



"If I must die, let it be in the service of God and peace."

~ Pastor Emmanuel Na'allah Auta who was recently martyred in Nigeria.

NIGERIA: Expanding Dangers for Christians

Sources: Mission Network News, BBC, Morning Star News, International Christian Concern, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Truth Nigeria

In recent weeks, the Voice of the Martyrs Canada produced a special two-part video series on Nigeria, highlighting the dangers facing Christians in the northern region of the country while focussing on the urgent need for prayer. If you have not yet taken the time to view these two brief but powerful videos, please do so at our [country report](#).

The persecution of believers in Nigeria continues to escalate, fuelled by intensifying attacks from more than six different militant groups vying for control of the nation. As a result, hundreds of Christians have been killed, injured or kidnapped in recent months. In mid-June alone, more than 200 villagers lost their lives in the state of Benue and thousands of others were displaced. While economic and cultural factors contribute to the unrest, religion remains a major catalyst of the ongoing violence. For instance, during the recent raid in Benue, eyewitnesses reported that the attackers shouted, "Allahu Akbar," as they targeted predominantly Christian communities, leaving devastation in their wake.

The scale of violence in Nigeria has reached such a magnitude, that there are urgent calls from around the world prompting decisive action against the country's militants. Yet, despite assurances from Nigerian political leaders, the attacks have continued unabated. Less than three weeks after the Benue massacre, four more Christians were killed in the same area. An in-depth video interview about the ongoing violence is [available here](#).

Militant Fulani herdsman also attacked the villages of Dogon Fili and Attang in Kaduna State on July 7th, resulting in the deaths of two Christians, as well as injuries to three others. Several individuals were also reportedly kidnapped, although the exact number remains unknown. That same evening, a pastor and another worshipper were killed in a separate attack when militants stormed a worship service at the Bege Baptist Church in Yari Bori, Kaduna. Armed assailants shouted, "Death to infidels," before fatally shooting Pastor Emmanuel Na'allah Auta and Mallam Samaila Gidan Taro. During the raid, an unidentified woman was also taken captive.

Since Yari Bori is a religiously mixed region, comprising both Muslim and Christian residents, Pastor Emmanuel served as a strong advocate for interfaith dialogue and peace between its religious communities. According to one local farmer, this church leader is remembered as "a fearless voice for unity" who "worked with Muslim youth and never stopped speaking out against violence."

- ***Amid the escalating violence against Christians, please continue to lift up the nation of Nigeria in your prayers, especially interceding for all those who have been directly affected by the recent attacks.***
- ***Pray specifically on behalf of Nigerians within these targeted communities who are now mourning the tragic loss of loved ones, asking the Lord to provide them greatly needed comfort and peace.***
- ***Also ask God to minister healing – mentally, emotionally and physically – to all who are suffering in various other ways as a result of the violence.***
- ***Pray that He will continue to raise up courageous Christian leaders, like Pastor Emmanuel, who are willing to serve as Godly advocates for peace, unity and reconciliation in the face of fear and division.***



Video screenshot showing some of the destruction following the Benue massacre.
Photo: Stefanos Foundation

INDIA: Legislator Issues Bounties on Evangelists' Lives

Sources: International Christian Concern, Mission Network News, The Times of India, India Today, The Indian Express

A legislator in India's Maharashtra state has publicly announced the issuance of bounties on the lives of Christians who visit villages for the purpose of proselytization. In a speech that he made on June 17th, Gopichand Padalkar offered rewards ranging from 300,000 rupees (about \$4,800 CAD) for assaulting a Gospel worker to over one million rupees (approximately \$17,500 CAD) for killing a pastor. The legislator's remarks were made in retaliation, following the suicide of a young woman who had allegedly been pressured by her in-laws to pay a customary dowry and adhere to the family's belief in Christianity.

The official's recent announcement has sparked widespread concerns among India's Christians. Various protests have since been held throughout Maharashtra, with demonstrators demanding that Gopichand Padalkar face criminal charges for inciting violence and promoting religious hatred. The Christian community is also calling for the governing official's expulsion from state legislature. Thankfully, some dissent over the official's life-threatening stance has even taken place within his own political party. While Gopichand is a member of the Hindu-nationalist BJP – a party known for supporting anti-conversion legislation – some BJP leaders have publicly condemned his remarks which they consider "irresponsible" and unrepresentative of the party's official stance.

