



Somalia

“Stop your harmful ideologies and preaching to the Muslims. Some Somali Muslims are already affected by this cancer of Christianity... they will be under the sword of the mujahedeen [“holy warriors”]... we know where you are”. Christians in Somalia live constantly under threats such as this one, which was sent by the militant group al-Shabaab to a Somali Christian in December 2011.



Liibaan Ibraahim Hassan, a Somali Christian convert from Islam, was executed by Muslim extremists in 1994. In 2008 at least three converts to Christianity were murdered

Somalia has lacked an effective government since the fall of former dictator Siad Barre in 1991. The country is ruled by various insurgents, warlords and clan-based militias. Even the relatively moderate Transitional Federal Government, which controls only very limited areas, prescribes the death penalty for apostasy. As there are no non-Muslim places of worship, the tiny and unprotected minority of Christian converts from Islam must meet secretly or follow Jesus alone.

Christianity is often associated with the oppression of the country by European colonial rulers. Al-Shabaab said in the aftermath of an anti-Christian attack in 2010 that “we aim to get rid of the barbaric and non-Islamic culture in the country.” Although the group’s insurgency was successfully challenged in 2012, its continued strength means that the country’s small Christian minority remains in jeopardy. Al-Shabaab, which has claimed affiliation with al-Qaeda since 2007, has committed many anti-Christian atrocities. On 16 November 2012, Christian convert Farhan Haji Mose was beheaded by al-Shabaab militants in Barawa in front of a crowd. The extremists accused him of being a spy for foreigners and embracing the “foreign religion of Christianity”. Before his brutal execution, Farhan’s movements had been monitored for six months after he returned from Christian-majority Kenya.

The bodies of two more Christian men, who were beheaded after being kidnapped by al-Shabaab, were found in separate incidents in 2011. The chaotic nature of Somalia means that reports of murders that reach us may not reflect the actual number of such incidents.

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