



Mozambique, Ethiopia, Nigeria, DRC – Wave of anti-Christian violence continues across Africa

Scores of Christians were killed in brutal massacres in Mozambique and Ethiopia in November as targeted anti-Christian violence continued across western and central regions of Africa.

Islamic militants turned a village football pitch in northern Mozambique into an execution ground where they beheaded more than 50 people during three days of savage violence between Friday, 6 November and Sunday, 8 November.

Villagers who tried to flee were caught and taken to the sports ground in Muatide village where they were decapitated and chopped to pieces in a series of ferocious attacks in Muslim-majority Cabo Delgado province.

Gunmen shouting “Allahu Akbar” storm village in Mozambique

In one attack, gunmen shouting “Allahu Akbar” stormed into Nanjaba village on 6 November, firing weapons and setting homes alight. Two villagers were beheaded and several women were abducted.

Barnabas Fund’s contacts in the area report that anyone who refuses to support the jihadists and embrace their beliefs is attacked, and their property set on fire. Thus Christians who refuse to deny Christ are amongst the victims.

The attacks are amongst the worst seen, in recent years, in the brutal campaign by militant Islamists to establish an Islamic caliphate in the oil and gas-rich Cabo Delgado province. Desperate people are flooding in to the Christian mission stations for protection.

At least 54 ethnic Amharas murdered in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, at least 54 ethnic Amharas, mostly Christian women, children and elderly, were murdered after about 200 people were herded together at a school in the western Oromia region.

Around 60 armed terrorists, identifying themselves as the Oromo

Liberation Army (OLA), swept into Gawa Quanqa village, Guliso District at around 5 p.m. on 1 November.

Some survivors were able to flee to a nearby forest while the assailants rounded up women, children and elderly who were unable to run away, before shooting at the defenceless group.

One victim found the bullet-riddled bodies of his brother, sister-in-law and three children in the school compound.

Witnesses said that the attackers dragged some victims from their homes to the school and reported that a school building and 120 houses were burnt down.

The gunmen arrived, announcing that they “controlled the area” near the South Sudanese border, just hours after federal troops “withdrew unexpectedly”, according to witnesses.

In a Facebook post, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said, “This is heartbreaking”, and denounced the killings as “barbaric attacks based on identity”.

This is the latest deadly assault in a series of other recent massacres in Ethiopia, which have left several dozen dead, apparently targeting the Amhara, a mainly Christian ethnic group, and Christians of other ethnic groups.

Nigerian Christian community leader murdered alongside son

In Nigeria, armed men targeted the home of Haruna Kuye, the community leader of a predominantly Christian village in southern Kaduna State, on 17 November.

Suspected Fulani militants struck in Mazaki village, Zangon Kataf local government area, in the early hours, killing Mr Kuye and his teenage son, Destiny Kuye, both Christians. Mr Kuye’s wife and daughter were both injured.

The Kaduna State government also condemned the murders, with Governor Nasir El-Rufai, himself a Fulani Muslim, describing the attack as “evil and violation of the sanctity of life and destruction of property by enemies of peace who must be made to face the full weight of the law”.

In a similar attack on 5 October, Fulani militants killed the acting village head and

five others in Wereng, Plateau State.

The latest attack raised to at least 237 the death toll from Fulani militant attacks on Christians in Middle Belt communities since the beginning of July alone. An open letter from the Southern Kaduna People’s Union in July called on the International Criminal Court in The Hague to act against the “pernicious genocide”.

At least 20 killed, church desecrated in DRC

Islamist militants are believed to have been responsible for the killing of more than 20 people in North Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of Congo on 30 October.

At least 15 of the 21 dead were women, local witnesses said. Members of the jihadi militia, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), are suspected of carrying out the assault on Lisasa village in which a church was desecrated, a health centre looted and homes set on fire. A number of people were also abducted.

The attack happened days after jihadists killed at least 18 people in Baeti village in North Kivu province. A church and a number of homes were burnt during the raid, which Islamic State (IS) claimed was carried out by its members.

The ADF, which is understood to have close ties to IS, has been active in the mainly-Christian north-east of the DRC for more than two decades, with violence surging since October 2019 when the army launched a large-scale offensive against the group. In October 2020, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) warned that thousands of children were at risk in Ituri, neighbouring North Kivu, because of “unrelenting violence” during the conflict that has ravaged the region over decades.

Cameroon closes schools after wave of Boko Haram suicide bombings

Concerns for the safety of children prompted authorities in Cameroon to close more than 60 schools on its northern border with Nigeria, it was reported in October. The measure aims to protect pupils and teaching staff from continuing suicide bomb attacks by terrorist group Boko Haram.

