



PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

Pray for the Persecuted Christians in Central African Republic



Christian Population: 1,453,190
Total Population: 4,505,945

Threats from Jihadist and Criminal Groups

Embroiled in bloody conflict since 2013, most of the Central African Republic remains occupied by armed militia groups, with numerous rebel splinter groups targeting Christians specifically. Over the last year, fighting and attacks have intensified, forcing an increase in the displacement of tens of thousands of people from their homes—the highest numbers since 2014. Christian leaders who publicly denounce the violence endure threats on their lives.

How Christians are suffering

In Central African Republic, discuss their faith with anyone other than immediate family members is a risky undertaking. The country is divided along faith lines. If a Christian host talks about Christian faith to a Muslim guest, they may get into trouble. In the country's northern region, it's also dangerous to have Christian materials, as well as access to Christian radio, TV or Christian material online. Family members act as spies and report when a Muslim has

converted. When ex-Séléka fighters come into a house and find someone reading a Bible, they have been known to kill them immediately. Normal church life is extremely difficult as meetings of Christians are always under threat of attack, Séléka groups attack churches in the Muslim-dominated areas of the country and especially target churches that are more involved in openly integrating converts from the Muslim community. Anti-Balaka rebel groups also attack churches and any Christians who oppose their activities. Both rebel groups are involved in criminal activities. And Islamic leaders occupy all of the marketplaces, control trade and impose a huge tax on Christian businessmen and even loot the shops of Christians to reduce them to poverty.

This displacement of thousands of Christians has resulted in overcrowded IDP camps full of traumatized people. In many of those circumstances, they were attacked because they are Christians.

Example

Pastor Zoundji cares for an evangelical congregation of about 200 in the country's largest IDP camp. The camp houses around 30,000 people, mostly Christians. Christians must put up with the hardship of the camp because there is near-anarchy in the surrounding wilderness filled with rebel groups. "We find ourselves between the devil and the deep blue sea," Zoundji tells Open Doors workers. "It has been very difficult, but we are here. We will move forward, knowing that only God can protect us. And even if death should come, I will die in the Word."

Pray for Central African Republic

- Pray for the thousands of people, the majority of them Christians, living in IDP camps because security has not been restored. Pray that the Lord would be at work through his Holy Spirit and that these circumstances would be catalysts to a deeper, more intimate knowledge of Christ.
- Pray for wisdom and integrity for the government as it seeks to restore government authority and make a way for peace.
- Morale of church leaders in the north and east is very low. They have lost all their study material and find it hard to prepare for sermons. Pray they are sufficiently resourced with books. Pray that they will also be built up in the Spirit and will be able to comfort others.
- Pray that true Christians would not seek revenge but pray for, bless and do good to their persecutors.