



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
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"True prayer is neither a mere mental exercise nor a vocal performance. It is far deeper than that. It is a spiritual transaction with the Creator of heaven and earth."

~ Charles Spurgeon

INDIA: Christians Beaten After Mob Storms Police Station

Sources: The Hindu, Hindustan Times, Free Press Journal, Morning Star News, Twitter

Acting on accusations from Hindu nationalists, police raided a gathering of the New Life Fellowship Ministry in Raipur, the capital of India's Chhattisgarh state, on September 5th. The complainants had accompanied the police and attempted to enter the church but were prevented from doing so. The officers then requested that Pastor Harish Sahu report to the local police station.

After the service was completed, Pastor Harish went to the police station, bringing along Ankush Bariyekar, the General Secretary of the Chhattisgarh Christian Forum, and Prakash Masih. When the three Christians arrived, a mob of approximately 200 Hindu militants assembled outside the building and began chanting anti-Christian slogans. Inside, Pastor Harish was informed that a complaint had been issued against him, accusing him of "indulging in religious conversions."

As the police were questioning the men, the mob stormed into the station. In addition to shouting threats, the attackers physically assaulted the Christians. During the attack, Ankush and Prakash, who were situated in the front, were badly beaten, while Pastor Harish was relatively unharmed. A police officer had also been manhandled in the fracas. A video of the attack was captured and has since gone viral on social media (www.twitter.com/ashubh/status/1434518238205861888). Reflecting on the incident, a pastor pondered, "If Christians are not safe even in (a police station), what can we expect?"

A case has been registered against eight instigators of the attacks on charges of rioting, uttering obscenities, assault and criminal intimidation. Arrests have been made against two of the

perpetrators: Manish Sahu and Sanjay Singh. Manish is the division president of the BJYM, a youth wing of the Hindu nationalist BJP political party. In the days following the arrests of the two assailants, local BJP members have staged demonstrations in protest. They claim the police were influenced by the ruling Indian National Congress party, as they had protected the victimized Christians. For more information on the challenges facing believers in India, including previously posted reports, go to www.vomcanada.com/india.htm.

Pray for the protection of Pastor Harish, his family, and all the members of their church, as they seek the Lord's wisdom and guidance in the midst of the fierce opposition they've been subjected to for their faith in Him. May those responsible for the recently committed acts of violence against these believers be held accountable for their wrongful actions. Also prayerfully uphold the local police officials, asking that they will have the fortitude to continue standing firmly in their call for societal order and peace, even when confronted by large intimidating mobs. May the militants opposing them and members of the church community have opportunities to hear the "Good News" of Jesus -- the One whom they are truly persecuting (Acts 9:5) -- ultimately acknowledging Him as their Saviour and Lord.

NIGERIA: Mob Kills Pastor Over Alleged Conversion

Sources: Christian Solidarity Worldwide, International Christian Concern, Sahara Reporters, Premium Times

Rev. Yohanna Shuaibu was the pastor of the New Life for All Nation Church in the Nigerian village of Masu, located in Kano State. He also served as the local chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria. After being attacked on September 22nd by an angry mob, described as "irate Muslim youths," the church leader succumbed to his injuries the following day.

The conflict began after a young man in the area by the name of Sabo had left Islam. On September 21st, Sabo, who was neither attending a church nor a mosque, got into an argument and ended up killing his brother's wife. Even though he subsequently turned himself in for police custody, the expression of differing opinions among local Muslims quickly turned violent.

Already angry because of the growth of the church in the area, a rumour began to spread among Muslim villagers that Sabo had become a Christian, and that Rev. Yohanna was responsible for converting him. The villagers, who were enraged that Sabo had escaped vigilante justice, also learned that the pastor may have encouraged the young man to surrender himself to the police.

As tension mounted in Masu village, Rev. Yohanna was advised to leave the area with his family. After spending the night in the neighbouring village of Biri, the pastor returned the next day to evacuate students from a Christian school he helped to establish. Believing that the hostilities had subsided, his family returned to the community.

That night, a Muslim mob descended on the Christian leader's home. Although his wife and children managed to escape to safety, Rev. Yohanna himself suffered multiple machete blows. When police were alerted of the incident, the wounded pastor was rushed to hospital where he died the next day. Later that evening, the mob continued their attack, destroying the Christian family's home, the building of the church, as well as the Christian school.

Rev. Yohanna, a prominent figure in the community, is described as a "peace-loving Christian community leader." Along with coordinating over 100 churches, he helped to raise funds for the establishment of a school and the drilling of wells which are now providing clean water in areas where government-provided water was previously unavailable -- including a local mosque.

Greg Musselman, Minister-at-Large for The Voice of the Martyrs Canada, recently spoke with Rev. Yunusa Nmadu, the General Secretary of the Evangelical Church Winning All. In the interview, they discussed the situation in Nigeria, including the rise of persecution that has taken place over recent years. To view the interview, go to www.vomcanada.com/videos/madu-ecwa.

Prayerfully remember Rev. Yohanna's wife and children in their time of grief, asking the Lord to fill them with His comfort and strength. In fact, please pray for all the Christians in the area who are now dealing with the loss of their dear friend, brother-in-Christ, and esteemed church leader. May God mightily intervene in the lives of those responsible for this horrific crime, replacing their anger towards the church with a deep longing for spiritual truth and peace. Also pray for the continued growth of the Gospel in Masu village, and other areas throughout Nigeria, so that the light of Christ can draw many more across this troubled nation to salvation in Him.

REPORT UPDATE

IRAN: Prisoner Located and Since Released on Bail

Source: Middle East Concern

In the *Persecution & Prayer Alert* that VOMC published on September 30th, it was reported that three Christians had been arrested while attending a prayer meeting in Rasht, Iran, on September 5th. The report had mentioned that two of the believers were released on bail, but family members were unable to locate Ayoub Poor-Rezazade. See www.vomcanada.com/ir-2021-09-30.htm for more details.

With thankfulness, we are pleased to announce that Ayoub has since been located and subsequently released by the authorities on October 3rd after posting bail. According to recent reports, Ayoub was taken to the same prison as his friends but had been held in solitary confinement for interrogation about church finances.

Praise God that Ayoub has recently been released on bail. Pray that these three faithful followers of Jesus will be successful in appealing the charges against them. May the Lord speak to the hearts of those in authority politically, convicting them of their need to uphold religious freedom in Iran, and thus ensure all citizens are provided equal rights. Also continue to prayerfully remember the many Christians who are currently being held in Iranian prisons because of their faith in Jesus, advocating before God's righteous throne for their imminent release.