The Islamist militants have been carrying out at least three attacks a week since January, according to the Cameroon military. Most are perpetrated by suicide bombers, mainly women and children. In August and September, 13 schools were torched, 200 people were held to ransom and an unknown number of civilians abducted, the military reported.

A local education official said 62 schools have been closed and 34,054 students internally displaced because of the violence.

Some troops deployed to protect civilians have also been teaching the displaced students.

Lift up survivors and the bereaved, that they will be comforted as they walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Pray that they will fear no evil, remembering that their Shepherd walks with them (Psalm 23:4). Ask that the LORD will be a strong tower of protection for His little ones in Africa and meet the needs of the displaced for food and shelter. Pray that the men of violence will become sickened by their murderous ways and be led to a personal encounter with the Prince of Peace, who alone can give them new hearts of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26).

Somaliland – Christian couple arrested as “apostates and evangelists” released and deported

Praise God for answered prayer for a married Christian couple, detained for being “apostates and evangelists spreading Christianity” in Muslim-majority Somaliland. They were suddenly released and deported to Somalia, allowing them to subsequently travel with their youngest child to a safe country and reunite with their two elder sons.

The couple, who were arrested by police on 21 September when Christian material was found at their home, made several appearances in the Somaliland regional court before being unexpectedly released and ordered to be deported on 1 November. The couple’s lawyer noted that the decision came after European government representatives raised the case with the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Islam is the official religion of

Somaliland, which declared independence from Somalia in 1991. Its constitution states that individuals have the right to freedom of belief. However, the constitution also prohibits Muslims from converting to another religion, bars the propagation of any religion other than Islam and stipulates all laws must comply with the general principles of sharia (Islamic law).

Praise the LORD for the release of His faithful servants (1 Samuel 2:9). Give thanks for the safe reunion of the family and for the intervention of European governments on their behalf. Ask that members of Somaliland’s small Christian community will remain strong and take heart as they continue to hope in the LORD (Psalm 31:24).

Laos – Christians detained for “violating traditional customs” in planning Christian funeral

Four Lao Christians remain in jail nearly five months after they were arrested for planning a Christian funeral, which was deemed by local authorities to violate traditional customs.

The four were arrested on 3 July after travelling to Phousath village, Khammouane province, for the funeral of the son of a local Christian family. “They were detained because they came here to perform ceremonies that don’t conform with Lao culture, which creates unrest and divides community solidarity,” said a local official.

He said non-Christian villagers wanted to perform a funeral ceremony “according to our culture handed down to us by our ancestors”, which, under local tradition, would include inviting Buddhist monks to pray at the family home.

“But [the Christians] wanted to do things that violate our traditional customs,” added the official. “They were preparing things that we felt were strange and wrong and do not understand, and so we acted in order to prevent them from happening.”

The detained Christians are the breadwinners of their families and their wives and children now face hardship.

The Law on the Evangelical Church,

approved and signed into law in December 2019, allows Lao Christians the right to conduct services and preach throughout the country and to maintain contacts with believers in other countries. However, locally they are subjected to harassment and violence, while the communist government imposes tight restrictions on religious activity.

Pray for the release of the four jailed Christians, that they will be led out singing by the LORD (Psalm 68:6). Ask that the strength of their faith will open the eyes of non-believers to the Light of the world, Jesus Christ (John 8:12). Pray that the needs of the prisoners’ families will be provided for in their absence. Pray that the rights granted to evangelical Christians in Laos by the December 2019 law will be implemented all across the country including rural areas.

Sri Lanka – Pastor forced to halt ministry after threats from police and Buddhist monks

A Sri Lankan pastor has been forced to stop his ministry in Bakamuna, Polonnaruwa District after being threatened and intimidated by police and Buddhist monks.

Police visited the pastor on the morning of 18 October and ordered him to report immediately to the local police station.

Obedying the instructions, the pastor went to the police station where he was taken to an office crowded with monks, who issued a series of threats against him. The monks also had the church attendance list in their possession.

The church has endured similar intimidation tactics over the previous five years.

Pray for an end to hostility and harassment towards this faithful pastor and his congregation and that the hearts of the Buddhist community will be softened toward their Christian neighbours. Ask that, although hard pressed from every side, the Christians will not be crushed or give in to despair, knowing they will never be abandoned (2 Corinthians 4:8-9).

The LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. – Deuteronomy 31:6

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