported us today."

Through local Open Doors partners, more than 200 Christian families in the North Kivu province of eastern DRC are receiving

MESSAGES OF THANKS

ESPERANCE was displaced with her family of seven. "The ADF stormed our village, and I fled with my husband and six children to Butembo, leaving everything behind. After a brief calm, we returned and planted beans, but the ADF came back. We were forced again into Butembo, where we are living in extreme poverty. All of us have to sleep in two small rooms. The children are no longer in school, and to feed them we walk over 30km to collect grass to sell to livestock keepers.

"I never expected this help! Thank you for your generosity, and may it be returned to you a hundredfold."

MUINDO* is a new believer who also benefited from your vital support. "When my family discovered I had converted to Christianity, they threatened me and demanded I return to Islam if I wanted to stay. Eventually, they kicked me out, and the church welcomed me. The church strengthened my faith and today I received support and a Bible. What more can I say except thank you, thank you again and again."

TSONGO is a father of six who was forced to flee the most recent ADF attack earlier this year. "As rumours spread, my wife and I fled Musenge before the ADF arrived. My two daughters, Immaculée and Dacisse, stayed behind to shelter displaced Christians in our home. On 24 January 2026, they went to the farm to gather food but never returned. A week later, their bodies were found.

"My wife and I now live at my younger brother's house. We struggle to eat, and when nothing works, my son risks his life by returning to that same farm for food.

"The support we received today will help us survive. Thank you very much, and may God bless you."

AMAZA is a mother of seven and shares, "In 2025, the ADF attacked the neighbourhood where I lived in Magurejipa. With nowhere to go, we moved to another part of the village. We are now internally displaced and have lost access to our farms. I survive with my family by selling doughnuts. Truly, I thank the brothers and sisters who supported us today. A part of this support will feed my children, and the rest will strengthen our small business. May God bless you, and please continue to pray for security in our villages."

Because of your generosity, our brothers and sisters are being strengthened and equipped. They are reminded that they are part of the body of Christ and not forgotten by their global church family. Thank you!

PLEASE PRAY

- In praise for God's provision and unending compassion to these families
- That many more families would receive help, be protected from further attack and find new homes where they can flourish
- For justice, peace and renewal to reign across DRC.

LAST CHANCE TO SIGN THE ARISE AFRICA PETITION

In mid-November, the Arise Africa petition will be presented to the UK government. If you haven't done so already, could you sign the petition and share it with friends and family?

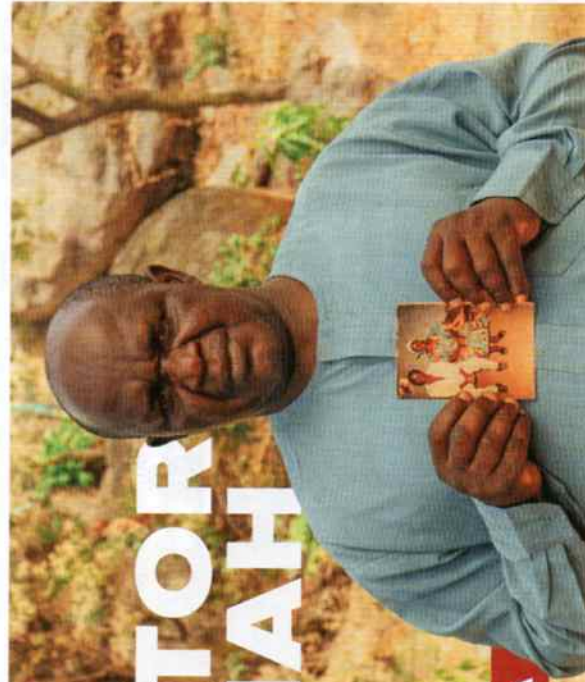
Every voice standing with our church family in sub-Saharan Africa is so appreciated – make sure your enclosed petition sheet is returned by 2 November, or sign at opendoorsuk.org/ariseafrica



PASTOR JOSIAH

WWL 07 NIGERIA

Pastor Josiah holds his favourite photo of him with his wife, Rebekah, who was killed in an extremist attack



Pastor Josiah lost almost his whole family to extremist attacks in Nigeria. Because of your prayers and support, he is beginning to heal.

