



Voice of the
Martyrs

PERSECUTION
& PRAYER
ALERT

Persecution & Prayer Alert

Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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*"[God] will cover you with His pinions,
and under His wings you will find refuge;
His faithfulness is a shield and buckler."*

~ Psalm 91:4 ESV

INDIA: Pastor and Church Members Beaten in Violent Attack

Source: International Christian Concern

A pastor and several members of his church were physically attacked on September 8th when Hindu nationalists raided a worship service in Bhubaneswar, Odisha State. The Christians were accused of forcibly converting Hindus to Christianity.

The targeted church members had recently rented a three-story building to conduct their worship services. However, when affiliates of Hindu nationalist groups learned that more than 100 people were attending the services, they decided to take action against the growing church.

Perpetrators of the violence finally ceased their attack when local authorities arrived at the scene and took some people, including Christian worshippers, to the police station for questioning. There, Hindu militants surrounded the station in protest until the arrival of the leading police officer.

False accusations of forcible conversion activities are frequently used against churches and Christian individuals in India. For more information on the persecution of followers of Jesus in this South Asian nation, go to www.vomcanada.com/india.htm.

Pray that our Christian brothers and sisters in India who were beaten during this recent attack will fully recover from their injuries and that those responsible for the incident would be held accountable for their wrongful actions. Pray also that the authorities would act with justice and equality as they seek to keep the peace in this community. May the members of the targeted church not be discouraged by the opposition they've encountered, but rather may they continue to resiliently serve as testimonies of God's saving grace to all those around them.

BURKINA FASO: Hundreds Killed by Islamic Jihadists

Sources: Release International, Reuters, Barnabas Fund, La Croix International, Africa News

Since 2015, the West African nation of Burkina Faso has experienced numerous violent attacks by militants linked to al-Qaeda in a deadly Islamic insurgency that has spread from neighbouring Mali. In what is now the single biggest massacre since the start of the ongoing conflict, as many as 400 people were slaughtered during a raid on August 24th.

The town of Barsalogho is located in an area that has been plagued by constant threats from the militants. On the day of the devastating attack, residents were ordered by government troops to dig protective trenches around their community when they were suddenly ambushed by heavily armed fighters who began killing indiscriminately. The trenches that the residents had been digging ended up being used as mass graves for the victims.

One resident, who was able to flee the area, stated: "Barsalogho is regularly attacked by terrorists. But never has an attack been so deadly. The terrorists killed as many people as possible without distinguishing between soldiers, volunteers and civilians." In response to the carnage, the country's prime minister admitted that the civilians who had been recruited to dig the trenches – some involuntarily – had not been adequately protected.

Christians have been disproportionately affected by the violence in Burkina Faso, and churches are frequently targeted by Muslim militants. In a separate incident that took place on August 25th, a church in the small village of Kounla was surrounded by a group of insurgents. Entering the church building, the attackers ordered all the women and children to leave. They then tied up the remaining 26 men and executed them. The militants subsequently set fire to the homes of the believers before stealing their livestock and leaving. To review other reports on the difficulties facing Christians in Burkina Faso, go to www.vomcanada.com/burkina-faso.htm.

Please prayerfully uphold the tremendous number of families now grieving the loss of loved ones who were so senselessly killed in these recent attacks, asking God – who is "near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit" – to minister His comfort, love and peace. Also pray for the healing of the many survivors who were traumatized by the devastating violence (Psalm 34:18). May the country's governing forces soon regain control of the region and become adequately equipped to provide all the country's innocent civilians greatly needed protection, assuring them of their safety. Ultimately, may each member of these vulnerable communities find refuge under the wings of our compassionate Heavenly Father (Psalm 91:4).

SYRIA: Islamist Commander Confiscates Land of Christians

Sources: Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Independent Catholic News, The Christian Post

The Syrian city of Ras al-Ein, which happens to be located along the country's border with Türkiye, is currently under the control of a coalition of Islamist militias associated with the Turkish-backed rebel group, the Syrian National Army (SNA). In June 2024, a SNA commander

named Abdulaziz Al-Sawadi visited the St. Thomas Syriac Orthodox Church in Ras al-Ein and expressed his commitment to develop a positive relationship with the small number of Christians remaining in the area. During his visit, the commander also vowed to provide the believers protection.

Regrettably, the Christian community did not receive the protection promised to them. It was recently reported that 500 acres of farmland have since been confiscated from Christians residing in the area by a commander from one of the affiliated Islamist militia groups. Along with the confiscations, the militia groups are threatening to increase the farmers' taxes from 20 to 35 percent.

A local tribal chief has condemned the imposed actions. "We have tried to reach out to these militias and their Turkish masters, but they have constantly ignored us," the chief explained. "Our Christian brothers have contributed massively to the development and richness of our area. They ran the most successful education, agricultural and health projects, and we are concerned that the remaining Christians will be forced to leave, which would be a big loss for us all."

Speaking of the militia groups, a Muslim tribal leader stated: "They don't represent us; they only represent themselves and their backers. They are worse than Assad's officials, who were corrupt but didn't interfere with personal and religious freedoms." For additional information outlining the troubling situations facing Christians in Syria, go to www.vomcanada.com/syria.htm.

Prayerfully remember the beleaguered Christians in Syria who are encountering various challenges from multiple militia groups, asking the Lord to encourage, strengthen and meet the needs of these faithful followers of Jesus. May a stable governing force be established in the country; one that would take into account the concerns and rights of all Syrian citizens. Furthermore, pray that believers in Ras al-Ein – as well as those in other areas of this Middle Eastern nation – will serve as consistent witnesses to their neighbouring community members, leading many more to faith in Christ.

The "Persecution & Prayer Alert" is a ministry of:
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