

**"Against the persecution of a tyrant
the Godly have no remedy but prayer."**

~ John Calvin

INDIA: Slain Convert Left on Road

Sources: Persecution Relief, AsiaNews, World Watch Monitor

A recent convert to Christ was found killed and beheaded in Odisha earlier this month. While the specific reasons for his death are not yet known, he had faced constant pressure and intimidation since becoming a Christian nine months earlier.

On February 11th, Anant Ram Gand was home with his six-year-old son Purno when three men came to the door, tied him up and dragged him away. The young boy began to follow but the attackers pushed him away, threatening to harm the child if he followed. In fear, Purno ran to his uncle's home.

According to reports, Anant Ram was first shot in the head, then pummelled with a stone before he was decapitated and left on the road. He is survived by his wife, Sukbati Gand, and five children.

Anant Ram was well known as a Christian. When he came to Christ, his family also readily embraced their new-found faith. But soon after, the community turned hostile toward them. Eventually, the family was forced from the village and moved a kilometre away.



An earlier photo of Anant Ram Gand's family.
Photo: UCA News

Before coming to Christ, the slain victim had been supportive of the Naxalites (Maoist guerrillas). Some reports have suggested that his killers may have been members of the group, fearful that he might share secrets with the police. Others, however, believe the guerrillas may have been contracted by militants in the village to kill him.

India has seen continued anti-Christian violence, particularly since the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party came to power. States with anti-conversion laws, such as Odisha, have been particularly affected. For more information on the difficulties facing Christians in India, go to our [country report](#).

Please uphold the family of Anant Ram in your prayers. May the Lord help them to cope with the grief and shock they are now experiencing. Intercede for the Christians residing throughout Odisha who are facing daily pressure because of their faith in Jesus. Pray that justice will take place in this recent case, and that Anant Ram's testimony will continue to reach many others in India for Christ – including those who knew him.

LAOS: Christian Leader's Home Targeted

Source: VOM USA



Khmu believers face ongoing opposition.
Photo: VOM USA

It has been a challenging year for a group of Khmu believers in northern Laos. Last April, village leaders demanded that they renounce their Christian faith or leave the village. Eventually, the authorities had a change of heart, allowed them to stay, and issued a proclamation protecting the Christians' right to practise their faith. Over Christmas, eight new families decided to become followers of Christ!

In the middle of the night on January 23rd, however, someone poured gasoline around the home of one of the church leaders and tried to burn it down. Fortunately, the fire had been noticed in time and was extinguished. Those responsible left a note warning Christians in the community that their lives are in danger unless they leave the village. The church leader who was targeted has considered heeding the warning. "If he leaves, many of the Christians will be discouraged," a VOM contact reports.

Pray that the Christians in this village will find the strength to stand firm in the midst of opposition. May the village leadership stand behind their proclamation and give needed support to these believers. Also pray that those responsible for the arson attempt will be led to repentance and faith in Christ by realizing they are opposing God – their Creator –

who longs to enjoy fellowship with them.

NIGERIA: Election Brings Calls for Protection

Source: Release International

With the re-election of President Muhammadu Buhari this past weekend, organizations are calling on him to provide needed protection for the nation's vulnerable Christian communities; protection which has often been perceived as lacking.

The Boko Haram terrorist group and the Fulani militants have killed tens of thousands and driven millions from their homes (see [this page](#) for reports). There has been a significant increase in attacks by Fulani herdsmen within the past year, particularly against farmers in largely Christian areas of northern Nigeria. The effect has been to drive the Christians out, leading to suspicions of a coordinated effort. Anglican Archbishop Jos Ben Kwashi states, "The government must rise to its responsibility to mete out justice and save lives."

Pray for God's leading and wisdom to be granted to President Buhari and his government as they tackle this ongoing concern. May they provide necessary protection for the country's Christian communities while dealing justly with the militants who are seeking to annihilate them. Pray that Nigeria's persecuted believers (including those who are still in captivity) will lean on their Rock and Fortress, Jesus Christ, who wants to deliver them from the evil ploys of the enemy (Psalm 18:2).



President Muhammadu Buhari
Photo: Wikipedia /
Bayo Omoboriowo

REPORT UPDATE

ETHIOPIA: Report on Church Attacks

Sources: Steadfast Global, VOMC



Photo: Steadfast Global

Earlier this month, we reported on a devastating attack on the churches of Alaba Kulito, a town located in southern Ethiopia (see [this report](#)). Following the attack, a support representative travelled to the community on February 21st to gain more details and determine what could be done to provide necessary assistance.

In the attack, ten churches from eight different denominations were damaged, affecting more than 6,000 Christians. According to witnesses, the perpetrators specifically targeted the churches, and not individual members. One church building was completely destroyed because of its remote location. The others were not set on fire, as this could have put neighbouring properties owned by Muslims at risk. For those nine churches, the contents were removed before being set on fire.

Local police were present during the attacks but did not intervene. It was only when state police finally arrived that order was restored. According to sources, a number of arrests have been made and a police guard has been assigned to every church in town.

Despite the tremendous destruction and loss, each of the congregations met for worship the following Sunday. Some members, however, stayed away out of fear. Emergency finances have been provided to assist the injured with medical costs, and to aid the affected congregations with their restoration efforts. Plans to rebuild the destroyed church and replace needed Bibles and other damaged items are ongoing.

Remember to pray for each member of these affected churches. May they receive the resources required to rebuild their places of worship and the courage to stand firm in their faith, despite this terrible loss. Ask that God's Spirit will not only move mightily in the lives of these believers but also within the hearts of other members in their communities so there will be a spirit of love and unity between them all.

The Persecution & Prayer Alert is a ministry of:
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For information on additional ways to support members of the persecuted church overseas, review this [listing of options](#).