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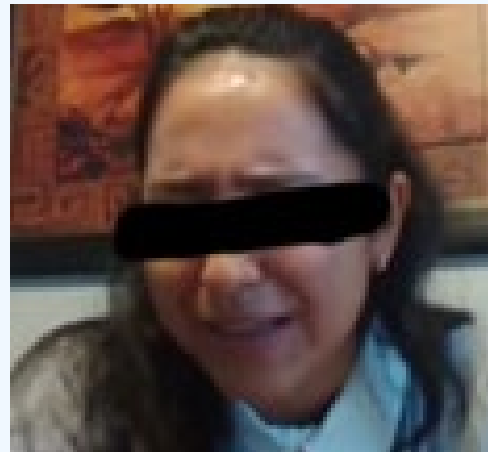
SUPPORTING
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Christians arrested by Taliban in Kabul

This month has been a tough one for our families in hiding. They need your prayers more than ever.

Earlier this month, we received word that one of our sisters was arrested by the Taliban. Her uncle, a medical doctor, has been a believer for more than 5 years. He told us how he had spent much time sharing the gospel with fellow Afghans before the Taliban took over.



"Lord, please save our people!"

He was well-known in the community because of his role as a doctor, and many knew about his conversion. Three years ago his extended family all became believers. It has long been dangerous to become a Christian in Afghanistan, but the dangers have significantly increased since the Taliban takeover. Now, the doctor's whole family are being hunted. He is regularly having to move to a new hiding place and has received many threats.

No one has heard from his niece since she was arrested. We do not know if she is still alive... but if she is, she is likely enduring all manner of horrors, to get her to renounce her faith and hand over her Christian friends and family. This is a devastating situation and our hearts are broken. The doctor asks you to pray:

Peace and blessings be upon you. There is still no news of my niece. I ask you to please pray for her. The prayers of all the believers are needed. Please pray.

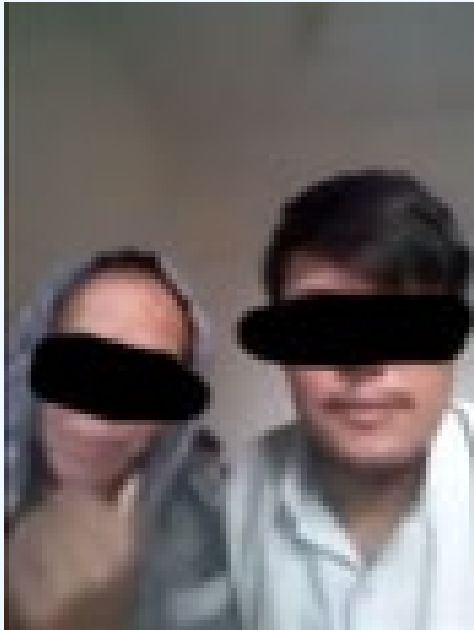
Two weeks after her arrest, a brother was also arrested. We still have no news of his fate.

The doctor has now seen a warrant for his arrest too. His crime is conversion to Christianity and being known to have evangelised. The penalty for apostasy is death, and public executions are on the rise. His faith is strong but he asks for prayer.

I have seen the letter for my arrest. The Taliban say this person (me) is an apostate

and has been promoting Christianity among muslims and must be arrested. I am proud to be a disciple of Christ, but I am being followed. Yesterday I moved again. Please pray. The Taliban have spies everywhere.

Please pray for our dear brother and sister. Pray that if they are still alive, they would have the strength to endure and stand firm in their faith. Pray too that they would resist betraying their friends and family - including those in our flock. Please pray for the protection of the rest of the flock, particularly the doctor and his wife - that they would all be hidden from the eyes of their enemies, and kept safe.



Please continue to pray for our Afghan flock

Last week, one of our brothers in Kabul was missing from our zoom class. Later he messaged to say he had been out trying to get food, but was stopped at a Taliban checkpoint. He thought that was the end for him... and that he had been recognised, but thank God, the Taliban on duty didn't recognise him and he was released. He is convinced it is because people are praying that he would be hidden from the eyes of his enemies.

