

OpenDoors

MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER 2024

**ARISE
AFRICA**

**WILL YOU STAND
WITH DISPLACED
CHRISTIANS?**

STRENGTHENING CHRISTIANS WHERE FAITH COSTS THE MOST

www.opendoorscanada.org



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Cover image: Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa face violent persecution on a scale never seen before. Now, African church leaders are calling on you to stand with them. Read more on page 4.

GARY'S TAKE

Dear Friend,

Today, I planted a tree in Africa.

That’s right. As I write this letter I am in one of the most risky places on earth to live as a Christian - risky because of the level of violence that has been levied against Christians here in recent years.

Imagine having to flee your village without notice, and with only the clothes on your back. Imagine having to endure the trauma of seeing family members, including children, being brutally killed right in front of you. Or, imagine stepping into the place of your pastor and dying the death intended for him, so that your church community can continue to exist as a place of refuge for those on the run from extremists.

These are just a few examples of the stories I heard this morning, sitting under a large tree just outside an IDP camp in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The situation for our brothers and sisters in this region is indeed grim, but their hope is kept alive knowing that Christians around the world are praying for them, and supporting them.

The mango tree I planted today was lovingly named “The Canada Tree” by family members whose lives, like the tree, demonstrate resilience and mission. We continue to pray that, as this tree grows, so will the faith of the church in Sub-Saharan Africa grow, and that it will “bring forth fruit in due season” (Ps. 1:3). Let’s keep praying!

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Gary Stagg
 Executive Director



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HOW LONG, O LORD?

Pastor Barnabas has lived in this camp, with his wife and five children, for four years. He was driven here by violent persecution.



More than 16 million Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa have been driven from their homes by violent persecution. It's time to stop the violence and start the healing.

Filmsy makeshift tents sprawl in every direction, offering little relief from the ferocious heat. A sense of hopelessness hangs in the air. There's not enough food, no running water, too few toilets, and disease is rife.

This camp, with its appalling conditions, is 'home' to Pastor Barnabas, his wife and five children. The floorspace of their tent is no bigger than a double mattress. Every day is a struggle to survive.

They've been here for four years.

"Each person you see here... we are all Christians," says Pastor Barnabas. "We are here because of violence. Millions of Christians are displaced here in Nigeria. But the news doesn't care about it, politicians don't talk about it, nobody talks about it. We are remaining in darkness. How would you feel to be forgotten?"

16 MILLION DISPLACED

Pastor Barnabas is just one of

ARISE AFRICA: STOP THE VIOLENCE START THE HEALING

Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa face violent persecution on a scale never seen before. Now, African church leaders are calling on you to stand with them.

Through Arise Africa, a global campaign, Christians around the world can stand alongside our persecuted family. We aim to provide spiritual, emotional and physical support to four million believers by 2027, and see a resilient, resourceful and influential Sub-Saharan African church shining as a beacon of light.

This year, with the focus on 16 million Christians made homeless by violent persecution, your support is especially vital. You can help to stop the violence and start the healing.

more than 16 million Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa forced from their ancestral lands and homes by persecution. Across the region, Islamist terror groups such as Al-Qaeda, al-Shabab and Boko Haram want to establish an Islamic state and are targeting Christians with unprecedented violence.

Believers are being attacked, kidnapped and murdered, and Christian villages and schools are being destroyed. Burkina Faso has lost 40 per cent of its territory to terror groups, and in places like Nigeria, militants seem to act with impunity.

Pastor Barnabas knows first-hand how dangerous it is for believers. After all, it was a deadly attack on his farm that drove him to a refugee camp...

MACHETE ATTACK

“Militants surrounded us, some with guns, some with machetes, some with sticks,” remembers Pastor Barnabas. “My brother was shot dead, and his wife was shot, macheted and killed. I kept running and was attacked with a stick. My hand was broken.”

The terrifying violence that day not only left Pastor Barnabas with permanent injuries, it had a devastating long-term impact on the family.

“I lost everything,” says Barnabas as he steps through the dust and debris of the refugee camp, a child by his side. “Everything in my home was burned. Now I cannot take care of my family. I cannot feed them. My children no longer go to school.”

Pastor Barnabas pauses for a moment, overwhelmed with emotion. “As a pastor, too, I am supposed to take care of my sheep. But people are losing their hope in God because of the situation they are in. I don’t have anything to give them. We can only pray and share the Word... I feel very, very bad.”

ARISE, AFRICA

Insecurity and instability are putting the future of the church at risk, and creating a displacement crisis, an education crisis and a healthcare crisis. Now Pastor Barnabas and Christian leaders across Sub-Saharan Africa are calling on the global Church to act, through the Arise Africa campaign.

