

Lent 2023 Prayer Guide

ADFIInternational.org

**“FOR  
FREEDOM  
CHRIST  
HAS SET  
US FREE”**

Galatians 5:1



ADF INTERNATIONAL



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## For freedom of thought

**WE PRAY FOR** freedom of thought and the right to pray freely. We pray for everyone who is criminalised for prayer and offers of help to those in need.

**Thinking forbidden.** In December 2022, the British woman Isabel Vaughan-Spruce stood quietly and peacefully on a street in Birmingham (UK). After a few minutes, the police arrived. They questioned and then arrested her. The reason? She admitted that she “might” have been praying in her head.

A municipal censorship zone prohibits “prayer and counseling” near abortion clinics; even silent prayer is banned. Isabel was arrested for thought-crime – no one was able to see that she was praying. Her crime consisted in her thoughts. But fortunately, on 16 February, Isabel was acquitted of her charges by the Birmingham Magistrates’ Court.

However, the UK is not an isolated example. In Germany, for example, the federal government is openly speaking about its endeavors to criminalize peaceful prayer and offers of support. The United Kingdom should serve as a warning to all of us.

ASH WEDNESDAY

START

Wednesday 22 February – Saturday 25 February

2

## For the overturning of blasphemy laws

**WE PRAY FOR** all those who experience persecution because of their faith, and we pray for religious minorities all over the world.

### **Death penalty for a WhatsApp voice message.**

The young Nigerian musician Yahaya Sharif-Aminu shared a short part from one of his songs in which the Sufi Muslim praised an Imam. The praise triggered a mob of people threatening his life. Allegedly, Yahaya had insulted the prophet Muhammad by praising the Imam.

His persecutors were unable to kill him, but Yahaya was charged. In his trial without a legal counsel, he was sentenced to death. Since then, he has repeatedly appealed against the verdict. However, he is still in prison.

Thankfully, the Supreme Court of Nigeria has agreed to hear his case. The significance of the verdict goes far beyond this case. Should a favorable ruling be made, Northern Nigeria's deadly blasphemy laws could potentially be overturned.



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## For Life

**WE PRAY FOR** the right to life – especially for the most vulnerable in our society. And we pray for all who want to protect this life.

**Conscience Unwanted.** Andreas Kersten is still on trial in Berlin. For reasons of conscience, Kersten felt unable to sell the “morning-after pill” at his own pharmacy due to its possible abortifacient effect. For the pharmacist, this violates his conviction that the health of every human being must be protected and that the unborn life is valuable.

He was charged by the Chamber of Pharmacists. However, the first instance ruled in favour of Kersten. The court ruled that pharmacists are free to sell certain products in accordance with their conscience. The Chamber then appealed against the decision. So, the trial continues, and Andreas Kersten must still defend his freedom of conscience in court.



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## For perseverance

**WE PRAY FOR** the perseverance of all our clients; for example, Päivi Räsänen. After her acquittal in March last year, she has to stand trial again at the Finnish Court of Appeals in August 2023. The prosecution appealed the unanimous acquittal, so the trial against the Bible and Räsänen's freedom of speech continues later this year.



5

## For the Next Generation

**WE PRAY FOR** the education and training of tomorrow's leaders. We pray for all past and future participants of Areté Academy, that they may have a long-term impact in our society for truth, freedom, and justice.





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## For Marriage and Family

**WE PRAY FOR** the legal and political protection of marriage and the family. We pray for all those who suffer under a wrong understanding of marriage.

**Forced marriage.** Reeha Saleem is a Christian girl who was abducted on her way home from school when she was 16 years old. Reeha was “married” to her much older neighbour Muhammad, forcibly converted to Islam, and held in captivity while being repeatedly sexually assaulted. But one day, she managed to flee from her “husband”.

Now she is recovering with her mother, but threats against the family continue and sadly, the case has never been treated seriously by local police. That’s why an ADF International allied lawyer is urging the court to annul the marriage on the grounds that she was abducted, forced to convert to Islam, and forced to sign the marriage certificate. Reeha’s legal battle is still ongoing.

## 7 For Free Expression

**WE PRAY FOR** all who freely and openly stand up for their convictions. We pray for the protection of freedom of expression, and all fundamental freedoms.

**On trial for tweets.** Mexico has a 50/50 quota for women and men in Congress. A Mexican Congressman named Gabriel Quadri published tweets in which he defended this equality quota.

In the 2021 election, two biological men each received a seat reserved for women. Quadri criticized this political ploy and the underlying transgender ideology. As a result, a court condemned him even though he had only shared his opinion online. The Congressman was censured and forced to publish a pre-formulated “apology”.

For standing up for women’s opportunities, he could lose the right to run for office. The case is now before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Freedom of expression in the Americas will be decided here.



# UNITED IN PRAYER DURING LENT

Renewal and conversion are the focus of the Lent season. For 40 days the Flood covered the earth. Israel spent 40 years in the desert. Jesus spent 40 days fasting in preparation for public ministry. We want to use these 40 days together to pray for specific intentions. The people and their cases need your support right now.



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