Thank God they didn't recognise me. I was very scared but thank God they didn't recognise me! Thank you for all the

believers praying for me to be hidden...please keep praying for our safety.

The situation with the recent arrests has increased concern of being taken and killed. Those arrested are frequently tortured to force betrayals of other believers.

The winter weather has also arrived in Afghanistan, and the believers in hiding are facing a harsh winter. Wood and coal are in short supply, and so our families have taken to burning rubbish and old clothes - whatever they can find to keep warm. Electricity blackouts are frequent and supplies of coal and wood are low. Thankfully we've been able to get some help to them, for now.

Please don't forget these precious believers. They are strong in their faith despite great persecution and danger. They are determined to be faithful to Jesus no matter what, but they are suffering daily. They are so grateful for your prayers!

Olive Harvest in Goshen

This month we were very excited to try harvesting some of Goshen's 100 olive

trees. At this time of year, the olives are mature and ready to pick. Some are for eating, others are best for making oil. And so, armed with a few hand tools, the Goshen olive harvest began. It's a

slow and labour intensive process, but strangely relaxing and peaceful.



Picking Goshen's olives for oil, by hand



First batch ready to go to the olive mill

As we picked olives, we discussed the biblical picture of the olive tree - a symbol of God's people. We noticed how the wild olive trees produce less fruit and their fruit is pretty tiny and useless. The cultivated trees on the other hand, are laden with fat, oil-filled fruit. We were reminded of how as gentiles, like the wild olive tree, we are grafted into the cultivated tree of the commonwealth of Israel.

...and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree... (Romans 11:17)

Goshen has some grafted trees and ordinarily you would never graft a wild branch into a cultivated tree - it's always the other way around - cultivated branches are grafted onto wild trees to make the wild trees more productive... but what God has done is the opposite! ("contrary to nature" Romans 11:24) What a beautiful



Pure, golden olive oil from Goshen olives!

picture of God's love and grace - that He would graft in branches that would otherwise be overlooked, so that they can join the cherished and tended tree.

Note then the kindness and severity of God: severity towards those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in His kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. (Romans 11:22)

Branches that do not produce fruit are cut off and burnt in the fire. It's a routine part of caring for olive trees. It doesn't matter even if they are big, strong branches... if they produce nothing they are cut down and burnt, they are useless, sucking nutrients from the tree without contributing to it. We are so blessed to have this example in front of our eyes, demonstrating what Paul was writing about. It's a powerful message.

As we continue to harvest, (both with the olives and in our work as ICC) we are all so encouraged to keep pressing on and maturing in Christ, producing good fruit with the help of the Holy Spirit! We hope this will also encourage you.



Wild olive tree - with no fruit (or very tiny fruit)



Cultivated olive tree - full of fat, oil-filled fruit

Athens Update and Current Needs

We are receiving new referrals for Christian refugees needing help due to the Greek government's recent closure of asylum seeker accommodation programmes. Two new families are moving in over the next month. As we mentioned in our previous newsletter, one of our safe houses is in need of some major repair work and we are still trying to raise the funds for this. We can't house anyone in that apartment until it's repaired so please pray for those resources to come in.

Pray we are able to help those who come to us as some have complex legal issues which complicates the safe-housing process, pray for breakthrough in those cases!

Please pray for resources to support those who enter ICC's safe house programme as the government no longer provide any benefits or support for refugees and asylum seekers outside of closed camps. The burden of feeding, clothing, housing and helping with basic needs falls on ICC's shoulders. We are now possibly the only Christian organisation in Athens providing a complete support structure. The economic climate, food supply and energy crises are having a big impact both on donations coming in and the running costs of this programme.

Finally, please pray for the ICC charity car. Despite managing to get repairs done, it

is still having problems and the mechanics are struggling to find the cause. We need the car to function and operate so need it fixed!

[Make a Donation](#)

THANK YOU

We are so blessed to have such faithful and loving supporters - you are all amazing and we deeply appreciate each and every one of you.

Thank you to all who continue to donate, despite increasing financial pressure - we wouldn't be able to do what we do without your support.

And a huge thank you to all of you who faithfully cover ICC and our beneficiaries in prayer - it is needed and appreciated more than you know!



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