



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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"When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of all who had been martyred for the Word of God and for being faithful in their testimony. They shouted to the Lord and said, 'O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before You judge the people who belong to this world and avenge our blood for what they have done to us?'"

~ Revelation 6:9-10 NLT

INDONESIA: Four Christians Killed

Sources: Open Doors, UCA News, International Christian Concern

A small militant group associated with ISIS, referred to as The East Indonesia Mujahideen, is known for its acts of violence. This same group was responsible for an attack in November that left four Christians dead (see www.vomcanada.com/id-2020-12-03.htm). Therefore, when five members of the group were spotted in the village of Kalimago on May 11th, the townspeople were alarmed.

While searching for the militants, a task force combed the area and found the bodies of four Christian farmers who had been working on a coffee plantation. The fifth worker, who managed to escape, identified one of the men as Qatar, a fugitive and member of the terrorist group.

The four slain victims, identified only by their initials (SS, MS, LL and PP), were men between the ages of 42 and 61. While reports vary, it is evident that the recent attack was very brutal. It is believed that at least one of the men was decapitated, while the others were found with wounds on their necks. Although the actual motive behind the attack is not yet known, it is clear that the violence was intended to strike fear and intimidation into the hearts of the Christian villagers.

A *Closer to the Fire* video podcast addressing the situation was published on May 13th. To view to this report, and to join in prayer for our surviving Indonesian brothers and sisters in Christ, go to www.vomcanada.com/pnp-videos/video/pnp-id-2021-05-13.html.

Please prayerfully uphold the families and friends of the victims who were killed in this brutal attack, as well as the surviving worker who is now recovering from the trauma. Despite the

intense persecution that has taken place in Central Sulawesi, may God's peace reign in the hearts and minds of the Christians who are under threat and the members of their communities. Pray that the notorious crimes of this terrorist group will be stopped, and those responsible for the violence will be held accountable. Also pray that the militants will, like the Apostle Paul, turn from their acts of violence by discovering the living reality of our Risen Saviour Jesus, who is honourably revered in God's Word as the "King of kings" and "Lord of lords."

UGANDA: Pastor Slain After Leading Muslims to Christ

Source: Morning Star News

Pastor Thomas Chikooma served at an independent Pentecostal church in the village of Ngalwe, Uganda. He was invited by local Muslims to participate in an open-air religious debate in the larger community of Pallisa. After giving his defence of Christianity, he was privileged to lead 14 people to faith in Christ, including six who had been Muslims.

As the meeting was concluding, angry Muslims began to shout Islamic slogans, compelling Pastor Thomas to rush away with his son. He was followed by Muslim protestors on two motorcycles, which then sped past him. As the pastor and his son neared their home, they saw the motorcycles stopped at an intersection, waiting for them. Suspicious of their intent, Pastor Thomas told his son to follow at a distance as he approached the men. The tone quickly turned violent and he was struck by one of the men. The boy fled through a field to his home and returned with his mother and some neighbours to search for his father. Pastor Thomas was eventually found beheaded with his tongue cut out.

Relatives and friends are shocked by the violence. The father of 11 children had planted 50 churches throughout eastern Uganda. This is only one of the many instances of persecution committed by Uganda's Muslim minority, some of whom have adopted militant Islamist ideologies. For more information on the difficulties facing Christians in Uganda, go to www.vomcanada.com/uganda.htm.

Please lift up Pastor Thomas' wife, Jessica, and their children in your prayers as they heal from their tragic loss. May the Lord meet all of their present and future needs, providing them great comfort, strength, courage and protection. Pray that they, along with other fellow Christians in Uganda, will continue to serve as vibrant testimonies in their communities, demonstrating God's love and grace to their Muslim neighbours -- including the perpetrators of the crime. Also pray for the 14 new believers who had put their faith in Jesus during the night of the debate and are now suddenly confronted with the potential high cost of following Him. May they be encouraged to remain faithful in their commitment to Christ and receive opportunities to be discipled in their newfound faith so they can grow spiritually amid opposition.

REPORT UPDATES

SAUDI ARABIA: Christian Man's Wife Seized by Opposing Family

Source: Middle East Concern

A Saudi believer identified only as "A" has been facing legal challenges after openly speaking about his conversion to Christianity, as well as assisting his Christian sister to flee the country (see www.vomcanada.com/sa-2021-03-18.htm). While frivolous charges of theft against him were dropped in April (see www.vomcanada.com/sa-2021-04-29.htm), he continues to endure further court challenges and added personal concerns. His next court hearing is scheduled for May 30th.

It has recently been revealed that the convert's wife has been forcefully seized by her family members. On May 5th, having been told that her mother was ill, she went to the family home. Her relatives then would not allow her to leave. She was told that her husband will be sent to prison and that it would be better for her to divorce him and stay with them.

Continue to pray for "A" as he awaits the upcoming court hearings. Ask the Lord to touch the hearts of the presiding court officials so that true justice will prevail. Please also pray for this Christian man's wife; that she would be given the freedom to leave her relatives' home and support her husband at this time. Despite the pressures facing this couple, may they be encouraged to trust in Jesus, drawing needed strength, courage and hope from Him. Furthermore, pray that the family members instigating all of these problems will realize the error of their ways and readily receive God's peace and gift of eternal life which can only be attained through faith in His Son Jesus Christ.

NIGERIA: Abducted Leah Sharibu Recently Turned 18

Sources: Independent Catholic News, Daily Post Nigeria

Leah Sharibu, who has been held captive by Islamic jihadists from the Boko Haram terrorist group for more than three years after refusing to renounce her Christian faith, turned 18 years old on May 14th. Standing in solidarity with her, Christians around the world have continued to call for her release.

Originally kidnapped in February 2018, along with 109 other students from a girls' school in Dapchi, Nigeria, Leah has held fast to her Christian faith. Five of the abducted girls died and the other 104 were released a month after being abducted. However, according to those released, Leah refused to "cooperate" by converting to Islam.

Various reports have leaked over the past three years indicating that Leah is still alive. The latest report states that she has recently given birth to a second child within a year of being forced into marriage to a Boko Haram commander.

Despite assurances from Nigeria's president that everything possible will be done to rescue Leah and the many other remaining kidnapped victims, they continue to be held in captivity. This includes the students of another previously reported incident, as over 100 girls from the Chibok school likewise remain missing, more than seven years after their abduction. (A report on this situation is available at www.vomcanada.com/ng-2014-05-08.htm.) There are cases in which the kidnapped victims have been sold into sexual slavery.

Please continue to uphold Leah and the other surviving victims in your prayers. May the Lord give them and their distraught families the strength needed to endure and remain hopeful. Pray that each of the kidnapped girls will continue to experience the reassuring presence of Christ, whose unfailing love has undoubtedly been sustaining them throughout the years of their captivity. Pray for wisdom on behalf of Nigeria's government officials so that their efforts to locate the missing victims and safely secure their release will be effective. Through the abounding mercy and grace of our Heavenly Father, may all of them soon be set free and joyfully reunited with their families.

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