Voice of the Martyrs CANADA
PERSECUTION & PRAYER ALERT

"Joy is not necessarily the absence of suffering; it is the presence of God."
~ Sam Storms

SOUTH SUDAN: Pastor and Associates Abducted and Slain

Sources: Morning Star News, VOMC Contacts, Divine Mission Pentecostal Church

For the past 10 years, South Sudan has struggled under the weight of unrest and civil war. This upheaval has led to ethnic tensions, political instability, and the ongoing trauma that accompanies prolonged conflict.

Stephen Wesley teaching in South Sudan. Photo: VOMC

Due to economic challenges, Pastor Lino Pasquale had been working for a fishing business in Gondokoro, a region located south of the capital city of Juba. On February 19th, the church leader was returning home with three other men when they were suddenly captured by unknown gunmen. A few days later, the bodies of Pastor Lino and two of the men were discovered. At last report, the fourth victim remains missing.

Pastor Lino served faithfully as the leader of an outreach branch for the Divine Mission Pentecostal Church in Juba. Church leaders have condemned the attack as "barbaric," believing that the pastor and his associates were deliberately targeted. Those who knew Pastor Lino remember him as a devoted shepherd who was committed to sharing the hope of the Gospel.

On the same day that Pastor Lino was abducted, VOMC's Director of Global Education and Discipleship, Steven Wesley, had been visiting South Sudan to teach local believers about the theology of persecution and discipleship. Providentially, Pastor Lino's wife, Eva, was present at that very training session. It was only later that she discovered what had happened to her husband. Tragically, on the same day that she received news of his death, Eva's mother passed away following a short time of illness.

Upon his return from South Sudan, Stephen recorded an interview to share insights from his recent ministry trip. To watch this video report, go to VOMCanada.com/video/TOPAD-SSudan. More information about the challenges encountered by Christians in South Sudan can be accessed at our country profile.

- ***Prayerfully remember Eva as she now deals with the immense grief of suddenly losing both her husband and her mother. Ask God to lovingly surround this dear follower of Christ – and all who are mourning the loss of those mentioned in this report – with His strength, comfort and peace.***
- ***As the authorities conduct their investigation into this violent incident, may they not only safely locate the missing abducted victim but also bring those responsible for committing the crimes to justice.***
- ***Pray for VOMC's "Theology of Persecution and Discipleship" ministry, asking that this training program will continue to encourage and equip Christians in South Sudan (and other areas of the world) who are enduring persecution because of their faith.***

INDIA: Christians Denied Burial Permission

Sources: Morning Star News, Catholic Connect, Christian Today

A Christian family residing in a tribal village of Chhattisgarh state has been denied permission to bury a relative who passed away, unless they first convert to Hinduism. Local villagers claim that allowing a Christian burial would defile their land and anger their deities.

A village in India.
Photo: Flickr / Rakshit Pandey (CC)

Sambai Mandavi, a 34-year-old Christian woman from the village of Amodi, passed away on February 24th. When her husband Kamlesh attempted to arrange her burial – either in the village's public cemetery or on privately owned family land – both of his options were refused. According to village leaders, the burial could only proceed if the family renounced their Christian faith and converted to Hinduism. As a result, Sambai's body remains in the hospital's mortuary while the dispute continues.

A formal complaint has been filed with local authorities after Kamlesh received threats of violence against both himself and his property. This conflict arises only six days after a court ruling that halted the exhumation of Christians' bodies in tribal villages throughout the state.

Commenting on this difficult situation, a spokesperson for the Progressive Christian Alliance stated that "the persistence of such threats underscores a blatant disregard for judicial directives." The organization is calling for direct intervention by state authorities. To review other reports addressing the persecution of Christians in India, go to our country profile.

- ***Prayerfully uphold Kamlesh and his family, asking the Lord to greatly comfort and strengthen them as they now must contend with this troubling situation while grieving the loss of their loved one.***
- ***Pray that state officials would intervene in their case, working to enforce the court's decision and protect the constitutional rights of these citizens.***
- ***May God work powerfully within the lives of villagers in Amodi so that, in the midst of this conflict, their hardened hearts would be softened, and thus receptive to the truth of the Gospel.***

NIGERIA: Fulani Militants Face Terrorism Trial

Sources: International Christian Concern, Premium Times, Vanguard, Punch

In a rare court case, nine Fulani herdsmen are facing trial for their roles in the massacre of more than 200 Christians in Benue State during the month of June, 2025. Prosecutors filed a total of 57 charges against the accused individuals, and additional suspects are still being pursued by authorities.

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

The leader of the violent group, Ardo Lawal Mohammed Dono – along with the other eight offenders – pleaded "not guilty." Ardo has been accused of organizing and funding terrorism activities, plus recruiting complicit participants to join him. Similar charges relating to acts of violence and terrorism were brought against the remaining accused members of the group. Although the trial has experienced various delays, the presiding judge cautioned the defence against unnecessary stalling, stating that the matter is of "significant public interest." In the meanwhile, the alleged perpetrators have been remanded to custody for the duration of the trial.

All of the apprehended defendants are members of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, an organization representing Fulani herders. While the group has been accused of financing attacks on Christian villages, its leaders continue to deny any involvement.

Violence against Christians – often involving militant Fulani herdsmen – has been a major concern for several years, particularly in northern Nigeria. The indiscriminate raids, village burnings, as well as targeted killings, have devastated entire communities and resulted in the displacement of countless families. Further information concerning the atrocities experienced by believers in Nigeria can be obtained by reviewing VOMC's previously published reports.

- ***Pray that God will impart wisdom and guidance to court officials as this trial proceeds, in hopes that the outcome will mark meaningful progress towards the cessation of violent activities perpetrated by militant groups across Nigeria.***
- ***May the Lord provide protection, comfort and healing to our Nigerian brothers and sisters in Christ, who are not only suffering deep grief and loss in the aftermath of the attacks, but also living under the perpetual threat of further danger.***
- ***Pray that international attention and pressure will help strengthen the pursuit of justice for the thousands of innocent Nigerian believers whose lives have been devastated by the violence.***

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