Pastor Josiah looks down at the photos in his hands, and his eyes begin to cloud over.

"Rowland loved singing in the church band," he begins, looking through the photos in turn. "Jonathan was never lazy, always up and doing things. Timothy



Pastor Josiah and Salama hold photos of Jonathan and Timothy.

was a quiet person, always calm and resourceful."

He holds up another. "This is my favourite photo of my wife and me together, the first picture of us as a married couple."

"I was powerless; I couldn't do anything."

He gazes at the picture. After a long pause, he continues, "My wife was an industrious woman, hospitable and considerate, to the point that she allowed me to shine in the public eye whilst she looked after our home. Her spiritual life made me proud."

Josiah begins to weep as he remembers his wife and three sons, taken in an extremist attack.

"I WAS POWERLESS"

The day is forever etched in Josiah's mind – the day that radicalised members of the Fulani tribe invaded his home and shot his wife, Rebekah. "I kept hearing voices saying, 'Open the door.' As I did so, they grabbed my hands, tied me up and laid me on the ground. My two sons and my eldest daughter, Salama*, were already there.

"As we were taken, I could hear Rebekah crying, 'I'm going to die!' But I was powerless; I couldn't do anything.

"The kidnappers took us, and we started walking to the bush. We didn't stop until 7am when we got to their camp. I kept thinking about Rebekah. Did she die? Was she still alive?"

"WHERE IS JESUS NOW?"

Josiah and his family spent two and half months in captivity, barely surviving on meagre portions of food. Their kidnappers' hostility towards Christianity was fierce. "They said, 'You follow Jesus. Where is He now?' If I just bowed my head, they would say, 'He's praying!' and aim their weapons at me. We could only pray in our hearts."

In January, Josiah's sons were supposedly sent to retrieve the ransom payment for their lives.

"The day my daughter and I were set free, I was told that our ransom had been paid. They left us at the roadside and, from there, my daughter and I walked back towards the village. My brother saw us coming and carried us back. I asked him where my sons were.

"That was the day I was told my boys, Jonathan and Timothy, had been killed by the kidnappers when they'd been sent to collect the ransom."

Only a few months later, his younger brother and his third son, Rowland, were also killed in extremist attacks.

"I felt like the world was crumbling in on me, as if I were alone with this pain," Josiah laments. "I kept

happen to me?' When I remember Rebekah and the life we had together, I ask God, 'Why?'"

"I HAVE RECEIVED FREEDOM"

In his grief, Josiah was met by Open Doors trauma caregivers. One of them, Philip*, began to meet one-to-one with Josiah to help him process his loss.

"When I came to the trauma centre, my anger and bitterness reduced and I have received freedom," he explains. "I realised that forgiveness is almost impossible without God. It has helped me to heal from the bitterness and hatred, and I have forgiven them."

Josiah now plans to share all that he has received with others deeply affected by persecution. He sees clearly the pattern of violence infecting communities across Nigeria, but he also sees the impact of your support.

"My brethren in Christ, I want to say thank you for the relief you have given," he says. "Don't think your prayers are not being felt – they are. Through them, I have understood the love of believers. Believers' prayers brought me out of the bush. So, I am pleading and praying that you keep on supporting through your

LISTEN

"I remembered you, God, and I groaned; I meditated, and my spirit grew faint." (Psalm 77:3)

LINGER

When have you 'groaned' to the Lord in difficulty? How did God answer?

LIVE

What 'deeds of the Lord' might you remember to help you trust God in times of sorrow? (Psalm 77:11)

PRAY

- For all affected by violence in Nigeria
- That God's comfort and healing would restore the broken-hearted, like Josiah
- For peace and justice to reign across sub-Saharan Africa.



Watch Josiah's story at opendoorsuk.org/videos