

Are You “n”? ...Standing With Our Persecuted Brothers and Sisters

When Islamic State militants (ISIS) moved into northern Iraq, they began identifying Christian-owned homes and businesses. Families would find the Arabic letter “N” (ن) painted on their buildings. This single letter, the first letter of the word used in the Quran to identify Christians, conveyed the powerful accusation that the occupants were followers of Jesus. Our Christian brothers and sisters were tagged in this way and given the choice of either converting to Islam or standing for Christ and losing everything they owned.

I have had the privilege of meeting some of these sisters and brothers during recent visits to Iraq, where The Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) is serving them in their time of great need. I'd like to share one of their stories with you. It is the story of a 36-year-old wife and mother who met God in a life-changing way during a worship service. Here is Ban No'Shaba's story.

Born in Baghdad, Iraq, Ban No'Shaba lived what she called an average life with her husband, a taxi driver, until November 2013, when her husband was kidnapped by ISIS and their family was forever changed.

Fearing for the safety of her children and receiving no protection from the police, she began to live as a nomad. “We struggled and starved for a long time,” she said.

In a state of utter desperation, Ban No'Shaba decided to end her life. In her words: ”

I couldn't bear it anymore... I cut my wrists, hoping to die. I couldn't watch my children suffer anymore."

She woke up in the hospital, hopeless and angry at Jesus, feeling that He had abandoned her and her children.

A friend lovingly invited her back to church, and when she returned, she experienced a miracle. "I felt the touch of Jesus... I was in church, and the pastor said, 'Raise your hands. The Lord is near, so raise your hands!' And so I did. I felt a touch on my hand."

She began to talk to Jesus, asking that He help her to remain faithful despite her circumstances. "You are my love, my father and my husband," she told Him. And Ban No'Shaba began to immediately feel power and the presence of the Lord like never before.

Now, she speaks with authority on the biblical perspective of persecution: "The prophets before us experienced the same. Jesus Himself experienced persecution. We must hold on strong to our faith in Christ. We should not face evil with evil."

These Christians are our family members – part of the body of Christ. We will not let them suffer in silence. We will not let them serve alone. Will you join us in praying for the persecuted... for pastors and church leaders who serve in the midst of persecution? Will you pray for the persecutors? Will you ask your friends and church to join you in these prayers?

Jason Peters, Associate Vice President
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Learn more about ways to support persecuted Christians and listen to Ban No'Shaba's remarkable story in her own words in Episode Four of the I Am N Video Curriculum, available at .

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