



Voice ^{of the}
Martyrs

PERSECUTION
& PRAYER
ALERT

Persecution & Prayer Alert

Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

Thursday, February 26, 2026

*"We will not leave Christ.
We will live as Christians;
and when we die, we
will die as Christians."*

~ Suguda Soren, a teen who was
orphaned in January 2026

ETHIOPIA: Open-Air Evangelists Attacked

Source: Voice of the Martyrs USA

On February 9th, two Christian evangelists were attacked by Muslim militants while preaching within an open-air market in central Ethiopia. As a result of the incident, both men suffered severe head injuries and thereby had to be transported to a local hospital. Details surrounding their current conditions have not yet been released at the time of publishing this report.

Although Ethiopia is statistically a majority-Christian nation, followers of Jesus living in predominantly Muslim parts of the country often face hostility, threats and violence because of their faith. For more information on the difficulties confronting Christians in Ethiopia, visit www.vomcanada.com/ethiopia.htm.

- *Pray for God to minister strength, comfort and complete healing to these injured believers as they recover from the attack.*
- *Intercede for the country's evangelists, asking the Lord to grant them courage, protection and discernment as they share their faith in difficult and sometimes hostile environments.*
- *As a result, may the message of the Gospel continue spreading throughout Ethiopia, working mightily within the hearts of those who have yet to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour – including the persecutors.*

INDIA: Christians Slain by Opposing Family Members

Sources: Morning Star News, UCA News

In a tribal region of Odisha State, three members of a Christian family were recently killed by close relatives, leaving three children orphaned and now in hiding. The incident took place in the village of Nialijharan on January 25th, claiming the lives of Jitendra Soren and his wife Malati, along with their 15-year-old daughter Sasmita.

Jitendra and Malati are survived by their 21-year-old married daughter Pana, their 18-year-old son Suguda, and their 12-year-old daughter Rani. Although both Pana and Rani witnessed the horrific attack, the traumatized sisters were able to narrowly escape with their lives. Their brother Suguda was not home at the time of the incident.

Those accused of the killings are Jitendra's brothers, Baidyanath and Laxman, as well as Baidyanath's son Sudam. While authorities have cited a "long-standing land dispute" between the brothers as the official motive for the attack, the slain couple's surviving son stated that his family's recent conversion to Christianity – a decision considered "intolerable" within their village – was at the heart of the hostility.

Jitendra began following Christ eight months earlier, during a time of prolonged illness. After receiving prayer, the family began attending church regularly. Following Jitendra's healing from liver damage, he and his wife – as well as their children – eventually committed their lives to the Lord. Noticing Jitendra's healing, his brother Baidyanath confronted him about his Christian faith. According to Suguda, "My uncles objected to our faith and often argued with my parents." When Baidyanath's own daughter fell ill, he blamed Jitendra and his family, alleging that the newly converted Christians were "practising witchcraft."

On January 25th, when the condition of Baidyanath's daughter worsened, he – along with his son Sudam and brother Laxman – rushed to Jitendra's home, armed with bamboo staffs and an axe. Despite pleas for mercy, Jitendra was beaten to death. When his wife Malati and daughter Sasmita attempted to intervene, the assailants slit their throats.

That day, Pana had been visiting her parents with her two small children. Hearing the commotion, the young mother ran to help but was told by her uncles that because she was now married – and therefore no longer considered part of the Soren family – she should flee. Rani, overhearing this conversation, fled to a neighbouring village where she alerted local residents who then contacted the police.

Suguda and Rani have since taken refuge with a Christian family and refuse to return to the village due to fear. Relatives there have urged the surviving children to return, saying: "You have nobody now. Stop following Christ and we will take care of you and live together." The siblings have declined, with Suguda firmly responding: "We will not leave Christ. We will live as Christians; and when we die, we will die as Christians."

In an effort to promote peace, a prayer meeting was organized at the house of the deceased on February 16th. Under police protection, approximately 400 people gathered for the event.

According to Anil Kumar Nayak, a church leader who has been assisting the couple's surviving children, "By the grace of God, the program was blessed."

An application has been submitted requesting that the police investigation be transferred to an independent agency to ensure fairness. The application highlights the hostility of opposing villagers towards the Soren family because of their faith in Christ.

For Christians living in tribal areas of India, religious opposition can be compounded by cultural beliefs and close family connections. Witchcraft accusations are also commonly used against followers of Christ due to entrenched superstitions. To review additional reports concerning the persecution of believers in India, see www.vomcanada.com/india.htm.

- *Prayerfully remember the slain couple's three surviving children -- Pana, Suguda and Rani – asking God to provide them safety, comfort, emotional healing and restoration.*
- *May the Lord fill the hearts of these grieving young people with His peace as they navigate their way through this traumatic season in their lives -- sovereignly guiding them to a promising, hope-filled future (Romans 8:28).*
- *Pray that the authorities would conduct their investigation with impartiality and integrity, so that truth and justice will prevail.*

REPORT UPDATE

CHINA: Outcomes for Recently Arrested Believers

Sources: ChinaAid, Church in Chains

On January 6th, seven members of the Early Rain Covenant Church were arrested, marking another development in the ongoing campaign against this unregistered congregation. (Previously published details relating to the arrests are available at www.vomcanada.com/cn-2026-01-29.htm.)

In a recent update, it was confirmed that three of the detained believers have been released on bail pending trial. One of the Christians, Liang Zhongyuan, was released on February 5th but remains under surveillance at a relative's home in Chengdu. Zhang Xinjue, the wife of Elder Li Yingqiang, was released on February 6th, along with Brother Lin.

The remaining four detainees have been formally charged with "inciting subversion of state power." Ye Fenghua and Deacon Jia Xuwei have been placed under "Residential Surveillance at a Designated Location." Elder Li Yingqiang and Preacher Dai Zhichao are currently being held at the Deyang Detention Centre.

These arrests form part of a broader campaign against the church that began in December 2018, resulting in the detainment of over 100 congregation members to date. This included the high-profile arrest and conviction of the church's lead pastor, Wang Yi. To review more reports

addressing the multiple challenges encountered by this long-suffering congregation, see www.vomcanada.com/early-rain-covenant-church.htm.

- *Pray that God's intervention and guidance will take place in the lives of these persecuted believers – and many others across China – as they seek justice and vindication through the country's legal system.*
- *Continue to prayerfully uphold the members of Early Rain Covenant Church, asking the Lord to strengthen their witness as they faithfully share the Gospel message in the midst of ongoing pressures.*
- *Pray that believers who are presently detained in China's prisons or detention centres will seize the outreach opportunities presented to them by brightly shining the 'light of Christ' while awaiting their release from confinement.*

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