“OUR EYES AND OUR HOPE ARE ON GOD”

You are invited to share in the pain of Pastor Barnabas and others, speak out against violence, pray with conviction and stand as one with your persecuted brothers and

sisters. Your gifts, prayers and action today can help stop the violence and start the healing.

Already, Open Doors’ local partners have provided emergency food and medical help to Pastor Barnabas and other Christians in the camp. Skills training and trauma healing are coming soon. With your support, the persecuted church in Sub-Saharan Africa remains strong and resilient, and Christians like Pastor Barnabas will not give up.

“God has sustained me and kept me, and I will not lose my confidence in Him,” said Pastor Barnabas. “Our eyes and our hope are on God. If God will fight this battle for us, a day shall come when we will live a good life.”

16 million Christians are displaced in Sub-Saharan Africa. They need your help. See the next page to learn how you can stand with them.



Will you stand with the church in Africa to stop the violence and start the healing?

PLEASE PRAY

- For Pastor Barnabas and his family, that their suffering will end, their faith will remain strong, and their lives will be filled with hope.
- For violence to stop. Ask God to change the hearts of those intent on destruction and evil and pray for peace in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- For healing to start. Pray for justice and restoration for persecuted communities, and for Open Doors partners delivering trauma healing.

PLEASE GIVE

Every \$29 could provide emergency shelter to a Christian driven from their home.

Every \$48 can sustain a displaced believer with food, clothing and medical care.

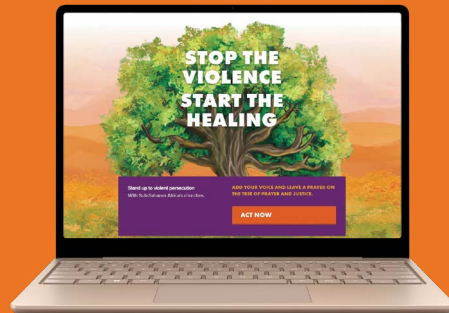
Every \$104 could provide a month of education to a displaced child, to give them a future.

PLEASE ACT

Sign the global petition to call for Christians and other vulnerable individuals in Sub-Saharan Africa to be treated with dignity and respect by:

- Providing robust protection from violent militant attacks
- Ensuring justice through fair prosecutions of the attackers
- Ensuring restoration to bring healing to affected communities

