



"It was for this Jesus that my husband was willing to be faithful to the point of death; I too will follow in his footsteps."

~ Jime Kawasi, widow of Kosa Kawasi

PAKISTAN: Christian Falsely Accused of Blasphemy Succumbs to Injuries

Sources: Morning Star News, Pakistan Christian Post, Associated Press of Pakistan

On May 25th, an angry mob rampaged through a Christian community in Sargodha, Punjab, instigated by false allegations that a 74-year-old Christian man named Nazir Masih had burned pages of the Quran. For more details on the attack, see [this report](#). With deep sorrow, we regret to announce that Nazir succumbed to his injuries just after midnight on June 3rd.

After sustaining serious head wounds, Nazir was taken to a military hospital in Rawalpindi for treatment, as well as for security reasons. Although doctors performed two surgeries to remove bone fragments from his brain, his condition remained precarious. Despite being placed on a ventilator, he passed away during the night due to multiple organ failures. The Christian man's body has since been buried in his hometown of Sargodha.

The family was advised not to return to their home for several days, or until it's safe to do so. However, Nazir's son, Sultan, has expressed concern that his family may never be able to return to their community. "The entire episode has been so traumatizing for all of us that I don't think we will ever be able to resume our normal lives there," he states.

Dozens of arrests have been made in connection to the incident, along with an investigation into the blasphemy allegations. In response to the tragedy, expressions of condolence and calls for justice have been issued by numerous organizations. Bishop Azad Marshall, who serves as president for the Church of Pakistan, wrote, "Yet again, hate has brought us to the place where we must ask questions." The chairman for the Pakistan Ulema Council, a body of Islamic scholars, called for swift justice, stating that taking the law into one's own hands was both unlawful and illegal.

Please lift up Nazir's family before God's throne of grace as they face this difficult time of overwhelming grief, asking the Lord to fill them with greatly needed comfort, peace and courage. May those responsible for this senseless tragedy be brought to justice. Pray that other Christians in this community and throughout various areas of Pakistan, who are at risk of the dangers associated with false accusations due to their faith in Christ, will draw tremendous encouragement from the assurance that they are part of a global family that is prayerfully standing with them.



Angered mob members burned Nazir Masih's belongings in the street.
Photos: ECSPE

INDIA: Young Convert Killed and Widow Forced to Flee

Sources: International Christian Concern, Morning Star News, The Washington Times

On May 4th, 22-year-old Kosa Kawasi was killed during a violent mob attack while at his home in the village of Kapanar, Chhattisgarh state. The mob, believed to have been led by the young man's uncle and cousin, was angered that Kosa and his wife Jime had converted to Christianity. As a result, the opposing villagers had unsuccessfully tried to force the Christian couple from their home. Following this incident, the angry community members physically confronted the believer – ultimately inflicting a lethal stab wound.

The authorities have since arrested the instigators and ruled that the young man's death was the result of a property dispute. Witnesses, however, state that Kosa's uncle was motivated by religious hatred. Jime was also wounded in the attack but escaped to a local hospital where she was treated for her injuries.



Kosa Kawasi's wife, Jime.
Photo: Morning Star News

In the aftermath of her husband's death, Jime remains fearful of further violence. She has taken refuge far from the murder site, and five other Christian families have also fled the region due to the incident. Despite her fear, the young Christian widow proclaimed: "It was for this Jesus that my husband was willing to be faithful to the point of death. I too will follow in his footsteps. Please pray for me; I need your prayers."

Violence against those who convert from Hinduism to Christianity is common throughout areas of India, particularly in states where anti-conversion legislation has been instituted. For more reports addressing the sufferings of our persecuted Christian brothers and sisters in this South Asian country, go to our [country report](#).

Remember Jime in your prayers as she mourns the tragic loss of her husband, while also dealing with the trauma of the attack and fear of further violence. May the Lord provide wisdom, guidance and protection to her and the other Christians who have been forced to flee the area. May each of these believers be comforted by the truth that God will always be with them, and that no one can ever separate them from His wonderful love and abiding presence. As India concludes their national elections this week, pray that the results will bring about necessary changes in areas of human rights so that followers of Jesus throughout the nation will be protected from injustice and abuse.

NIGERIA: Deadly Market Attack

Sources: International Christian Concern, ECSPE, Daily Trust

As Nigerians were celebrating their national Democracy Day on May 29th, gunmen opened fire on the Maro Junction Market which happens to be located within a predominantly Christian community of Kaduna State. Reports state that as many as 12 people were killed and 20 others injured.

While details surrounding the incident are still emerging, reports indicate that the attackers arrived at the busy market and fired indiscriminately at the traders and shoppers. No kidnappings were reported to have occurred during this recent attack, and the assailants fled the scene before the police had arrived. The wounded victims were taken to hospitals in Kachia for treatment.

While the motive behind this attack is not certain, the incident is believed to be part of an ongoing campaign by Islamic militants to drive Christians out of the area. A spokesperson for International Christian Concern commented, "The terrorists' quest is to decrease the population of Christian communities and render them deserted, isolated and desolated." This is the second time that the market in this predominantly Christian town has been the target of violence. For more information on the persecution against followers of Jesus in Nigeria, and/or to view related videotaped reports, go to our [country report](#).



Bandits in Nigeria
Photo: Voice of America

Pray for the full recovery of the many community members who were physically injured in this most recent violent attack. Additionally, pray for the emotional healing of all the bystanders who have been traumatized by the incident, asking that they too will remain strong in their faith. For those mourning the loss of their loved ones, may God's comfort and peace be tangibly experienced through the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit. Continue to pray for the cessation of such violence in Nigeria and that, in the interim, the authorities would actively work to protect the country's vulnerable Christian communities.

The "Persecution & Prayer Alert" is a ministry of:
Voice of the Martyrs Canada, P.O. Box 608, Streetsville, Ontario, L5M 2C1 Tel.
(905) 670-9721 Website: www.vomcanada.com