

Pray for the world in 2012!

The following pages of maps and flags and other information were compiled in December 2011 and January 2012. The information was accurate at the time of compilation, but details (names of presidents, kings, etc.) may change during the course of the year.

Sources include www.worldatlas.com, <http://education.nationalgeographic.com>, www.persecution.com, and www.kidsofcourage.com.

The prayer requests are from the 2012 VOM Prayer Calendar. You can use this information to pray for the world with or without the calendar.

WILL YOU PRAY?

The 2012 VOM Prayer Calendar

The Voice of the Martyrs' 2012 Prayer Calendar will help you fellowship with and pray for these persecuted believers, sharing in their trials and being encouraged by their tremendous faith. The calendar features photos and brief stories of persecuted Christians, many of them youths, who exhibit an unwavering trust in Christ despite persecution.

The prayer calendar makes an excellent gift for family and friends, serving as a daily reminder to pray for the persecuted church. For as little as \$4, you can give the gift of prayer to the persecuted church while giving family and friends the opportunity to fellowship with those persecuted for their faith.

But Jesus called them unto Him, and said,
"Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not:
for of such is the kingdom of God." Luke 18:16 (KJV)

Visit

http://etools.vomusa.org/a/vomso/bg_vomso_wdbm-20111205-PrayerCalendar_443.html
to request your 2012 Voice of the Martyrs Prayer Calendar.

www.scripturemelodies.com

January 2012

Afghanistan

Algeria

Azerbaijan

Bahrain

Bangladesh



After the defeat of the Taliban, this Afghanistan flag is the latest one to fly over this long-embattled country. It displays the *Pan-Arab* colors of red, green and black. The yellow coat of arms centered features a golden mosque ringed by sheaves of wheat. The Arabic inscription at the top reads, "*There is no God but Allah and Muhammed is his messenger.*"

Afghanistan (from www.kidsofcourage.com)

Interesting Fact Afghanistan is a land with no church buildings. Christians meet secretly in small house churches.

History After terrorists bombed buildings in the U.S. in 2001, the U.S. led a “war on terrorism.” As part of that fight, the U.S. got rid of the radical Muslim “Taliban” government of Afghanistan and helped the country set up a different government. This brought new hope, but Afghanistan still does not have freedom of religion.

Religion More than 95 percent of the people in Afghanistan are Muslims. Radical Muslim Taliban soldiers ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. Under Taliban rule, music, television, games, and videos were against the law. Any Muslim who became a Christian could be executed. Even without the Taliban, Afghanistan is still a very Muslim nation, with about 48,000 mosques. (A mosque is a Muslim place of worship.) Some Afghans learn about Jesus through radio programs that are broadcast from other countries. Muslims who decide to follow Christ risk persecution from their own families and other Muslims.

Persecution If someone in Afghanistan says they are a follower of Jesus, they risk serious persecution. Family members and neighbors may attack them. The police and government officials do not stop people from persecuting Christians.

Radical Muslims do not want missionaries and Christians workers who share their faith with Muslims to come to Afghanistan. They have kidnapped Christians who came to Afghanistan to help people.

Shanashah: An Afghan Christian Refugee

Shanashah is an Afghan Christian boy. Workers from The Voice of the Martyrs talked to him in Pakistan. Shanashah appeared to be about 10 years old, but he was not sure of his age. Many Afghan children have had very difficult lives. They have not been able to keep track of their birthdays.

Like other boys and men in his part of the world, Shanashah often wears a shalwar kamiz, which includes baggy pants and a long shirt. His favorite game is cricket. He likes to eat mutton and apples. In school, his favorite subject is English.

Shanashah has three sisters and four brothers. Every day his family reads the Bible together. But they did not always do so. They used to be Muslims. After someone shared the gospel with them, they received a Bible in their own language, Pashto. They read the stories in the Bible, and soon they gave their lives to Jesus!

Shanashah's family came to Pakistan from Afghanistan on a bus. Nineteen other families came with them. Now they live in a refugee camp where they sell vegetables to earn a living.

Many Afghans left their country when Taliban Muslims took over much of Afghanistan. Their life is "very rough," said a VOM worker who visited Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan. "Some refugee camps are just tents," the worker said. "Others have houses made of cement. Cooking and a lot of other activities are done outside. Cattle dung is often used for fuel. They make patties from the dung and stick them to the walls of a house to dry."

Shanashah told the VOM workers that he wants to be a doctor when he grows up. He said that he likes to witness to his friends about Jesus. His family loves Afghanistan and hopes to return there someday soon. In the meantime, they meet with other Afghans in their small homes for worship. It will not be easy to be Christians in a Muslim Afghanistan when they return. Ask God to help Shanashah continue to be a strong witness to those around him throughout his life.

Pray for Afghanistan.

