



Prayer Walk Guide 2023

This 10 kilometre prayer guide is designed to help you reflect on some of the realities faced by refugees in our time. Each new kilometre begins with a short reading.

If you want to learn more about the work of IAFR Canada and how you and your church can come alongside our mission to *help refugees survive and recover from forced displacement*, please visit www.iafr.ca.

K1: Türkiye and Syria

In late February 2023, the death toll from the earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria surpassed 50,000 people. This tragedy added another immense challenge for two countries already facing overwhelming hardships. According to the UNHCR, prior to the earthquakes, Türkiye was already hosting more than 3.7 million refugees, the most of any country in the world, and, according to the same report, Syria is currently the country in the world from which the most refugees have fled (more than 6.8 million).

It is impossible to predict exactly what the long-term ramifications will be for both countries. As you walk this first kilometre, pray for all the people who are newly displaced because of this disaster. Pray also for the internally displaced persons and refugees for whom this is another tragedy on top of all they have already gone through.

K2: Your Hometown

Imagine your hometown. Maybe you still live there, or maybe you haven't been there for a long time. What did you love about it? What made growing up there unique and memorable? Now picture your neighbourhood... imagine the schools you attended, your friends who lived down the street, the places you would hang out.

Now imagine a war starting in your country... in your city... in your neighbourhood. Imagine infiltrating soldiers, the sounds of gunfire, the fear of bombs. Devastation.

Having imagined this, pray for displaced people in the world, people for whom this fantasy is a terrible reality. Pray into their loss and grief and ask God to be with them. Pray also for your country, your city and your community, that they would be places of welcome for people who have been forcibly displaced from their communities.



Widespread destruction across Bucha, Ukraine, on Sunday, after Ukrainian forces had allegedly targeted a Russian convoy. Credit...Ivor Prickett for The New York Times – April 18, 2022



K3: The Numbers

In the last decade the number of forcibly displaced people in the world has more than doubled. In 2022 the number passed 100 million. Don't forget that each number represents an actual human being – someone with a story, a family, a community, hopes, dreams, and a name. Exodus 33:15-18 says:

*“Then Moses said to [God], “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?” And the LORD said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and **I know you by name.**” Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”*

As you walk this kilometre, lift up the millions to the God who knows each one by name.

K4: Unaccompanied Minors

Imagine a situation in which conflict or persecution is so severe that it is safer and wiser to send your child far away to another country rather than keep him or her with you. Violence is at the door, so you send your child or children ahead of you, unaccompanied, in hopes that they will find safety.

According to the UNHCR, approximately 40% of refugees in the world are under 18-years-old. Of these, in 2021, over 150,000 young people were unaccompanied minors. Around 41,000 of these were found in Ethiopia alone.

Pray for these children and teenagers, that they will be protected along their journeys and welcomed safely into host communities. Imagine your child alone traveling dangerous paths and waters looking for safety and home. Pray earnestly for angels to guide and protect them along the way.

K5: Uganda

According to the UNHCR, as of January 31, 2023, there were 1,501,552 registered refugees in Uganda, which makes Uganda the nation which hosts the most refugees in Africa. Although Uganda still faces many challenges, and is still searching for peace in many ways, we thank God that this country, which not very long ago was embroiled in terrible civil conflict, is now a place of refuge for others.

Pray for the refugees living in refugee camps and in difficult urban settings throughout Uganda – for God's provision and restoration. Pray also for peace for Uganda's neighbours. The unrest in many African countries does not make the news as much as other disasters and wars, but the challenges are very real. Of the approximately 1.5 million refugees in Uganda, more than half come from South Sudan, and over 32% come from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Others come from countries such as Somalia, Burundi, Eritrea, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Sudan.



I Live Again Uganda – a Christian NGO, conducting a trauma care session for a Ugandan village

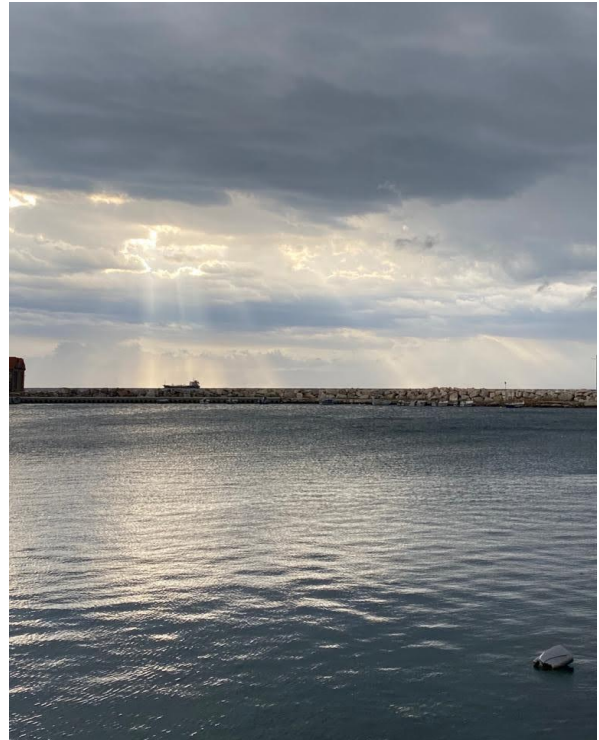
K6: The Sea

In 2021, 3,231 people were reported dead or missing trying to find safety across the Mediterranean Sea (news.un.org/en/story/2022/06/1120132). Seven or eight years ago, during the Syrian crisis, this sea crossing was featured heavily in the news. This is much less the case now. However, some still refer to the Mediterranean as the “deadliest border in the world.” Men, women, and children flee every day in unsafe boats and rafts in search of safety in Europe. Some are pushed back by patrols, some sink, many onboard are not swimmers. It is extraordinarily dangerous.