This incident comes amid a broader rise in hate speech and hostility towards religious minorities throughout various parts of India. Additionally, the enforcement of anti-conversion laws, which are often used to target Christians, has been gaining traction across the country. On July 9th, officials working for the Maharashtra state government announced that they will be enacting their own anti-conversion legislation, making this Indian state the 11th with related laws. Such measures have frequently been used to intimidate and oppress religious minorities. To review previously published reports addressing the challenges encountered by Christians in India, go to our [country profile](#).

- *Pray that our Christian brothers and sisters in India will receive God's wisdom and discernment as they seek ways to appropriately deal with the hostility inflicted against them, so that they may respond to their opposers with grace and unwavering hope.*
- *Ask the Lord to shield the pastors and evangelists in Maharashtra state from harm by thwarting any violent schemes of the enemy and ensuring peace prevails over discord.*
- *May the Holy Spirit move mightily within the hearts of India's governing and judicial leaders – at the local, state and federal levels – bringing about policies that promote tolerance, justice and mutual respect for all of the country's religious communities.*

PRAISE REPORT

PAKISTAN: Court Decisions Render Justice for Christians

Sources: Morning Star News, International Christian Concern, VOPM

Christians in Pakistan often encounter intense opposition, particularly through the country's legal system. However, three recent court rulings have brought about a measure of relief and a renewed hope for justice.

In 2023, two Christian youths, Adil Barbar and Simon Nadeem, were accused of blasphemy after a neighbour claimed to have overheard them calling a dog "Muhammad Ali" and laughing about it. Although the families of both teens denied the presence of any dog, Adil and Simon were charged for allegedly insulting the Islamic prophet Muhammad. ([Read more details](#) on the incident.)

On July 8th, after more than two years of legal uncertainty, the two Christian youths were acquitted and dismissed of all charges. While they are now considered free, concerns remain for their safety due to the threat of vigilante violence. Regrettably, Pakistan's blasphemy laws have been frequently misused to settle personal disputes, incite violence and persecute religious minorities.



A village in Maharashtra
Photo: Wikimedia / Nikhil More ([cc](#))



Adil Barbar
Photo: Morning Star News

In a separate case, 14-year-old Elishba Adnan was abducted from her home on June 11th by Baba Mukhtar, a 28-year-old man known to the family. Though members of the Christian girl's family turned to the local police for assistance, their pleas were repeatedly ignored.

Elishba's father eventually sought help from a human rights activist named Albert Patras, who discovered that the teenage girl had supposedly converted to Islam on June 12th and married her kidnapper. Albert was able to bring the case to court, arguing that – since Elishba was under the age of 16 – the marriage constituted statutory rape under Pakistani law. On July 3rd, the judge ruled in favour of the family, denying custody to Baba and placing Elishba in a women's shelter. Her parents remain hopeful that she will soon return home now that she is no longer under the influence of her captor.

In a similar ruling on July 9th, a judge in Lahore sentenced Ahmed Raza to life in prison for the rape of a 12-year-old Christian girl. The victim, whose identity has been withheld for security reasons, was kidnapped in 2023 and assaulted by Ahmed and his three accomplices. The perpetrator then fabricated documentation indicating that the girl had converted to Islam and married him. Ahmed was ultimately found guilty of rape, though the judge did not rule on the legitimacy of the conversion or marriage. However, during a separate proceeding, a family court issued a decree in the girl's favour and thus declared the marriage void.

Blasphemy accusations and forced marriages remain two of the most prevalent threats against Christians in Pakistan. While the courts often succumb to pressure from militant groups, these recent rulings offer a glimmer of hope that justice and protection for minorities are still possible. To learn more about the incidents of persecution encountered by our Christian brothers and sisters in Pakistan, go to our [country report](#).

- ***Praise God for the courage and integrity of judges who upheld justice in these recent cases, even in the midst of opposing societal and political pressures.***
- ***Pray for further reforms to take place within Pakistan's government and its operating legal system, asking that laws respecting the rights and dignities of all citizens – regardless of their faith – will be duly upheld.***
- ***Lift up all those in Pakistan who have suffered from abductions, false blasphemy accusations and threats of violence, asking our Heavenly Father to minister healing, restoration and peace to these believers and their families.***

The Persecution & Prayer Alert is a ministry of:
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