



## **Persecution & Prayer Alert**

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada  
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*" No one can violently attack something without taking it seriously in some way. No one attacks belief in Zeus any more. No one gets emotional over the Flat Earth Society. Yet Christianity calls forth the deepest emotions... especially in the ones who most reject it. "*

~ Gene Edward Veith Jr.

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### **INDIA: Increasing Persecution from Multiple Groups**

Sources: Morning Star News, Barnabas Fund

Christians in India have frequently faced opposition from neighbours as well as authorities. A growth in Hindu nationalism has exacerbated the problem. In recent months, however, attacks on Christians in northern India have spiked even higher, often instilling fear in congregations within the area.

According to Vijayesh Lal from the Evangelical Fellowship of India, incidents have risen to a never-before level in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state. In an incident that took place late October, a group of believers were meeting in Agra when a mob of 40 to 50 people forced their way in, carrying bamboo poles and hockey sticks. Many of the gathered Christians were beaten, and seven of them left in serious condition. When the police arrived, several of the assaulted victims were detained for "hurting religious sentiments," but none of the attackers have been arrested to date.

The violence has not been restricted to Uttar Pradesh; it has also spread to other areas of northern India. In a surprising twist, Hindu activists have apparently joined other religious groups. In the state of Jharkhand, tribal leaders influenced by members of the militant Hindu group RSS persuaded villagers to drive five Christian families from their homes. The home of one of these victims, Sidiu Bari, was left in shambles. Facing the threat of expulsion and seizure of their land, three of the families converted back to the tribal religion. Similar situations are happening around Jharkhand.

In Punjab, where over half the population is Sikh, Christians are facing opposition from both Hindus and Sikhs. A pastor in the village of Chaksharif was attacked on October 31st. The mob accused him of using the church as a means for sexually exploiting women. In another village, a church building was set on fire on November 7th. Both the pastor and his wife were converts from Sikhism and had been sharing the Gospel among the Sikhs since 2007. For more details on the persecution facing Christians throughout India, visit [www.vomcanada.com/india](http://www.vomcanada.com/india).

*Please remember to uphold the Christians of northern India in your prayers as they face opposition from all directions. Pray that those affected will stand firm in their faith. May the Christians of various church denominations band together in unity, supporting and encouraging one another (Hebrews 10:25). Also intercede for the civil authorities who need wisdom and diplomacy in order to handle cases of persecution in a fair and just manner, while ensuring proper help and protection are provided to those being abused.*

### **CAMEROON: Christians Trapped in the Midst of Conflict**

Source: Mission Network News

As the West African nation of Cameroon faces conflict on two fronts, Christians are finding themselves trapped in the middle.

In northern Cameroon, the government has been fighting to stop the insurgence of Boko Haram terrorists who are moving south from Nigeria. In the process, members of the notorious group were raiding and pillaging villages throughout the area, forcing many Christians to flee for their lives. Numerous reports have been heard of pastors being attacked and killed by the militant Islamic group. Issues with Boko Haram also affect other neighbouring countries, including Chad and Niger.

In the western area of the country, the government is facing a different situation, as English-speaking separatists battle the French-speaking government. Hundreds have been killed and approximately 436,000 displaced. While Christians are not being targeted in the battle with the separatists, many have found themselves in the midst of the battle. In late October, American missionary Charles Wesco was caught in the crossfire and fatally shot. Other Christian leaders have also died.

*Pray for the safety of Christians in both of these regions. Ask the Lord to bring peace between the warring factions, and within the hearts and minds of believers. May the governments throughout West Africa be successful in stopping the spread of Boko Haram terrorism. Additionally, remember the captives being held hostage by the militant group, including the Nigerian schoolgirls who were kidnapped in 2014, as many are still in need of rescue.*

## **ALGERIA: Churches Ordered to Close**

Source: Middle East Concern

Churches in Algeria continue to face court-ordered closures, as the Algerian authorities tighten restrictions on non-Islamic places of worship (also see [www.vomcanada.com/algeria](http://www.vomcanada.com/algeria)). Over the past year, most churches affiliated with the Algerian Protestant Church Association (APCA) have been visited by officials, reportedly to check for safety code violations. As part of their inspection, they also ask to see their licenses -- officially designating their buildings as non-Muslim places of worship. However, the government has yet to issue any such licenses under this regulation.

Several churches have been ordered to cease all operations. One such church in the village of Azaghur was inspected in December 2017 and, as part of the inspection, was cited for violations regarding foreign visitors among other things. On October 16th, authorities took action and sealed the building.

In another incident, a court ordered the closure of an APCA church in Ait Djemaa on November 14th. According to the courts, the building is zoned for residential or commercial use only, and not as a place of worship. The APCA intends to appeal the ruling.

*May God grant wisdom, encouragement and favour on behalf of these church leaders in Algeria as they face pressure from government authorities and the courts. Pray that the opposing members of government will realize that Christianity is not a threat to the country but rather a means of blessing the general populace through its compassionate community outreaches and humanitarian efforts. May the authorities allow these places of worship to continue in ministry.*

*If you would like to post a prayer of praise or petition on behalf of our persecuted family around the globe, visit VOMC's prayer wall at [www.vomcanada.com/prayerwall.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/prayerwall.htm).*

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If you would like to encourage someone to read or receive this weekly prayer alert, please use our online form at [www.vomcanada.com/pnpforward.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/pnpforward.htm) and help spread the message of the persecuted church around the world.

For information on additional ways to support members of the persecuted church overseas, review the list of options at [www.vomcanada.com/take-action.htm](http://www.vomcanada.com/take-action.htm).