

## LENT PRAYER PROJECT: WEEK 3

### Choi Chun-gil

In December 2014 South Korean businessman and missionary **Choi Chun-gil** (65) travelled into North Korea from China, where he was involved in transporting religious and humanitarian goods for North Koreans. He was arrested and imprisoned on charges of conspiracy to subvert the state, espionage, destruction and sabotage, and illegal border crossing.

#### Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> March

In 2015 Pastor Choi was sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour. Ask God to protect and sustain him in prison.

#### Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March

Today we pray for hope for Pastor Choi and a sense of God's presence in the labour camp.

#### Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March

Pray for good health and strength for Pastor Choi and that he would be given enough food.

#### Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March

In December 2024, ten years after Pastor Choi's arrest, South Korea's Unification Ministry called on North Korea to release him and five other nationals "who are illegally detained". Pray that Pastor Choi would be released soon.

#### Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March

Information about Pastor Choi's family is not publicly available except for his son Choi Jin-young, who has travelled widely to appeal for international support for his father and five other South Koreans held in North Korea. Pray for comfort and hope for Pastor Choi's family.

#### Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March

Ask God to change the hearts of North Korea's leaders.

#### Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March

Pray for an end to persecution of North Korean Christians.

**The remainder of the Lent Prayer Project will follow in the April Prayer Diary!**



# Church in Chains Prayer Diary

## March 2025 - Lent Prayer Project



I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. (Philippians 1v19)

### PRAY FOR NEWS AND EVENTS

#### Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March

Iranian Christians **Naser Navard Gol Tapeh** and **Joseph Shabazian** were re-arrested on 6 February at their homes in the Tehran region by intelligence agents and taken back to Evin Prison, where they had both been previously imprisoned. Pray that Naser and Joseph will be released from detention soon.

#### Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> March

On the same day, Christian convert **Somayeh Rajabi** was arrested at a gathering of about 80 Christians in a private garden. Pray for strength and protection for Somayeh as she faces interrogation.

#### Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March

Three Christian girls **Ariha Gulzar** (12), **Saneha Sharif** (14) and **Saba Shafique** (12) were abducted by Muslims from their homes in Punjab province (Pakistan) in January. Pray that they would be rescued and returned to their families.

#### Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March

Pray for blessing for the work of CLAAS (Pakistan), which supports victims of false blasphemy accusations, abductions, forced marriages and conversions.

#### Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March

Pray for all the ongoing work behind the scenes in Church in Chains, focusing in particular in governance, research and advocacy.

#### Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March

**Preacher Deng Yanxiang** from Shengjia Church (China) was recently sentenced to two years in prison; time spent in pre-trial detention means that he is scheduled for release in May 2025. We pray for health and strength for him for the next 3 months.

#### Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March

Pray for good progress with making the arrangements to present the petition (to end repression of Christians) to the Chinese Embassy in Dublin.

#### Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> March

Thank God that **Abdulbaqi Saeed Abdo** and **Nour Fayez Ibrahim Girgis** were released from prison in Egypt in January after spending over three years in detention on blasphemy charges. We pray for healing from their trauma.



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## LENT PRAYER PROJECT: WEEK 1

### Zafar Bhatti

**Pastor Zafar Bhatti** (62) has been in prison in Pakistan since July 2012, when he was accused of sending blasphemous text messages. In 2017 he was sentenced to life imprisonment and in 2022 this was increased to the death sentence. His appeal hearings have been adjourned repeatedly.

#### Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> March

Zafar suffers from diabetes and severe heart disease and has had three heart attacks. In January 2025 a prison doctor described Zafar's health as "critical". He has gangrene in his right foot and his heart function is only 10%. Pray for medical treatment and healing for Zafar.

#### Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March

Zafar and his wife Nawab (75) do not have children. Pray for hope and encouragement for Zafar and Nawab and that she will have all the support that she needs.

#### Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March

Prison doctors have recommended that Zafar apply again for bail on medical grounds, which was refused in March 2022. Pray also that he would be acquitted and released soon.

#### Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March

Nawab was visiting Zafar once a month with food and medicine until last year, when she was unable to make regular visits due to poor health. Ask God to sustain and provide for Nawab, who misses Zafar terribly.

#### Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March

Nawab also struggles with very poor health. She has high blood pressure, hearing loss and is blind in one eye but her sight has improved following recent cataract surgery. Pray for better health for Nawab.

#### Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March

Zafar has often been attacked in prison by Islamist prisoners and guards so he is kept under high security and is not allowed out of his cell. For security reasons court proceedings have been carried out by the judge in the cell. Ask God to protect Zafar from extremist attacks.

#### Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March

Pray for reform of Pakistan's blasphemy laws. In a worrying escalation of blasphemy cases, human right lawyers reported in January that an Islamist gang has trapped more than 450 people on false charges in recent years.



## LENT PRAYER PROJECT: WEEK 2

### Mina Khajavi

Iranian Christian convert **Mina Khajavi** (61) was detained in a raid on a house church meeting in Tehran in June 2020 and two years later she was sentenced to six years in prison for "acting against national security" through leadership of a house church.

#### Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March

In January 2024 Mina was summoned to prison and began serving her sentence, spending time in solitary confinement while she was interrogated. Ask God to protect and encourage Mina in prison.

#### Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March

In 2022 Mina was run over by a car and had her ankle broken in three places, which necessitated the insertion of metal plates. Mina continues to walk with a limp and has developed arthritis. Pray for better health and recovery from pain.

#### Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March

Recently-released prisoners describe Mina as having a positive attitude and high spirits. Ask God to give Mina peace and hope.

#### Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March

Mina has applied for a retrial and it is hoped that this would lead to acquittal or a reduced sentence since her co-defendants Joseph and Malihe were granted early release in 2023. Pray for a retrial to be held soon and for release.

#### Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March

Mina is married with a daughter, and her family has monthly visit opportunities. The authorities accused her of converting them but she said they decided to become Christians after seeing the change her new faith made to her life. Ask God to bless and comfort Mina's husband and daughter.

#### Friday 21<sup>st</sup> March

Ask God to sustain the other Christians in Mina's house church and keep them safe from arrest.

#### Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March

In 2024 it became clear that Christian organisations have only been able to report on a fraction of human right violations against Christians in Iran, when the anti-Iranian government hacker group leaked the case files of over 3 million prosecutions from the Tehran judiciary's website. Today we pray for all those Iranian Christians who are suffering for their faith and whose names we don't know. We also pray for freedom for house churches to meet in Iran.

