



***"Only in the cross of Christ will we receive power when we are powerless... strength when we are weak...hope when our situation is hopeless. Only in the cross is there peace for our troubled hearts."***

~ Dr. Michael Youssef

### **NIGERIA: Christians Slain After Being Forced from Bus**

Sources: Morning Star News, Daily Post, Leadership

On June 5th, a bus was travelling along the Damaturu-Biu Highway when a group of armed men forced it to stop near the village of Kamuya, which is located on the border between the states of Yobe and Borno. The terrorists, believed to be members of Boko Haram, pulled aside four passengers who were Christians and then allowed the rest of the travellers to leave.

The bodies of three young Christian men were later found, providing evidence that they had been shot by the attackers. At the time of publishing this report, the condition and whereabouts of the fourth passenger remain unknown. Photos of the killings have been circulating on social media. Unsubstantiated reports indicate that the abductors had apparently contacted the parents of the victims in advance to announce their intentions, suggesting that this was a planned targeted attack.



The three men who were killed by Boko Haram militants.

Incidents of Christians being kidnapped and killed are common in Nigeria. Reverend Ibrahim Abako from the Christian Association of Nigeria in Yobe State recently expressed his sorrow over the recurring attacks: "[These incidents have] been happening frequently. We call on the government, especially the military and police, to take proactive measures by protecting the citizens regardless of their religious background." For more information addressing the violence perpetrated against our Christian family in Nigeria, go to our [country report](#).

***Pray for the families and friends of the slain young men as they grieve over the tragic loss of these precious lives. May all those who are mourning tangibly sense the Lord's comforting presence with them and the assurance that their loved ones are eternally saved. Pray also that the abducted believer who is still missing will be divinely protected, released soon from captivity, and safely reunited with their desperately concerned family members. Continue to pray for the rescue of the many other innocent Nigerians who have been kidnapped by Islamic militants and remain missing today. As the abducted victims expectantly await their deliverance from captivity, may they be protected, strengthened and wonderfully encouraged by the Lord.***

### **IRAQ: Court Orders Christian Family to Convert to Islam**

Sources: International Christian Concern, Rudaw, Christian Post, Decision Magazine

A Christian woman is presently facing a difficult ruling after being ordered by an Iraqi court to convert to Islam. The decision is based on the 1959 Personal Status Law, which mandates that children must adopt Islam if one of their parents converts to the Muslim faith.

Evlin Joseph was 15 years old when her parents divorced. Her mother then married a Muslim man and converted to Islam at that time. Years later, Evlin married a Christian man, and the couple began raising their three children according to the teachings of Christianity. However, when Evlin sought to obtain a national ID



Children in Iraq  
Photo: Flickr / UN / ECHO (cc)

card, which specifies the religion of Iraqi citizens, the authorities stated that – since her mother had converted to Islam while Evlin was still a minor – she is also considered Muslim by law.

The matter went to court, where officials ordered that Evlin has to be designated as a Muslim. Accordingly, she is not legally eligible to be married to a Christian man. Additionally, since she is now labelled a Muslim, her children are also officially considered Muslims by the government.

Evlin is from Duhok in the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq. In speaking about the ruling, she stated: "I am Christian. I am married to a Christian man. I have three Christian kids. My education was in our language. All my official documents are Christian. Our marriage is registered by the church." The couple now must deal with the many ways in which this decision could affect their marital, inheritance and custodial rights.

A conference was recently held in the regional capital of Erbil, focussing on the ramifications of the Personal Status Law. The president of the Kurdistan Region offered his support to Christians. The conference, which included delegates from other Middle Eastern countries, called for legal reforms that would give Christians in Iraq full religious rights. For more information on the difficulties being encountered by believers in Iraq, go to our [country report](#).

***Prayerfully remember Evlin, her husband Sami and their children as they deal with this difficult court decision. May there be a resolution that will keep the family intact and allow each of them to continue living out their Christian faith. Pray that greatly needed changes will take place in the hearts of the country's governing leaders, and that legal revisions will be enacted to ensure greater religious freedoms for our suffering family in Christ. Pray also that Christians throughout the nation will continue to be faithful witnesses of Jesus' love and grace to those around them – resulting in the salvation of many more Iraqi people.***

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## PRAISE REPORT

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### **KYRGYZSTAN: Proposed Religion Law Amendments Rejected**

Source: Forum18

In October 2023, a bill that would put significant restrictions on religious organizations in Kyrgyzstan passed its first reading. Of particular concern to human rights experts were the legislation's vague wording (which could potentially be subjected to abuse) and the strict new requirements for financial reporting. Previously published details on the proposed restrictions are [available here](#).

On June 6th, the Kyrgyz parliament rejected the bill. However, as supporters of the legislation are presently working on other amendments that will be introduced to parliament, any reprieve may be short lived. To learn more about the various challenges experienced by Christians in Kyrgyzstan, go to our [country report](#).



***Praise God that the legislation of concern has been rejected by Kyrgyzstan's parliamentary officials and that further religious restrictions are not immediately forthcoming, bringing a sense of relief to many of our Christian brothers and sisters. Pray that the governing leaders of this Central Asian nation will be guided by a desire to provide fairness and justice to all residing citizens. In addition, ask the Lord to spiritually guide, empower and equip the country's church leaders as they encourage and train congregation members to be faithful "servants of Christ" in the midst of hostility.***

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Voice of the Martyrs Canada, P.O. Box 608, Streetsville, Ontario, L5M 2C1  
Tel. (905) 670-9721 Website: [www.vomcanada.com](http://www.vomcanada.com)