

# PERSECUTED YEMENI CHRISTIANS AND UNREACHED YEMENIS NEED YOUR PRAYERS THIS MONTH



Asad's mother was persecuted and beaten for her faith in Christ for years by her brother, an Islamic zealot. Once he even forced her to kneel while he held a gun to her head and tried to execute her—but when he pulled the trigger, the bullet didn't fire. When Asad was 13, this uncle who had relentlessly tormented his own sister, was killed as a combatant in Yemen's war. Still, his mother's other relatives continued to harass them until finally God provided an opportunity for them to move out on their own. Living independently gave Asad, his mother, and her other three children some relief—however, they continued to struggle financially as a woman-headed household cut off from their extended family. While the actual number of Yemeni homes headed by women like Asad's mother is not known, aid workers say the number is on the rise. "Price rises are forcing these women to reduce their meals to one a day, and many have resorted to begging," said the spokesperson for one Yemeni nonprofit.<sup>1</sup>

Asad is now 16 years old and in 2022, God intervened in the family's life once again by making a way for him to enroll in English classes. "This has kept him off the street and away from bad influences," said another disciple of Christ close to the family. "He now rubs shoulders with peers who are ambitious and motivated to work hard and he's seeing new possibilities."

Meanwhile, although Asad's mother has experienced a reprieve from family-based persecution—she and women like her are facing increasing restrictions imposed on their daily lives by the Houthi authorities that rule Yemen's north. This has included new directives concerning the attire of Yemeni women, who already abide by a conservative dress code, as well as decrees that restrict their autonomy by requiring male chaperones to accompany them in public.<sup>2</sup> Women in Yemen are facing "increased precarity because of the loss of male breadwinners, while discriminatory societal attitudes towards women's economic engagement and movement remain unchanged," stated an April 2022 United Nations Population Fund report.

These and other realities experienced by Yemeni women across the country limit opportunities for women like Fazia to hear the Gospel. Fazia is a young woman who managed to contact other Yemeni disciples early in 2022. Her mother is a strict Muslim, which made it difficult for Fazia to obtain information about Christ. As a woman from a religious family, Fazia could rarely leave her home, and the Yemeni disciples she

contacted weren't able to visit her initially. However, two women were able to establish daily communication with her and quickly realized that Faiza's faith was genuine. In time, she was able to get baptized and participate in discipleship activities with other followers of Christ. She watched the Jesus Film in her own dialect, learned foundational concepts of the faith, and began to fellowship regularly with other women who were gathering to grow in their relationship with Christ together. Finally, just as God gave Asad an opportunity to enroll in English classes—He also made a way for Fazia to enroll in university, giving her more opportunities to leave her home. Fazia is now happily studying towards a degree and asks you to pray that her mother and other family members will see the change in her life, come to know Christ's love, and become open to the Gospel.

As documentation of faith-based persecution in Yemen has improved, the country has continued to rise on Open Doors' World Watch List (WWL)<sup>3</sup>—reaching number three on the 2023 list.<sup>4</sup> Yemeni disciples like Asad and Fazia, who are growing in their faith within this high-risk country, invite you to join them in two key prayer opportunities in March. First, on Saturday, March 18th, partners of International Christian Response (ICR) will observe one of two annual days of prayer for Yemen. On this date, an international partner serving in Yemen was assassinated by extremists for his witness in the country. The partners gathering for prayer on March 18th will be remembering the sacrifices of those who have laid down their lives in Yemen while sharing the Gospel. They have selected II Corinthians 5:11-20 as a key passage for 2023 and encourage you to use this passage to inform your prayers as you join them in crying out for Christ's message of reconciliation to spread across Yemen.

The second opportunity to join with Yemeni disciples of Christ in strategic prayer is part of a focused movement that will take place during Ramadan, which will begin around March 22nd. For devout Muslims, the month of Ramadan is a season to pray, fast, reflect, and seek God's forgiveness for their sins. Muhammad reported receiving the initial revelations of the Qur'an during the month of Ramadan, and fasting during the month is one of the five pillars of Islamic practice. As Muslims seek forgiveness and reflect on the Qur'an, it is a key time for the global Church to pray that God's Word will be revealed to Yemenis in Jesus Christ, including the forgiveness offered through His death and resurrection. Thus, partners of ICR want to cover Yemen in prayer 24 hours a day, seven days a week from **March 23rd through April 22nd, 2023. Visit [yemen.pray4movement.org](https://yemen.pray4movement.org)** to sign up for 15-minute slots to help fill the 720 hours of prayer for the month. Currently 50 percent of the time slots are covered. A prayer guide with ideas and Scripture for daily intercession will be provided to those who sign up, along with reminder emails for each time slot they register for. The link and details can be shared with anyone who would like to stand with Yemeni disciples on the frontlines. Don't miss these special upcoming opportunities to come before God's throne of grace and advocate for Yemeni disciples living in the midst of persecution today, as well as the unreached Yemenis around them!

**HELP SUPPORT OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS BY CLICKING ON THE LINK BELOW AND CHOOSING "CAP FUND".**

**[CHRISTIANRESPONSE.ORG/GIVE](https://www.christianresponse.org/give)**

1 <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2023/01/05/Yemen-women-food-war-humanitarian-crisis>

2 <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2247476>

3 The World Watch List is an annual report prepared and published by the World Watch Research team of Open Doors. It ranks the 50 countries where it is most difficult to profess and practice the Christian faith. The research team surveys religious freedom for Christians in five areas of life: Private, Family, Community, National, The Church. Separately, the team also measures violence against Christians.

4 <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/persecution/countries/>