

Prayer Ministry

News

November 2007



Nigeria

Two Christians murdered in Kaduna, Nigeria, with swords and wooden clubs

Kill only the young

When Shief Gumi appeared on Nigerian television and specifically called for a jihad in late September, he asked that the elderly be spared, "because they have spent their years already". He was less gracious to younger

"Henry was a peace loving person; He was not a troublemaker"

believers stating that "Muslims should kill the young Christians." Justifying his call for jihad he stated that the British had taken northern Nigeria from the Islamic reformers (1754-1817) by force, and therefore Muslims, "should fight to take over Nigeria by going to war against Christians."

Attacked and left for dead

Soon afterwards, in an evening early in October, a young Sunday School teacher, Henry Emmanuel Ogbaje, aged 24, was attacked with wooden clubs at an area known as Gamji Gate. Believing that they

had killed him, his attackers left him for dead. Henry lay unconscious for three hours – nobody came to his aid.



Young Christians are under attack



Nigeria

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A good Samaritan

As Henry regained consciousness, a passer-by took pity on him and helped him home. Family members immediately took him to a military hospital where he received emergency treatment before being discharged pending a further examination in a few days.

But Henry's condition started to deteriorate the next day. He was re-admitted to hospital and died in the early evening. His sister called their father to give him the tragic news.

His father said the attack was deeply shocking because, "Henry was a peace-loving person; He was not a troublemaker". A brilliant soccer player, Henry Ogbaje had recently graduated high school and was planning to go to university at the time he was killed.

Another casualty

Elder Saidu Dogo, secretary of the northern Nigeria chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria told Compass Direct that another believer, known as Basil had also been attacked at the Gamji Gate, this time with a sword. Basil was left in a pool of blood, and died while being taken to hospital. His grieving family took his body to his hometown for burial.

Trying to provoke retaliation

Rev. Joshua Magaji, said the killings were

meant to provoke Christians into angry retaliations and trigger further religious riots in Kaduna state. "We thank God that Christians in the state have restrained themselves from avenging the killing of these two, and we would like to appeal that they continue in this spirit," Magaji said. Rev. Magaji also called for the murderers to be brought to justice. Government efforts at curtailing conflicts through the establishment of inter-religious councils between Muslims and Christians have yielded little or no results, he stated. Attacks against Christians have continued unabated.

Source: Compass Direct

Please Pray:

- » For peace in the area as Christians become the target for attacks by Muslim extremists.
- » That Christians would restrain themselves from retaliation despite being provoked by their Muslim neighbours.
- » That the Christian faith flourishes despite efforts by some to wipe it out from northern Nigeria.



Nigeria

Ten Christians killed and nine churches destroyed as Muslims rampage through Kano.

The day started normally for 18-year-old college student Iliya Adamu – but as he began to prepare for his first class of the day at the Tudun Wada Dankadai high school, a group of Muslim students stormed into his dormitory and began to savagely beat him. Iliya cried out, wanting to know what he had done to deserve such savagery. One of his attackers stopped raining blows to inform him that a Christian student had drawn a cartoon of Muhammad on the wall of the college mosque. Denying any participation in the act did not save him.

“Even Christian police officers were not spared... officers had their houses looted and set on fire”

Fearing for his life, Iliya tore free from his attackers and fled to the principal's office, hoping to find refuge. As he ran he saw another Christian classmate, Sule La'azaru suffering the same treatment. The college was in chaos, and Iliya feared for the other believers. Out of a high school population of 1,500, only 14 are Christians, they are heavily outnumbered.

A lie created as a reason to attack

None of the Christians knew who had drawn the cartoon of Muhammad – or even if it had ever existed. Everyone suspected that this was just an excuse to attack the small Christian minority group.

Trapped in the principal's office

As the situation rapidly deteriorated, teachers locked the small group of believers in the principal's office, and appealed for a calm resolution – to no avail. Muslim



Student Ayuba Wada after the attack



Nigeria

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students began to hurl rocks and stones at the Christian students through the window. Many sustained cuts and bruises before a shaky peace was restored. It didn't last for long.

A town in flames

Shouting "Allah Akbar" (God is Great) students poured into the streets of Tudun Wada where they were joined by other Muslims. Churches were burnt and Christian property vandalised. Anarchy and unrestrained violence continued for the next four hours. At the end of the rampage, ten believers were dead, countless had been injured and hundreds had been made homeless. Even Christian police officers were not spared; 30 officers had their houses looted and set on fire.

Pastor Rabiun Danbawa watched as churches were set on fire 'one by one'. He saw the smoke rising over his house as he approached. His wife and children were gone and his church was in flames. Another church leader's hand was cut with a machete before he was doused in petrol. He managed to escape before being set on fire. Many believers had run to the local police station hoping to find sanctuary, but officers turned them away saying that they could not guarantee protection.

Desperately, believers ran for the bush, the only logical place to escape from the carnage – only to be attacked by Muslims

who had already anticipated their actions. Women and children were attacked and beaten as they tried to find shelter amongst the trees and foliage. Not a single church or house belonging to a Christian has remained standing in Tudun Wada Dankadai; they have all been burnt.

