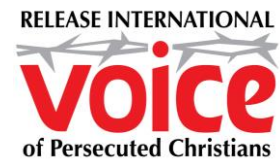


Volunteer Fundraising Event Presentation

June 2024



Introduction

[S1▶] Thank you so much for joining us and for supporting this special fundraising event. Today we are raising funds to support the vital ministry of Release International, Voice of Persecuted Christians.

[S2▶] Release International is a Christian ministry called by God to love and serve persecuted Christians. [S3▶] They work with partners on the ground in around 30 countries across the world bringing all kinds of prayerful, pastoral and practical support to Christians who suffer because of their faith.

Story – Avidan

[S4▶] Release International’s current appeal focuses on supporting Christians facing oppression and violence and I want to share with you the story of one particular family who have been impacted.

Avidan was brought up as a Christian in Pakistan. However, he decided to accept Islam in order to marry his wife. When she later left him, Avidan’s children chose to stay with him, and he felt called to turn back to Christ – even though he knew this would cause him trouble. As a result, he was hounded and abused by his neighbours, and he was eventually accused of kidnapping his children.

Avidan was arrested and held in prison on false charges for months. It was a terrifying ordeal but while he was in prison Avidan recommitted himself fully to Christ. After he was released, his ex-wife said she no longer wanted the children and Avidan was allowed to keep them. However, because he is a Christian, he found it very hard to find work and the family were left homeless, living in parks and begging for help.

Release International partners were able to provide vital pastoral care and financial support to Avidan when he had nowhere else to turn. And recently, the whole family were baptised together. Life is still difficult and dangerous for Avidan. He needs to keep a very low profile and tries to live out of sight of his neighbours. He has been verbally abused and physically attacked. There are also ongoing threats made to his children. Release International partners continue to meet with Avidan and his family to pray and encourage them.

Call to Action

[S5▶] This family’s story is not unique and Release International’s partners are working hard to help many people like Avidan who face oppression and violence because of their faith in places like Pakistan, Kenya, Iran, China and several other countries.

That work relies on the generosity of Christians here in the UK. We are all part of the body of Christ and we have a responsibility to care for each another. So thank you very much for your support today. You can make a donation here, or you can visit releaseinternational.org to give online.

[S6▶] And if you want to find out more, Release International would love to stay in touch with you. So please do pick up a copy of the *Voice* magazine and fill in one of these *Stay in Touch* cards so you can stay informed about this vital work. Thank you. [S7▶]