



***"It is easy to die for Christ.
It is hard to live for Him.
Dying takes only an hour
or two but to live for Christ
means to die daily."***

~ Indian missionary, Sadhou Sundar Singh,
who served during the early 20th century.

NIGERIA: Ongoing Suffering of Nigerian Christians

Sources: Morning Star News, ECSPE, Christianity Today

Attacks on Christian communities in Nigeria have continued unabated over the years, resulting in even more recently reported cases involving casualties and horrific trauma. Not only were these recent attacks the cause of death for several innocent victims, they have also been the source of physical wounding and emotional trauma for many survivors whose suffering has been further compounded by the devastating loss of loved ones and the destruction of community homes.

In Barkin Ladi County of Plateau State, three Christians were shot dead on May 3rd after being ambushed by Islamic militants. The next day, three others were killed and four injured as attackers opened gunfire and proceeded to lacerate the villagers.



A church gathering in Nigeria.
Photo: VOMC

On May 6th, rebel members of the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) attacked a group of Christians who had been travelling between villages in the southern part of Kaduna state. As a result of this attack, three believers were killed and several others wounded. According to eyewitnesses, the perpetrators asked questions to identify the victims as Christians before executing them.

In yet another separate attack, which took place on May 7th in the village of Otapi-Alpa, Benue State, two Christian farmers were slain – one of them a village leader named Tony Adejoh. Both victims had been working in their fields when they were suddenly ambushed and killed. This latest occurring incident follows a similar attack that took place during the previous month within the same village. As a result of the April 13th attack, ten fatalities had taken place and homes in the community were destroyed. Agbo Kennedy, a member of Benue State's House of Assembly reported that the April attack, which included victims as young as five years old, was "appalling and gory."

Those who manage to escape the violence frequently experience added long-term suffering when they are forced to flee their homes. In cases where entire villages have been destroyed, thousands of survivors seek refuge in the country's Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. A recently released report from *Christianity Today* features the testimony of one such Christian by the name of Jennifer.

During 2014, Jennifer and her family were forced to flee their home in Gwoza after violent killing spree committed by Boko Haram terrorists left hundreds of neighbouring Nigerians dead. After fleeing almost 1,000 kilometres, Jennifer, her husband Abraham, and their four children had hoped to settle in the area of Abuja. However, in August 2015, Abraham was tragically killed by a group of unidentified men in the Durumi IDP camp.

Left to raise their children on her own, Jennifer still struggles to provide basic needs such as food and medicine. However, she is determined to leave the camp some day and build a home that her husband would be proud of. "I don't know when, but soon," she says with a glimmer of hope. "God help me...."

Jennifer's story is indicative of the numerous difficulties facing thousands of displaced Nigerians who are seeking to avoid the violence that's so prevalent in various parts of the country. To review further reports concerning the persecution of Christians in this volatile region, including information about the 2014 attacks in Gwoza, see our [country report](#).

- ***Please remember to prayerfully uphold the families of those who were slain in these more recent attacks, as well as the many others who've experienced physical injuries and emotional trauma.***
- ***Pray for the practical and spiritual needs of the thousands of displaced victims who have been forced to flee their homes, livelihoods and communities – including those who are presently trying to survive amidst the daily challenges of life within the IDP camps or other temporary shelters.***
- ***Pray for governing officials, church leaders and humanitarian workers as they continue to seek lasting solutions to the relentless hardships facing the people of this violence-torn nation.***

BELARUS: KGB Declares Religious Freedom Group "Extremist"

Sources: Forum18, Christian Vision for Belarus

Amidst the ongoing oppression of Christians in Belarus, an organization was established in 2020, bringing together leaders from multiple churches in an effort to monitor and publicize persecution in the country. The organization was registered in neighbouring Lithuania as "Christian Vision for Belarus."

On April 1st, the Belarusian KGB secret police ruled that Christian Vision for Belarus was "extremist," and therefore banned the organization's website and social media platforms. In the process, the KGB specifically identified three of the leaders – Natallia Vasilevich, Natallia Harkovich and Dzmitry Korneyenko – all of whom are Orthodox Christians presently residing outside of Belarus. In addition, the government's Interior Ministry department added the name of the organization to its "banned list" on April 8th.



An Orthodox Church in Belarus.
Photo: Pexels

The day after the official listing, police in the town of Orsha visited Viktor Korneyenko, the father of Dzmitry. Confused about what was happening, Viktor did not ask any questions when a DNA sample was demanded of him. On April 10th, the police then visited Dzmitry's mother-in-law in Vitebsk. Later on, Dzmitry's brother, who was contacted on April 23rd, also received an order to provide a DNA sample. When the brother asked the police why, he was told that the results would make it easier for them to hunt Dzmitry.

Christian Vision for Belarus is not the only organization that's been identified as "extremist." Other organizations include The Democratic Media Institute, which supports independent media in the region; and the independent Catholic news website, [katolik.life](#). For many years, The New Life Full Gospel Church in

Minsk experienced repeated harassment from governing officials before being officially closed and receiving the same "extremist" label. Previously published reports addressing the persecution in Belarus are available at our [country profile](#).

- *Pray for the protection of those who are seeking to promote justice and truth in Belarus, asking that their expressed concerns will not be overlooked by the authorities but rather given due consideration.*
- *In the meantime, may the Holy Spirit continue to guide those who are sharing the message of God's salvation through Christ, blessing and multiplying their efforts to minister to the spiritual needs of fellow citizens.*
- *May the Lord also work mightily in the lives of the country's political leaders by opening their spiritual eyes of understanding, as well as their hearts, to His truths.*

IRAN: Detained Pastor's Wife in Solitary Confinement

Sources: Article18, The Christian Post

In 2022, Pastor Joseph Shahbazian was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for his Christian ministry work in Iran. After an appeal, he was released a year later. For unknown reasons, however, he was suddenly rearrested on February 6th of this year, and now reportedly faces numerous charges. For more details, see [this report](#).

Since his rearrest, Iranian authorities have been questioning and threatening Pastor Joseph's friends. The harassment appears to be an effort to gather evidence against him. One friend was told by his interrogator, "If you don't help us, we'll have to resume our unfinished investigation against you."



Lida Alexani
Photo: Article18

On April 12th, governing officials also decided to arrest Pastor Joseph's wife Lida Alexani whom they've placed in solitary confinement. At last report, she was still being detained in Tehran's notorious Evin Prison. Regrettably, neither Joseph nor Lida received permission to attend the funeral that was held on April 14th for his mother who passed away five days prior to the service. The couple's arrests were particularly challenging before his mother's passing since Joseph was her primary caregiver. To learn more about the challenges facing Christians in Iran, visit our [country profile](#).

- *Please continue to remember Pastor Joseph in your prayers, along with his wife Lida, praying that God's comforting presence would be tangibly sensed during their imprisonment – especially as they grieve over the recent loss of his mother.*
- *Pray that both of these believers, along with the many others who are currently incarcerated in this Persian nation, will soon be released from prison and reunited with their concerned loved ones.*
- *In general, intercede for the overall populous of Iran, including the country's governing leaders, praying that each individual will receive a revelation of the Risen Christ's sacrificial love for them, respond to His gift of salvation, and experience His life-changing power.*