A carefully planned attack

Christian survivors told Compass Direct that their survival was a miracle. The attacks mirror similar atrocities from religious genocide in 2004 when a Danish cartoonist published a caricature of Muhammad.

Source: Compass Direct

Please pray:

- » For believers to be rehabilitated. They need help from state authorities, but the Nigerian government has done nothing in the past to assist the injured and the misplaced
- » For believers who have been violated and traumatised. Many live in constant fear of their lives
- » For the safety of Muslim-background believers who are forced to meet covertly in order to pray and worship together.



Sudan

Five Christians die as suicide bomber targets church service.

The region of Malakal had remained relatively peaceful since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in January 2005, ending Sudan's brutal civil war.

Rev. Joseph Gordon was on a long-overdue visit to the city of Khorfulus. As acting secretary general of the Presbyterian Church in Sudan, his presence was needed over a very large area. As he prayed late into the autumn evening with local believers he heard a loud explosion. Rushing from the church to see if he could offer assistance, he found devastation.

Rushing from the church to offer assistance he found devastation

A man in military fatigues had shattered the fragile peace of the province. Eyewitnesses told Rev. Gordon that the man had walked up to a group of young Christians who were singing worship songs outside the Sudan Interior Mission church. Detonating a small explosive device, the stranger ended his life together with the lives of four young Christians. A fifth young man died in Malakal General Hospital a short time later. Twenty other young believers were

wounded, including four who were critically injured.

No identification

Military officials have stated that they are unable to identify the bomber, despite his army uniform, adding that he was not from a local battalion. However, one Christian support organisation reported that the dead bomber was an Arab soldier from



Young Sudan Christian



Sudan

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Northern Sudan who had recently joined the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army. Since the attack came to the attention of the national media, Rev. Gordon has noticed that the government has now posted plain clothed police officers around Khorfulus churches and banned public drinking of alcohol in the city. Government officials have called the incident accidental, but Rev. Gordon and church leaders feel that the unprovoked attack is a direct attack on believers.

Open Doors ministers to Christian communities and churches in Sudan. Believers are supported through training such as the *Standing Strong Through the Storm* seminars and Muslim background believers are able to take refuge in Open

Doors-sponsored safe houses to escape the unwanted attentions of extremists and opposing families.

Source: Compass Direct

Please pray:

- » For the grieving families of the young believers who have been killed
- » For Muslim-background believers in Sudan who need discipling and encouraging
- » For the safe distribution of Open Doors training materials and Bibles in Muslim countries.



Young Sudanese Christians know that they live in dangerous times



Gaza

Manager of Bible Society bookshop murdered in Gaza

Rami Ayyad closed the Bible Society bookshop on Saturday 6 October at 4.30pm, the usual time. He enjoyed working on the front desk; the bookshop was a Christian presence and he sought to serve visitors as Jesus would. The shop had been targetted only months earlier – in April it had been firebombed; its steel and glass doors destroyed and most of the first floor.

Life was never easy in war-torn Gaza. Tensions between political factions meant that threats and attacks on Christians and Christian institutions resulted in very little security for Gaza's small Christian minority. Just 3,000 believers lived in close proximity in a population of 1.5 million. So many wanted to leave Gaza for the safety of other lands but were unable to do so. Rami and his family lived with the political tensions as best they could.

Rami was looking forward to going home to his family. Now as he closed the bookshop and started for home, he noticed a car without license plates following him.

Back home, his pregnant wife, Pauline and their two small children waited. Rami was late. Then came the telephone call. 'People' had taken him and he'd be with them for another two hours. He added that if he was not back [by then], he would not be



Rami Ayyad

returning for a long, long time. His family waited, imagining the worst.

A tender-hearted guy

The following morning, Pauline's worst fears were confirmed. Rami's body had been found near the bookshop. He was tortured and had been shot in the head. He had also sustained multiple stab wounds.

The identity of Rami's murderers is unknown. He regularly received death threats from people angry about the bookshop's work.

The small Christian community remains in shock. "Everybody liked Rami" a Christian



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Gaza

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worker told Compass Direct. "He was the most tender-hearted guy, ever-smiling." Pauline fainted during the funeral and is suffering greatly.

You can write to Pauline to let her know that you are standing with her at this time. Please do not mention Open Doors or say anything negative about Islam or the situation in Gaza. Send your letters and cards c/o Open Doors at the address below.

Sources: Compass Direct / Open Doors



The Bible Society in Gaza is no stranger to attack

Please pray:

- » For Pauline, and Rami's family, as they mourn his loss
- » For the work of the Bible Society bookshop and the staff there. The management need God's wisdom for the bookshop's future
- » For the small Christian community living in Gaza as they try to maintain an effective Christian presence in the city.

For latest updates please visit the Open Doors web site:

www.opendoorsuk.org/pray or email Jennifer: prayer@opendoorsuk.org