

BBC Mission News May 2021

Syria

This March marked the 10th anniversary of the Syrian Uprising, which came about as part of the Arab Spring protests of 2011. In the civil war that ensued ‘more than 370,000 people have been killed and millions displaced’. Although an end to the fighting may be in sight, the situation for displaced Syrians shows no signs of improvement with many still unable to return home. In Lebanon, which is also suffering an economic crisis, about one in four people is a Syrian refugee, leading to tensions in communities. All of this is worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, with a recent rise in cases in Northeastern Syria where they are struggling to find essential COVID-19 supplies (vaccines, testing, oxygen, antibiotics, PPE), as well as hospital capacity to manage patients. Médecins Sans Frontières report that ‘Many people in northeast Syria are already experiencing limited access to health and water and sanitation services, making them especially vulnerable to this second wave of the outbreak.’

Suggested prayer points:

- There is an end to the fighting in Syria and people will feel safe.
- A sympathetic government.
- The country can be rebuilt with international help.
- Syrians will be able to rebuild their lives in a tolerant society.
- Refugees in other countries will not be discriminated against.
- Essential health supplies will reach hospitals.
- Food and other aid will reach those in need.
- Children can go to school and feel safe.
- Safety for health and aid workers, and for the Church standing alongside vulnerable communities, showing them the light of Christ and hope for the future.

Chad

You may have seen in the news recently that Chad has undergone many changes which has resulted in The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) advising against all travel to Chad based on their current assessment of security risks.

The FCDO advised all British nationals in Chad to leave the country as soon as possible, which meant all UK based BMS missionaries left on commercial flights, leaving the hospital to be managed by the local staff only. This was a difficult time for them all, particularly as some had only finally been in country a few weeks after the delays caused by the Covid restrictions. Please pray for them all as they come to terms with being back in the UK facing an uncertain future until the country stabilises and is deemed safe to return.

The events that led to this were:

- On 11th April an armed convoy belonging to the rebel group “Le front pour l’alternance et la concorde au Tchad” (FACT) crossed into Chad from Libya and engaged in fighting with government forces. The rebel group was reportedly

heading towards N'Djamena. The situation is still judged to be unstable, and tensions remain high across the country.

- On 20 April, the Chadian army announced the death of President Déby, increasing the risk of instability in the capital N'Djamena and the wider country. A national curfew announced following the death of President Déby is in place between 8pm and 5am, plus land and air borders were closed but have since reopened.
- On 27 April, there were violent clashes between protesters and security forces in N'Djamena and southern Chad. Several people were killed, with reports of live ammunition being used against demonstrators.

The country is obviously now in a time of great turmoil as different factions fight for power, including Deby's son, who has assumed power backed by the military but has not been voted into office by the people and is opposed by many.

BMS are in careful discussions with Guinebor II hospital, as to how best to maintain the safety and well-being of all its staff and patients.

They have asked we join them in prayer for:

- a peaceful resolution to this situation.
- the safety and well-being of the staff and patients at Guinebor II. Pray that the hospital would be able to stay open, with minimal disruption to its activities.
- all affected BMS mission workers, including Kalbassou, Pray for their continued safety and well-being during this turbulent time.

Claire is now back home in Devon and would welcome our prayers as she comes to terms with being back in the UK so soon. One positive is that she has had her 1st vaccination for covid since being back.

Please remember all the Mission workers and their families at this difficult time.

Amen.



Please remember Michael and Perouz Harrison in prayer as they serve the dear Armenian people in and near Yerevan.

Michael, Perouz and Talitha returned to Armenia on the 27th April. Pray for them as settle back into the work first-hand – 40 visitors the first day back!

Also pray that the 40 foot container will arrive safely and quickly with no problems in customs. So many needy people.

Here is an excerpt from their latest newsletter (copies can be collected from the Chapel and we encourage you to pick one up and read it through).

