

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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“Blessed Are the Persecuted”

Join the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP) on November 7 and 14

(Bonn, 03.11.2021) At a time when persecution is at an all-time high with more than 300 million Christians living in places where they are under pressure, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) encourages churches to participate in the upcoming International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP) on November 7 and 14. The annual prayer event offers Christians an opportunity to stand in solidarity with those who are suffering discrimination or persecution simply for their faith in Jesus Christ. The WEA prepared free resources in multiple languages to help churches participate in this year's IDOP.

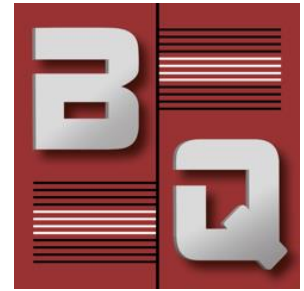
“At the WEA, we believe that prayer can deliver suffering saints. However, to pray for the persecuted, we also believe that it is important to first know what they are going through. The IDOP is organized, therefore, to equip the Church to pray for the needs of the persecuted in an informed manner. To do this, we produce an array of resources to aid the Church in its prayers. These resources are freely made available on IDOP.org,” said Bishop Dr Thomas Schirmmacher, Secretary General of the WEA, adding: “I thank our Ambassador Godfrey Yogarajah for directing the team that has prepared all these resources in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Russian.”

“This year, inspired by Matthew 5:10, the IDOP is held under the theme ‘Blessed Are the Persecuted.’ Our aim this year is to call the global Church to pray that our brothers and sisters would know that they are blessed when they face persecution because of

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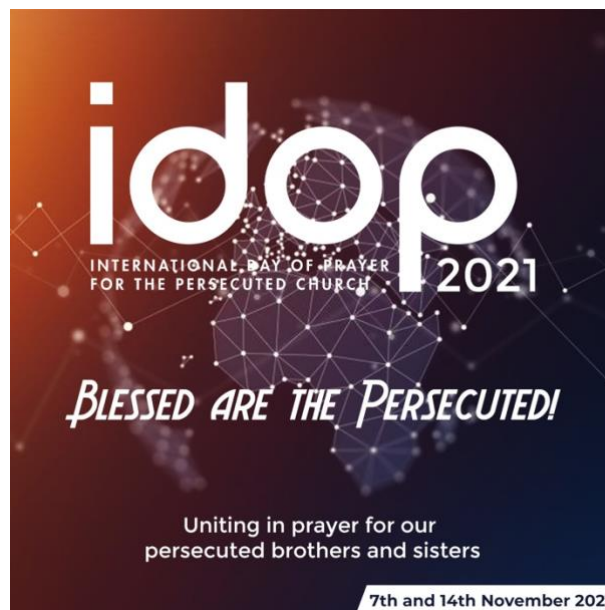
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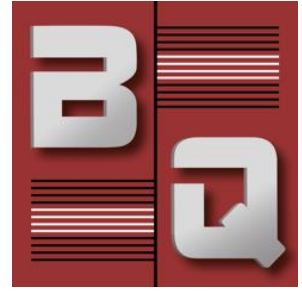
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righteousness and that they would not lose heart, knowing that their reward is great in heaven,” Schirmmacher said.

Discrimination and persecution take on many forms, such as being outcast from society, verbally or physically abused, slandered, wrongly accused of coercing others to change their faith, abducted, forcibly married, imprisoned and even martyred. Sometimes perpetrators are citizens who do not tolerate Christians in their neighborhoods and often enjoy impunity from police and government officials. At other times, it is the government itself that outlaws possessing a Bible, confessing the Christian faith, gathering for Church service or sharing the Gospel with others.

The IDOP was launched in 1996 by the WEA’s Religious Liberty Commission in response to the growing challenges believers faced in many parts of the world. It was subsequently also adopted by a number of churches and Christian ministries globally who encourage Christians to pray for their brothers and sisters in Christ who suffer for their faith.

“When you meet with persecuted Christians, the first thing that they ask of you is to pray for them,” said Godfrey Yogarajah, WEA’s Ambassador for Religious Freedom. “This is something that I have realized in all my years of work with the persecuted Church around the world. The IDOP, therefore, is as much an occasion to pray for the persecuted as it is an expression of solidarity with them. As a global family of believers, let us not miss this opportunity to unite in prayer for our brothers and sisters who share our faith, but not our freedoms.”