Add your name now:
opendoorscanada.org/ariseafrica

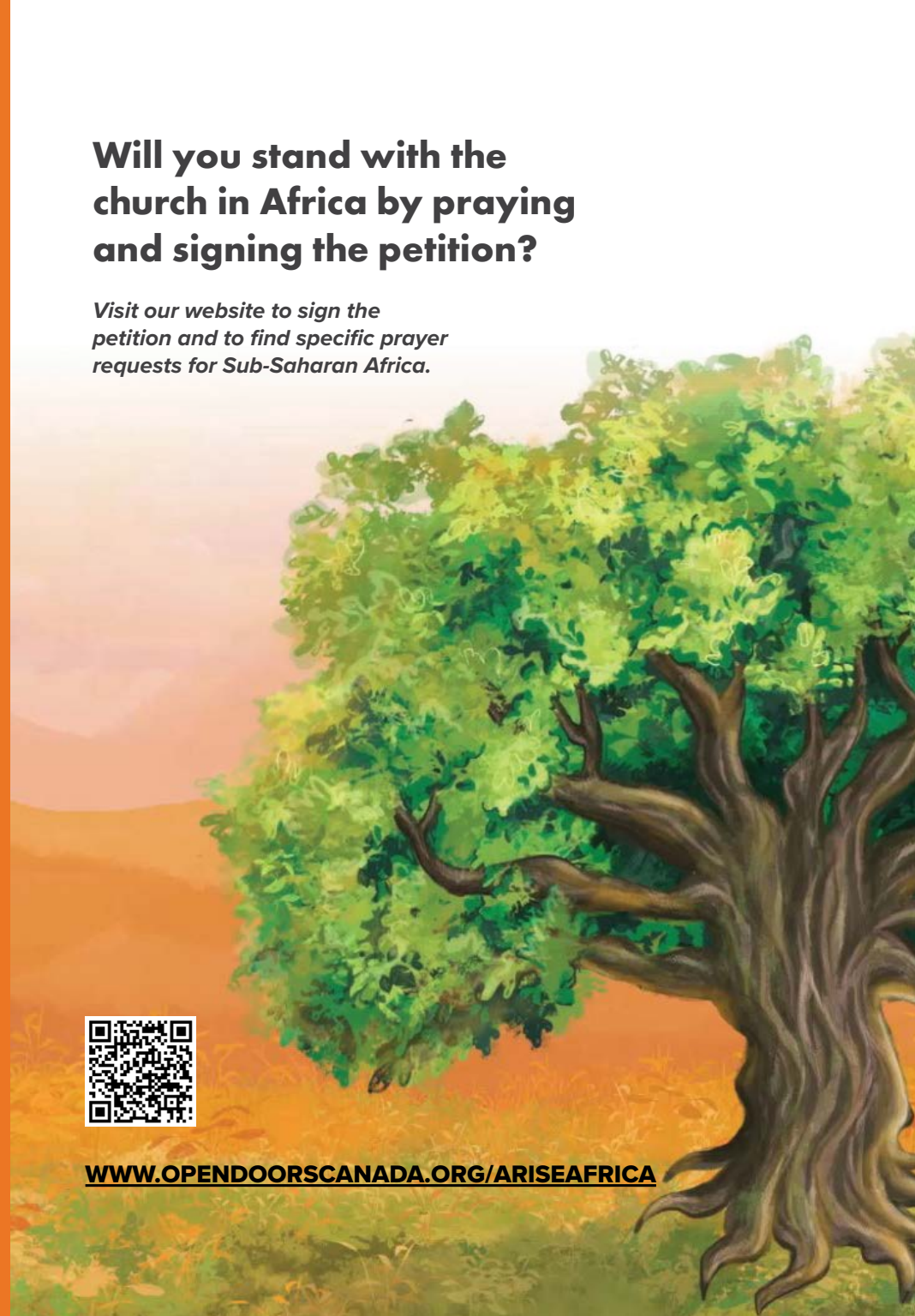


Will you stand with the church in Africa by praying and signing the petition?

Visit our website to sign the petition and to find specific prayer requests for Sub-Saharan Africa.



[WWW.OPENDOORSCANADA.ORG/ARISEAFRICA](https://www.opendoorscanada.org/ariseafrica)



'YOU ALWAYS ASK HOW WE ARE'



Abraham and his family are among 16 million Christians made homeless by violent persecution. In an internal displacement camp in northern Nigeria, your support is keeping them – and their faith – alive.

It was midnight when the first gunshots rang out...

Abraham had been warned that Fulani militants were planning to attack his village in Benue State, central Nigeria, so he'd sent his wife and three children to safety. But Abraham could not save his brother.

"They shot him through the door of his home, then he came outside

and they shot him in the head."

That was more than three years ago. Since then, Abraham and his family have lived in a makeshift tent in Ichwa, a camp for internally displaced people. It's too dangerous to go home because, unless the family converts to Islam, militants would kill them.

But conditions in the camp are desperate...

NO FOOD, NO HOPE

"We are struggling to remain alive," said Abraham, who has taken on the role of camp chairman. "Look at my children, how much weight they have lost."

Up to seven people sleep in every tent, and 3,000 people share just 15 toilets. Abraham's children no longer attend school and he worries for their future. He's abandoned his own dream of going to university. It's no surprise Abraham sometimes asks, where is God?

YOUR CARE

But through you, God is bringing hope to the Ichwa internal displacement camp. Your generous support means emergency food and practical help are reaching Abraham and other believers.

"When I told people that Open Doors partners were coming to pay us a visit, they were elated because of the help you have been giving us," said Abraham. "Last time you provided food, it lasted for about two months even for families with many members."

More than food, though, Abraham values your steadfast care – because it shows God has not abandoned him.

"Things here are really bad in



the camp but once we see you, we become joyous and excited," added Abraham, with a smile. "You always ask how we are, and that alone makes us very happy. We know God is helping us." Thanks to you, Sub-Saharan African believers like Abraham know they are not alone.

"We always pray God sends angels to our rescue," said Abraham. "We will worship God because He has preserved our lives. I still have God. He will surely deliver me."

WWL
06

PLEASE PRAY

- Ask God to encourage Abraham in his role as camp chairman.
- Pray for an end to hunger and sickness in Nigeria's refugee camps.
- Pray the Arise Africa campaign can raise awareness about violent persecution in Sub-Saharan Africa, and bring an end to the suffering of Christians like Abraham.

STANDING TOGETHER



Your gifts and prayers provided a lifeline to Pastor Soré when violent persecution drove him and his family from their village in Burkina Faso.

The first time Pastor Soré's village was attacked, extremists robbed people. The second time, they raped the women. The third time, they burned everything to the ground.

Pastor Soré, who lives in Burkina Faso, was left with no choice...

"When the terrorists find Christians, they tell them the time of Christianity is over," he said. "We had to flee to save our lives."

Leaving a beautiful home and thriving church, Pastor Soré and his wife Teresa escaped with their own two children and 15 others who had been orphaned or entrusted

into their care. They are among two million people who have been driven from their homes by jihadist groups in Burkina Faso. The country has lost 40 per cent of its territory, mainly in the north, to terror groups.

