

***"Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still,
His Kingdom is forever."
~ Lyrics by Martin Luther
A Mighty Fortress hymn
(Translated by Frederick Hedge)***

NIGERIA: Numerous Attacks Lead to Killings and Kidnappings

Sources: Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Church in Chains, Morning Star News, Barnabas Fund

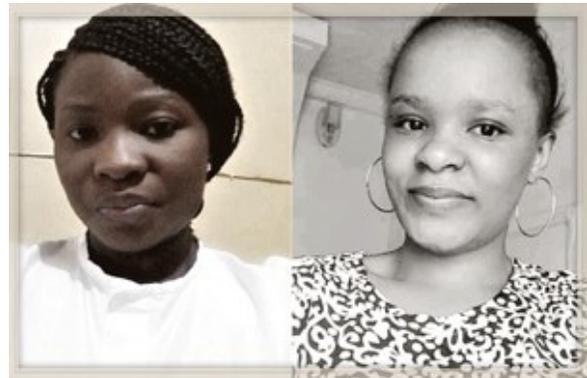
One person was killed, another wounded, and four women were abducted, when the Haske Baptist Church in Manini village, Nigeria, was attacked during a worship service on April 25th. Healthcare worker Zacharia Dogon Yaro was killed, and Shehu Haruna was injured. According to one of the worshippers, "[The attackers] surrounded the church and started shooting.... They shot at us randomly and at anyone they sighted." The Fulani gunmen then seized Charity Musa, Rose Zacharia, Alheri Bala and Liatu Zakka as they left.

This was just one of numerous recent attacks that took place in the predominantly Christian areas of Nigeria. In Kaduna State, Pastor Ozigi Hassan of the Mercy Place Ministry Church was kidnapped, along with his wife Fulaki and their four children, in the early hours of April 30th. Police pursued the captors and were able to recover the pastor and children, but the attackers managed to escape with Fulaki.

On April 21st, heavily armed Fulani gunmen forced their way into a hospital in the town of Idon, which is located in southern Kaduna State. Two Christian nurses, Afiniki Bako and Grace Zugwai Nkut, were taken captive.

While militant Fulani Islamists are frequently the perpetrators of violence experienced in Nigeria, other groups have likewise caused major suffering. In the village of Libera Gida, militants from Boko Haram are suspected of joining Fulani herdsmen in kidnapping 72 village residents on April 22nd and then holding them for ransom.

In the northern Yobe State, members of the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) took control of the town of Geidam on April 23rd. Around 2,000 residents fled to escape the looting and burning. At least two Christians, along with two Muslim schoolteachers, were unable to escape and were killed. According to an eyewitness, leaflets were dropped around town calling for the establishment of an Islamic State. The pamphlets stated, "We are fighting unbelievers; Christians and any other person or group going against the teaching of Islam, even if they are Muslims."



Abducted Christian nurses Afiniki and Grace.
Photo: Facebook

While the government often denies a religious motive behind these attacks, the frequent targeting of churches, as well as Christians, shows that hatred for Christianity plays a key role in numerous acts of violence throughout the region. Further information on the suffering experienced by followers of Christ in Nigeria is available at our [country report](#).

Please remember to pray for the safe return of all our Nigerian brothers and sisters in Christ who have been kidnapped. Until they are freed from captivity, pray for their need of protection and strength. In addition, ask the Lord to minister comfort and hope to their concerned families and friends. May each one sense the wonderful peace that accompanies His reassuring presence. Also prayerfully uphold those who are mourning the loss of loved ones, as well as the survivors of recent attacks who are now needing to recover physically and/or emotionally. Intercede for the perpetrators of the violence, asking the Holy Spirit to convict their hearts and lead them to repentance and salvation in Christ.

CHINA: China's Digital Clampdown

Sources: International Christian Concern, ChinaAid



The government-run Shamian Christian Church bookstore prominently displays Xi Jinping's books.
Photo: ChinaAid

As part of the ongoing crackdown on Christianity in China, Communist authorities have removed Bible apps and blocked Christian "WeChat" public accounts. Additionally, hard copies of Bibles are no longer available for sale online, and bookstores owned by the state-sanctioned Three-Self Churches have been increasingly displaying the teachings of President Xi Jinping rather than Christian books.

When someone attempts to access one of the banned "WeChat" accounts, a message appears stating that the account violated the "Internet User Public Account Information Services Management Provisions" and therefore has been blocked and suspended.

Those wishing to access Bible apps have had to use a VPN to circumvent the government-controlled firewall. However, the government has been stepping up its efforts to shut down such VPNs. To learn more about the persecution of

Christians in China, and to review previously published reports, go to our [country report](#).

Ask God to grant wisdom to the many persecuted Christians in China who are seeking ways to grow in their faith and continue boldly reaching out to others around them with the message of the Gospel. May they be encouraged by the knowledge that nothing can stop the Word of God, even in the midst of escalating restrictions. Pray that China's governing authorities will come to personally understand that Jesus is indeed "the Way, the Truth and the Life," and turn to Him in faith.

PAKISTAN: Conversion by Deception

Source: Morning Star News

Adnan Bashir is a mentally challenged Christian man living in Gujjar Khan, Punjab. On April 14th, he wandered from his home and inadvertently encountered a protest being held by members of the Islamist Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) Party.

Seizing the opportunity, the protesters forced the vulnerable Christian man to publicly recite the Islamic creed signifying conversion to Islam. The "conversion" was recorded and posted on social media. That evening, Adnan told his family that as he had been watching the protest, his former employer offered him sherbet on the condition he joined the demonstrators and recited the creed as requested.

Since the video was published online, Muslim acquaintances have contacted Adnan's relatives, asking when the rest of the family would embrace Islam. Some have threatened this family with serious consequences if they "force" Adnan to revert to Christianity, warning that apostasy is punishable by death.

Adnan's brother Fayyaz says that members of the party are monitoring the movements of the family members. "Our lives have become miserable due to the threats and surveillance by TLP activists," he explains. "We can neither seek help from the police, nor any other government or religious leader, because everyone is fearful of the TLP, and also because this matter can easily be turned into a religious issue." Additional reports on the persecution that Christians are experiencing in Pakistan can be reviewed at our [country report](#).



A social media post announced Adnan's "conversion."
Photo: Morning Star News

Please pray for safety and guidance on behalf of this family of believers as they face this difficult situation. May God strengthen Adnan, Fayyaz, and the rest of their family, affirming His presence in their lives and giving them the confidence, discernment and grace they need to overcome the onslaught of persecution. Pray that those who forced Adnan to "convert" to Islam, as well as those threatening his family, will be touched by God's love and discover the true spiritual peace that can only be found through faith in Jesus.