1 – Pray that the 71 unreached people groups will hear the gospel.

2 – Pray for Christian converts from Islam. A parliamentary secretary has called for their execution.

3 – Corruption is widespread. Pray for righteousness and justice.

4 – Pray for VOM's radio and television outreaches to new believers.

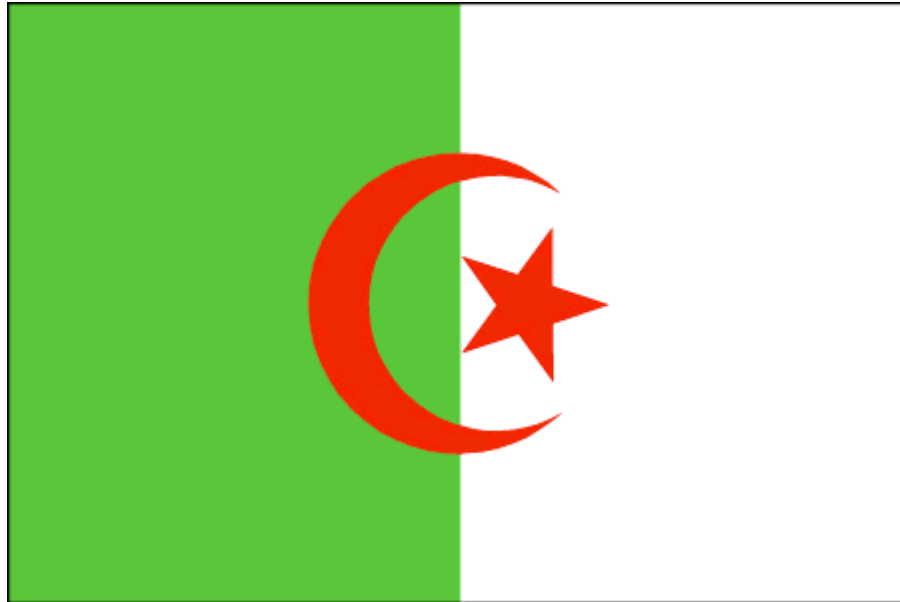
5 – Evangelists risk their lives to disciple new believers. Pray for their protection.

6 – Pray that new believers in this Islamic nation will boldly share the love of Christ.

7 – Pray for President Hamid Karzai.

Link to map:

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/mapping/outline-map/?map=Afghanistan&ar_a=1



Algeria's flag was officially adopted on July 3, 1962.

The flag features two equal vertical bands of green and white with a red, five-pointed star within a red crescent centered over the two-color boundary. The crescent, star, and color green are traditional symbols of Islam, the state religion.

Algeria (from www.kidsofcourage.com)

Capital

Algiers

Size

Slightly less than 3.5 times the size of Texas

Main Languages

Arabic, French, Berber

Time

At 6:00 a.m. U.S. Central Standard Time, it is 12:00 p.m. in Algeria.

History

France used to rule Algeria. In 1962, Algeria became an independent country. Since then, Algerian people have suffered from frequent violence and wars.

Religion

Algerians are predominantly Muslim.

Persecution

Islam is the official religion of Algeria. However, many people in Algeria are becoming Christians! But the government places limits on Christian activities. Anyone who writes materials, or makes tapes or DVDs that “shakes the faith of Muslims” can go to jail. Matthew 7:24–25 and Hebrews 12:28 tell us that Jesus offers a faith that will keep us from being shaken.

A Long Bus Ride

Published on November 2nd, 2011

Gerard is a Christian worker in Algeria. In 2006, the government passed a new law that said churches must register with the government. But the authorities did not grant many churches registration, so churches that continued to meet were “illegal.” Then the government began closing down unregistered churches.

“The government is always going to come up with new laws,” said Gerard. “They are not believers, so they cannot understand the hope we have.”

The government gives individual Christians a hard time, too. Two years ago, a student in a secret Bible school was stopped at a checkpoint. When soldiers found Bible study materials in her bag, they arrested her.

Pray for Algeria.

1 – Pray for Pastor Hakim and others sharing the gospel in Algeria.

2 – Pray for the Tizi Ouzou region, the center of the Algerian church movement.

3 – Pray for new believers. A VOM safe house provides refuge for those in danger.

4 – Pray for church growth and for more works in southern Algeria.

5 – Pray for “Amira” and other Christians that VOM assists financially.

6 – Pray for Christians who meet in the countryside to avoid government attention.

7 – Pray for President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

Link to map:

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/mapping/outline-map/?map=Algeria&ar_a=1



The flag of Azerbaijan was officially adopted on February 5, 1991. After gaining its independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991, this flag, dating back to 1920, was hoisted for all to see. It features three equal horizontal bands of blue, red, and green. A crescent and eight-pointed star, symbols of *Islam*, are centered in the red band. The country had a long alliance with Turkey, and the blue color has long been associated with the Turkic peoples. Green is said to symbolize the strong European influences on local culture.