“The year 2020 in Armenia has show us clearly what a tear-filled world we live in. The aftermath of the war that we are witnessing in 2021 is just as tear-filled and full of brokenness and pain. We can give but splashes of comfort, in the form of a hand extended with help – a food parcel, a lovely warm colourful knitted blanket, a pair of crutches, payment of an electricity bill, the promise of six months’ rent.

We thank you for working with us to give out the splashes of comfort. But we ask you also to **pray with us**. Please **pray** that God shines His promises onto the splashes and all the droplets become rainbows. Rainbows that we can trace in the Rain – His promises, His Word of assurance, His comfort and His presence, His plan of salvation, His open arms of love. In this time of desperation in our beloved Armenia, please **pray** with us that all the splashes of help that we are all giving out together, are filled with the rainbows of His promises.”

If you would like a full copy of the newsletter then please let Wayne or Malcolm know.

North Africa

Our church partner Naama is still waiting for news on her residency, although not surprisingly the local authority doesn't see there's anything to worry about.

Covid cases and death rates are rising rapidly in the country after a low infection rate in 2020. The health system and resources are stretched to the limit already. Vaccination has started but slowly and needs to ramp up quickly.

Project work is mostly admin based because of covid rules but plenty to do as Naama is now managing one of the teams biggest projects as well as her own.

A new interim director is arriving at the end of next week from the UK He is vaccinated so no need for quarantine but good to pray for goodbyes and for wisdom when tacking a heavy work load due to the lengthy transition period.

Albania

Last month Albania's ruling Socialist Party secured its third consecutive mandate in a parliamentary election with Edi Rama remaining as Prime Minister. This is very unusual as the government seemed to change every election so we pray that this gives some stability and helps to maintain growth of the economy. Pray that the investment and development programs do not come with strings attached which cause conflict, the re-elected Government delivers on all its promises and puts Albania in a position to become part of the EU. Pray that the change in law that allows people to protest peacefully without the fear of being arrested is not abused. The election campaign has resulted in Covid infection rates increasing although they are still comparatively low. Vaccine is being delivered although well short of what is required. Continue to pray for our friends in Albania and the continuation of the Lord's work that they do via their various ministries, may God be with them.

Russia – from Pauline Rogoja

We praise God for a wonderful opportunity to celebrate Easter with our church and friends. Quite a few guests came for the first time which was really encouraging. Please pray that we can continue to reach out to these people and help them to find Jesus.

We have a church camping weekend at the end of June. This will be a great opportunity for strengthening the church but also for sharing our faith with friends who are going who aren't Christians yet. Please pray that this camp goes really well, that everyone is blessed and encouraged and that any who don't know Jesus come to faith.

For us as a family, the children are now coming to the end of their exams and assessments. Please pray that all goes well. Also they all need to decide what to do next year, with Anna probably heading off to university, Zak progressing onto A levels and Ruthie possibly changing schools for her Russian A levels. Please pray for God's wisdom, guidance and provision in all of that.

India

This is a message from the National Council of Churches in India

Greetings to you all in the precious Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am forwarding the letter received from the National Council of Churches in India calling for National Day of Fasting Prayers on 7th May, 2021. As you are all aware, the entire country is on crisis. You are all requested to organise prayers and spend the day on fasting prayer.

Let us all look unto God's Healing and Merciful Hand

God's healing and merciful hand to our brothers and sisters who have contracted and are suffering due to the Coronavirus Disease,

God's healing and merciful hand may rest upon medical doctors, nurses and the supporting staff who are in the frontline of the fight against COVID-19,

God's healing and merciful hand to render life-saving services with due care, love and compassion.

God's healing and merciful hand to all those who have lost their loved ones due to the Coronavirus outbreak, their souls, through God's mercy, may rest in eternal peace.

God's healing and merciful hand may grant all bereaved families his consolation and strengthen their faith and hope in Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord.

Let us all observe the day together in fasting prayer at the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ and expect great deliverance from the mighty hands of our Almighty God Who alone can save and protect the whole world from this dreadful pandemic.

Please also pray for the work of BMS and all the mission workers at home and overseas

Every Blessing

Malcolm