After four days on the road, the group was too big to move into a camp for internally displaced people. So they set up a shelter on a desolate piece of land.

"We were so sad when we arrived in this empty space," says Pastor Soré. It's a 2km walk to the nearest clean water pump. In the rainy season, water washes through their makeshift tent bringing mosquitoes and snakes. And in the summer it's unbearably hot.

NOT FORGOTTEN

But thanks to your kind support, Pastor Soré is not alone.

"First you helped me with prayer that really comforted me," said Pastor Soré. "Then, seeds and fertilizers helped me grow crops and feed my family. I'm holding in my hands the maize we cultivated with your help. We've been consuming it for three months now!"

He added, "The Open Doors team visits us regularly, so we know you share our pains and burdens and carry them before God."

But what matters to Pastor Soré, more than anything, is knowing that you stand with him. Your care strengthens his faith and emboldens his remarkable ministry...

"We are displaced but Jesus is not, and never will be, displaced from our lives," says Pastor Soré. "I ask God to open doors for me to continue evangelism. Despite our miserable condition, Jesus still brings people who get saved."

He added, "When I look in the Bible, I see all warriors encountered difficulties. It's my turn today. An important truth about suffering is that it is never eternal – but Jesus is eternal."



WWL
20

PLEASE PRAY

"Christians all over the world, I ask you to pray. Pray for Christians in Burkina Faso, especially those who are displaced and living with me, to stay firm in their faith. Pray for me to keep a strong faith and succeed in the work God has called me to. And pray for land where my family can stay and follow Christ."

Pastor Soré

BECAUSE OF YOU...

YOUR GENEROSITY HAS PROVIDED RELIEF AND HEALING



Titik says, "Thanks to the medical care, I can see a little...I'm very grateful for what you've done in my life."

Titik and Pascal are a Christian couple from Togo with one daughter, Joanna. Titik has been dealing with glaucoma for fifteen years, and lost his job because of his disability. He was receiving support from his family members during the difficult time, but when he became a Christian, that support stopped. Pascal assumed sole responsibility of caring for her husband. Last year, Open Doors partners were able to meet Titik and his family and address their needs with practical aid. In addition to food and money for rent, your gifts allowed Titik to undergo treatment that has improved his eyesight.

BECAUSE OF YOU, EIGHT CHRISTIAN FAMILIES HAVE NEW HOMES IN LAOS



Thanks to your support, eight Christian families have new homes. They were expelled from their village in Laos when they refused to give up their faith.

Eight Christian families, about 26 individuals, were expelled from their village in southern Laos after refusing to deny their Christian faith in October of last year. The families were told that their faith had sparked controversy in the village, violating tradition and disturbing the village spirits, and were therefore expelled. After all the family members had to leave, local Christians and church leaders came together to help them rebuild their homes. Thanks to your generosity, Open Doors local partners were able to contribute materials for building walls and roofs. Today, these families live in new homes and encourage each other in the faith.

NORTH KOREA NEVER ABANDONED 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.

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



If you would like us to come to your church, contact us at odcevents@odcan.org or call (905) 636-0944.

SATURDAY, NOV 9 - 7:00PM

Birch Cove Baptist
50 Donaldson Ave, Halifax, NS B3M 3B5

SUNDAY, NOV 10 - 10:00AM

Westlynn Baptist Church
1341 27th St, North Vancouver, BC V7J 1S6

SUNDAY, NOV 10 - 10:30AM

Life Branch Church
10 Lancaster Dr, Dartmouth, NS B3A 4Y9

SUNDAY, NOV 10 - TIME TBA

Elim Gospel Chapel
566 5th St, Courtenay, BC V9N 1K3

TUESDAY, NOV 12 - 7:00PM

Glad Tidings Moncton
2460 Mountain Rd, Moncton, NB E1G 1B4

16 MILLION CHRISTIANS DISPLACED BY VIOLENT PERSECUTION

HOW LONG, O LORD?



Millions of Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa are being driven from their homes because of violent attacks by Islamist extremists...

Pastor Barnabas, in Nigeria, is one of them.

He and his family struggle to survive in a makeshift tent in a refugee camp.

Grieving and traumatized. Hungry. Hopeless.

Four years they've lived like this.

Violent persecution is creating a housing crisis, an education crisis, a healthcare crisis and a refugee crisis. Now Pastor Barnabas and African Christian leaders ask you to stand with them, as one.

STOP THE VIOLENCE. START THE HEALING.

- \$48 can sustain a displaced believer with food, clothing, toiletries and medical care.
- Sign the global petition to call for change.
- Pray for your persecuted brothers and sisters.



Scan here to make your gift, sign the petition and find out more about Arise Africa, the global campaign.

Go to www.opendoorscanada.org/ariseafrica to give now.

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