And Dr Janet Epp Buckingham, WEA Director of Global Advocacy, commented: “Millions of Christians are under pressure for their faith around the world. COVID-19 has made the situation much worse and global conflicts have put even more in peril. The IDOP is an annual opportunity for the global Church to stand together with those who are persecuted by upholding them in prayer. The focus countries of India, Nigeria,



Cover of the yearbook “Verfolgung und Diskriminierung von Christen 2021”

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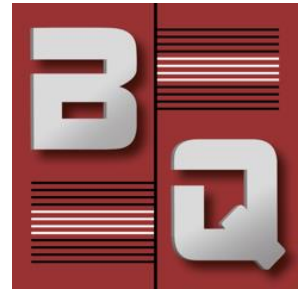
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Nepal, Somalia, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Algeria, Iran and Eritrea are places where Christians face persecution for different reasons, but are longing for the prayers of faithful believers around the world.”

The IDOP.org website offers a range of resources, including a promo video, Bible studies, devotionals, prayer sheets and a children’s worksheet. It also features social media graphics to help promote participation in the IDOP among believers in local congregations.

“There is no Christian who does not suffer, for even those who are not suffering directly, suffer because they share the pain and grief of those who do. If one member of the body suffers, the whole body suffers with it (1 Corinthians 12:26),” Schirmmacher said.

BLESSSED ARE THE PERSECUTED

IDOP 2021

For over two decades, every November, the global Church has united in prayer for our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world. Today, more than 300 million Christians live in places where they face persecution for their faith in Jesus Christ. Staggeringly, this is one in eight Christians, globally.

The International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP) is a global event dedicated to praying for the persecuted. In Hebrews 13:3, we are told that Christians should pray for those suffering as if they themselves were suffering. In other words, the Scriptures command us to empathize, identify with, and pray for our suffering brothers and sisters in Christ.

Over the years, the IDOP has served as a clarion call for the Church to remember those who face persecution in different parts of the world. In so doing, the IDOP has also served as a platform to amplify the challenges faced by persecuted Christians and draw global attention to their stories.

At the World Evangelical Alliance, we believe that prayer can deliver suffering saints. However, to pray for the persecuted, we also believe that it is important to first know what they are going through. The IDOP is organised, therefore, to equip the Church to pray for the needs of the persecuted in an informed manner. To do this, we produce an array of resources to aid the Church in its prayers. These resources are freely made available on IDOP.org.

This year, inspired by Matthew 5:10, the IDOP is held under the theme “Blessed are the persecuted.” Our aim this year is to call the global Church to pray that our brothers and sisters would know that they are blessed when they face persecution because of righteousness and that they would not lose heart, knowing that their reward is great in heaven.

We invite you, therefore, to join the IDOP on 7th and 14th November 2021. Let’s pray together that the persecuted would be strengthened to stand firm in the promises of God and serve Him victoriously, despite their difficult circumstances.

Bp. Dr. Thomas Schirmmacher
Secretary General & CEO
World Evangelical Alliance

The IDOP welcoming message by Thomas Schirmmacher

Downloads and Links:

- More information and resources at the IDOP website: <https://idop.org>
- The IDOP welcoming message by Thomas Schirmmacher: <https://idop.org/web/idop-2021/>
- **Germany:** Weltweiter Gebetstag für verfolgte Christen (14.11.2021):
 - https://akref.ead.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Gebetstag-fuer-verfolgte-Christen2021_web-final.pdf
 - <https://www.opendoors.de/aktiv-werden/beten/weltweiter-gebetstag-fuer-verfolgte-christen>
- **Switzerland:** Sonntag der verfolgten Kirche (14.11.2021): <https://www.agr-glr.ch/index.php?id=71>
- **Austria:** Sonntag der verfolgten Kirche (14. oder 21.11.2021): https://www.evangelischeallianz.at/fileadmin/Downloads/SVK/svk_2021_web.pdf
- Press release on the German language 2021 yearbooks on Persecution and Discrimination of Christians and on Religious Freedom: <https://www.bucer.de/ressource/details/bonner-querschnitte-282021-ausgabe-699-eng.html>

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