Pray for people on the sea, that God would watch over them, calm storms and bring them to safety, and to true welcome.

Psalm 107:28-30:

*Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
and he brought them out of their distress.
He stilled the storm to a whisper;
the waves of the sea were hushed.
They were glad when it grew calm,
and he guided them to their desired haven.*



The sea as seen from the Greek island of Lesbos

K7: Scripture

In Isaiah 64 the prophet calls on God to “rend the heavens and come down.” Seeing ruins around him, he asks how long until God acts, comes down and helps his people. As you walk, join the emotion and passion of the prophet, and pray this passage over the people around the world who are likewise calling out to God to help them.

*Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains would tremble before you!
2 As when fire sets twigs ablaze
and causes water to boil,
come down to make your name known to your enemies
and cause the nations to quake before you!
3 For when you did awesome things that we did not expect,
you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.
4 Since ancient times no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.
5 You come to the help of those who gladly do right,
who remember your ways.
But when we continued to sin against them,
you were angry.
How then can we be saved?
6 All of us have become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;*

*we all shrivel up like a leaf,
and like the wind our sins sweep us away.
7 No one calls on your name
or strives to lay hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us
and have given us over to our sins.
8 Yet you, LORD, are our Father.
We are the clay, you are the potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
9 Do not be angry beyond measure, LORD;
do not remember our sins forever.
Oh, look on us, we pray,
for we are all your people.
10 Your sacred cities have become a wasteland;
even Zion is a wasteland, Jerusalem a desolation.
11 Our holy and glorious temple, where our ancestors praised you,
has been burned with fire,
and all that we treasured lies in ruins.
12 After all this, LORD, will you hold yourself back?
Will you keep silent and punish us beyond measure?*



K8: Peace

The World Population Review (worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-currently-at-war) lists 31 countries that were in conflict in 2022 - some experiencing civil war, some at war with another nation, some surviving terrorist insurgencies, some in the midst of drug wars, and some experiencing ethnic violence. As you walk this next kilometre choose one or two off this list. Pray for lasting peace. Pray for regime changes. Pray for healing. Pray for God's kingdom to come.

- Myanmar
- Russia/Ukraine
- Afghanistan
- Burkina Faso
- Colombia
- DR Congo
- Ethiopia
- Iraq
- Mali
- Mexico
- Nigeria
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Sudan
- Syria
- Yemen
- Algeria
- Benin
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Ghana
- Ivory Coast
- Libya
- Mauritania
- Mozambique
- Niger
- Tanzania
- Togo
- Tunisia
- Uganda

K9: The Church

Wherever people have been displaced, the Church is nearby. His Church can take many forms... Often God's Church looks like other forcibly displaced people... believers, pastors, and church leaders, who have also been forced to flee for their lives but are still representing God's hope along the difficult journey. The Church can also look like local refugee churches in refugee camps around the world - places of community, hope, and support. Sometimes the Church looks like Christians finding ways to offer practical support in various places along the refugee highway – Christians in Colombia washing people's feet and offering new shoes to those fleeing from Venezuela; Christian NGO workers visiting and labouring in refugee camps in Greece, Germany, Lebanon, Malawi or Kenya; or churches providing housing for newly arrived refugees in Canada, the United States, Romania, Turkey or Moldova.

Pray that people would experience comfort, truth and hope through God's Church everywhere along the refugee highway.

K10: Worship

During the final kilometre read and pray Psalm 84. Find a line or an image that stands out to you. Worship God and declare his sovereignty over the whole world.

For the director of music. According to gittith. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.

¹ *How lovely is your dwelling place,
LORD Almighty!*

² *My soul yearns, even faints,
for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh cry out
for the living God.*

³ *Even the sparrow has found a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may have her young—
a place near your altar,
LORD Almighty, my King and my God.*

⁴ *Blessed are those who dwell in your house;
they are ever praising you.*

⁵ *Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.*

⁶ *As they pass through the Valley of Baka,
they make it a place of springs;
the autumn rains also cover it with pools.*

⁷ *They go from strength to strength,
till each appears before God in Zion.*

⁸ *Hear my prayer, LORD God Almighty;
listen to me, God of Jacob.*

⁹ *Look on our shield, O God;
look with favor on your anointed one.*

¹⁰ *Better is one day in your courts
than a thousand elsewhere;
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than dwell in the tents of the wicked.*

¹¹ *For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
the LORD bestows favor and honor;
no good thing does he withhold
from those whose walk is blameless.*

¹² *LORD Almighty,
blessed is the one who trusts in you.*