



***"Blessed is the man who remains
steadfast under trial, for when
he has stood the test he will receive
the crown of life, which God has
promised to those who love Him."***

~ James 1:12 ESV

NIGER: Baptismal Service Attacked by Gunmen

Sources: BBC, Vatican News, Human Rights Watch

On September 15th, a baptismal ceremony in Takoubatt, a village located within the Tillabéri region of Niger, was violently disrupted when gunmen on motorcycles suddenly stormed the gathering. According to a local source, 15 people were killed during that initial attack. The assailants then moved to the outskirts of the village, where they claimed the lives of seven more villagers. One local media outlet described the incident as a "gruesome death toll of 22 innocent people [who were] cowardly killed without reason or justification."

The Tillabéri region, which borders Mali and Burkina Faso, has been plagued by persistent attacks from jihadist groups linked to the al-Qaeda and self-proclaimed Islamic State militant organizations. Despite ongoing efforts to curb the violence, the military has struggled to maintain control over the area. A recent report from Human Rights Watch highlighted the various difficulties encountered by authorities in their attempts to protect the region's civilians. [View a list](#) of previously published reports concerning Christian persecution in Niger.



Militants in Niger.

Photo: Wikimedia / aharan_kotogo ([cc](#))

- ***On behalf of the families and community members now left mourning the tragic loss of their loved ones as a result of this recent attack, pray that they will receive God's great comfort, peace and healing.***
- ***Also prayerfully uphold Niger's governing authorities as they try to restore order and security in the midst of the ongoing violence, asking the Lord to help them find effective and lasting solutions.***
- ***Last, but not least, please intercede for the eternal salvation of the perpetrators responsible for the attacks, in hopes that they will be receptive to the transformative work of God's Holy Spirit in their lives. As a result, may they no longer be used as the enemy's agents of evil, but rather serve as dedicated disciples of Christ – demonstrating His tremendous compassion, mercy and saving grace.***

DR CONGO: Multitudes Killed While Attending Funeral Wake

Sources: Reuters, International Christian Concern, Actualite.cd, Open Doors

On the night of September 8th, Christians who had gathered at a funeral home in Ntoyo, a village in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), were brutally attacked by militants armed with guns and machetes. The assault resulted in the fatalities of numerous believers, the kidnapping of many surviving victims, and the burning of 16 homes.

A parish priest from the nearby city of Manguredjipa described seeing the bodies of "more than 70 people" in the funeral home and along the nearby road. Another local resident who had participated in search efforts following the attack claimed that further discoveries eventually led to a death toll that exceeded 100 fatalities.



Mourners gather for a mass burial.

Photo: Open Doors USA

The massacre has been attributed to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a militant Islamic organization seeking to establish an Islamic State. Such attacks have become tragically common in the DRC, including a devastating church raid in late July that resulted in the deaths of more than 40 followers of Jesus ([read more](#)). To learn how you can prayerfully support our suffering Christian brothers and sisters in this beleaguered nation, visit our [country profile](#).

- ***On behalf of the families who have been left heartbroken, pray that they will not feel alone in their sorrow; instead, may they experience our Heavenly Father's consoling presence, loving kindness and perfect peace.***
- ***Also pray for the emotional, spiritual and physical healing of the many others who have been affected by the senseless acts of violence, asking the Lord to ultimately provide all the members of this shattered community greatly needed restoration.***
- ***Pray that Christians throughout this region will be divinely protected from any additional harm and further strengthened in their resolve to proclaim the Gospel message amid difficult circumstances.***

PAKISTAN: Justice Delayed in Jaranwala

Sources: Morning Star News, The Friday Times, IANS Live

Incensed by allegations of blasphemy against two falsely accused Christian brothers, thousands of angry people stormed a Christian colony in Jaranwala, Punjab, on August 16th, 2023. The mob destroyed hundreds of homes and businesses before the violence was eventually brought under control. (Video footage of the attack is [available here](#).)

The two accused brothers were eventually acquitted by the courts, affirming that the allegations against them were false. However, more than two years following the devastating riots, residents of the targeted community continue to await justice and the fulfillment of government promises. Additionally, although more than 300 arrests were made in connection with the incident, none of the perpetrators who participated in the destruction have ever been sentenced.



The riots in 2023.
Photo: Morning Star News

In a show of solidarity, Christians from various organizations and denominations held a 17-day non-violent "sit in" protest, which ended on September 2nd. Lala Robin Daniel, one of the organizers of the demonstration, criticized governing officials who were "clad in suits and robes" for holding ceremonial meetings without making any endeavour to meaningfully engage with the victimized survivors of the August 2023 attacks. One resident of Jaranwala remarked: "This is not the story of just my family. This is [the] story of every Christian living in Pakistan." The protest concluded after governing authorities offered assurances of justice, though organizers warned that the demonstration would resume if no proper action is taken.

Earlier this year, VOMC's Minister-at-Large, Greg Musselman, travelled to Jaranwala to personally meet with local Christians whose homes were destroyed during the riots. These interviews can be [viewed here](#). For additional reports addressing the many challenges experienced by followers of Jesus in Pakistan, visit our [country profile](#).

- ***In the aftermath of the devastating August 2023 attacks, pray that Jaranwala's Christian residents will receive ongoing strength, encouragement and provision as they continue with the rebuilding of their homes, businesses and lives.***
- ***In the meantime, may Pakistan's governing officials fulfill their promises to provide needed assistance to the recovering victims, while also taking necessary steps to ensure they receive justice and protection.***
- ***Overall, please pray that the Gospel message of peace, love and hope will continue to spread throughout the country, transforming the hearts of Muslim militants and so many others who are in desperate need of God's eternal salvation through Christ.***