



***"My soul makes its boast
in the Lord; let the humble
hear and be glad. Oh, magnify
the Lord with me, and let us
exalt His name together!"***

~ Psalm 34:2-3 ESV

NIGERIA: Twelve Fatalities in Easter Sunday Attacks

Sources: International Christian Concern, The Washington Post, Morning Star News, Truth Nigeria, BBC

Easter Sunday worship services in the town of Ariko, Kaduna State, were violently disrupted when gunmen attacked two churches, killing 12 Christians. According to witnesses, Fulani rebels opened fire on followers of Jesus who had been worshipping at the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) and the St. Augustine Catholic Church. In addition to the fatalities, dozens of others were kidnapped and both church buildings sustained damages.

Residents reported that as many as 30 militants surrounded the town. The gunmen specifically targeted the ECWA congregation first before moving directly to the Catholic church. The coordinated movement between the two sites suggests that the attacks were carefully planned.



A funeral from a previous incident.
Photo: Morning Star News

Following the incidents in Ariko, the Nigerian army pursued the attackers, resulting in a firefight. The army reported that as the terrorists fled, 31 of the kidnapped hostages were left behind. The number of individuals still being held captive remains unknown.

Violence during Christian holidays is a tragically common occurrence in Nigeria, as well as in other specific regions of the world. More details about the atrocities experienced by our Nigerian family in Christ can be obtained by reviewing VOMC's written and video-recorded reports at our [country profile](#).

- ***Prayerfully uphold the families and friends of those who were tragically killed during these recent incidents, asking the Lord to tenderly minister to them by providing His healing presence, comfort and strength as they grieve such painful loss.***
 - ***May Nigeria's authorities receive wisdom, courage and integrity as they endeavour to recover the kidnapped victims and bring those responsible for committing the crimes to justice.***
 - ***Pray that the hope and transformative power of the Risen Christ would spread throughout the region, leading many – including those who carried out the attacks – to faith in Him.***
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ERITREA: Police Arrest 13 Believers During Gathering

Source: Open Doors Canada

On Sunday, March 15th, Eritrean police arrested 13 Christians at a gathering held in an undisclosed location. The believers were then taken to a prison in the capital city of Asmara. While the identities of the arrested individuals have not been publicly released, a recently received report indicates that one of the detainees – who previously spent 15 years in prison – was freed less than a year ago. No further information regarding the arrests is currently available. In the interim, considering the longstanding patterns of persecution in Eritrea, there are concerns that these believers may be held without any formal charges or court trial.



Photo: Pexels / Alejandro De Roa

In January, more than 100 Christians who had been imprisoned for their faith were released. (See [this report](#) for more details.) Following these releases, VOMC's Greg Musselman interviewed Dr. Berhane Asmelash from Release Eritrea. To hear this recorded audio podcast, in which they discuss the challenges facing our Christian brothers and sisters in Eritrea, go to [this page](#).

- ***Given the harsh conditions frequently experienced in Eritrean prisons, please pray that God's protection, strength and sustaining presence will be with each of these recently arrested believers and all other followers of Christ who are currently being detained.***
- ***Additionally, pray for significant changes to take place within Eritrea's political system – opening the way for positive reforms that will result in freedom of religion and dignity for all citizens.***
- ***Lift up the loved ones of those who were recently arrested, asking God to also comfort them with His perfect peace, sustaining hope, and the wonderful assurance that He sovereignly sees all, cares deeply and responds justly.***

INDIA: Court Reiterates Privileges for Specified Religions

Sources: Tribune India, The Hindu, International Christian Concern

In India, where the caste system remains deeply embedded within the framework of societal standards, those belonging to the lowest castes are classified as "scheduled castes" or "Dalits." Although historically marginalized, and often subjected to severe social discrimination, members of the lower castes receive constitutional protections and access to certain governmental benefits.

A Supreme Court ruling on March 24th reiterated earlier decisions, stating that the scheduled caste status – and the benefits attached to it – are not available to individuals who profess a religion other than Hinduism, Sikhism or Buddhism. As a result, conversion to any other faith leads to the immediate loss of these protections. The justification for this



India's Supreme Court Building
Photo: Wikimedia / Subhashish Panigrahi ([CC](#))

ruling continues to rest on the assertion that Christianity and Islam do not recognize caste distinctions. However, critics note that Buddhism and Sikhism likewise do not follow a system of castes.

The recent court ruling also clarified that any Dalits who had initially converted away from one of the mentioned approved religions – yet later decided to return – would be able to reclaim their scheduled caste status, provided they fulfill certain stipulated conditions. These conditions include: 1) conversion back to their originating religion, and 2) formal acceptance as reintegrated members of their caste communities.

While India is officially a secular state, Hindu nationalist organizations exert significant influence over governing policies in many areas of the country. Several states have instituted anti-conversion laws that punish "unlawful" religious conversions through which coercion or pressure are allegedly involved. Most recently, India's second-largest state, Maharashtra, passed such regulations in March of this year.

Against this broader backdrop, the ruling of India's Supreme Court has raised concerns among religious freedom advocates. By permitting the restoration of social and financial benefits only when individuals convert to select religions, the decision appears to create incentives for reconversions away from Christianity or Islam. Critics also argue that the ruling risks undermining religious impartiality – and, ironically, may even be considered an indirect endorsement for such coerced conversions. To review previously published reports concerning the situation in India, visit our [country profile](#).

- *Prayerfully uphold India's human rights advocates, asking God to grant them wisdom and guidance as they legally and politically navigate through the country's complex religious and social issues in their endeavours to promote fairness and impartiality.*
- *Remember our Christian brothers and sisters in this South Asian country who are facing accusations of forced conversion, asking the Lord to provide them with protection, courage and clarity so they can respond wisely and in a manner that will ultimately bring honour to Him.*
- *Lift up the many Dalits who have been subjected to financial burdens and social exclusion for remaining faithful to Christ, praying that our Heavenly Father will providentially provide for their daily spiritual and practical needs.*

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