Azerbaijan (from www.kidsofcourage.com)

Interesting Fact

The C.I.A. reports that in one recent year Azerbaijan had 1.3 million landline phones and 7.7 million cell phones. The population is about 8 million.

History

The U.S.S.R. (often called "The Soviet Union") was the largest communist country in the world. In the early 1990s, it broke up into many smaller countries. Azerbaijan was one of those countries. Today most of the people are Muslims.

Religion

More than 90% of the people in Azerbaijan say they are Muslim. But many do not take their faith seriously. Fewer than 10% are Christian.

Zoroastrianism was a main religion in Azerbaijan before the Muslims came. Today the people still honor traditions from Zoroastrianism.

Persecution

Even though many people in Azerbaijan are not serious about their Muslim faith, many do not like it when a Muslim becomes a Christian. They think Islam is part of their culture. Friends and relatives discourage Muslims from following Christ. Officials sometimes give churches and Christians a hard time.

It is often difficult for young adult Christians to find someone to marry who also follows Christ. Since marriage is an important part of their culture, they are often urged to marry a Muslim.

Pray for Azerbaijan.

1 – Penalties for violating religion laws have increased dramatically.

2 – Pray for Christians in Kusal and other Christians who continue to meet despite persecution.

3 – Pray for Christians who are persecuted by both the police and their Muslim families.

4 – Pray for efforts to distribute Christian literature, which faces tight restrictions.

5 – Pray that the widespread corruption will turn many to the righteousness of Christ.

6 – Church registration is difficult to obtain. Pray that Christians will devise creative ways to meet.

7 – Pray for President Ilham Aliyev.

Link to map:

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/mapping/outline-map/?map=Azerbaijan&ar_a=1



The flag of Bahrain was officially adopted in 1932.

The toothy edge between the red and white is used to distinguish it from the official flag of Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. Red and white have long been the traditional colors of the Gulf States.

News from Bahrain (from www.kidsofcourage.com)

November 23, 2011



Political Unrest and the Prime Minister

Like many Arab countries, this year Bahrain has had unrest among citizens who are not happy with their government. Two kinds of Muslims in Bahrain, Sunnis and Shiites, have not been getting along. More of the country's people are Shiites, but Sunnis are in control of the government.

Bahrain has a king and a prime minister. The prime minister, Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, will turn 76 years old on his birthday on November 24. He has been the prime minister since 1971, when he was appointed by his uncle, the king. Many of the important officials in Bahrain come from the Khalifa family. Some in the country believe their rule should end.

Christians in Bahrain

More than half the people living in Bahrain are from other countries. About half of them are not Muslims. They are allowed to worship as they please, but Muslims from Bahrain are not allowed to change their religion. If they do so, they are persecuted.

Pray for Bahrain.

1 – Christian websites are currently blocked. Pray for ministries and teaching opportunities.

2 – Pray for the protection and success of the two Christian bookstores in Bahrain.

3 – Most Bahraini Christians worship secretly to avoid persecution. Pray for their encouragement.

4 – Expatriates make up more than half the labor force. Pray for their strong Christian witness.

5 – Bahrain is spiritually strategic because of its relative freedoms. Pray for Christian leaders.

6 – Pray for King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa.

Link to map:

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/mapping/outline-map/?map=Bahrain&ar_a=1



The Bangladesh flag was officially adopted on January 25, 1972, after gaining its independence from Pakistan.

The red disk symbolizes that struggle for freedom, and the green field is representative of the fertile land.

From www.kidsofcourage.com



Capital

Dhaka

Size

In area, Bangladesh is a little larger than the state of Iowa. But, Bangladesh is very crowded. It has a larger population than the eight most populous U.S. states combined: California, New York, Texas, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan. A Christian worker in Bangladesh said, "With 147 million people in Bangladesh, that would be like squeezing half of everyone in the U.S. into the state of Iowa. Bangladesh is the 7th largest country in the world in population."

Time

At 6:00 a.m. U.S. Central Standard Time, it is 6:00 p.m. in Bangladesh.

Interesting Fact

Some ladies in Bangladesh are buying cell phones to help them earn money for their families. Many villages have no phone service. People pay to use the ladies' "village phones" to make phone calls.

Religion

Bangladesh has the fourth largest Muslim population in the world. Less than one percent of the population is Christian.



Pray for Bangladesh.

1 – Pray for Sharif and others returning home after completing discipleship-training programs.

2 – Christians are threatened with forced re-conversion to Islam. Pray that they will remain strong.

3 – Pray for President Zillur Rahman.

Link to map:

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/mapping/outline-map/?map=Bangladesh&ar_a=1