

Timeline

A Timeline of Christian Persecution 2008/2009:

Andulo, Angola

On 20 July Muslim extremists attacked the Christian community in the town of Andulo, Angola. The Muslim mob burned three church buildings and assaulted 4 Christians. Leti Raimundo, the school-age daughter of a deacon at one of the churches, was **beheaded**. Another Christian required 20 stitches in her head.



This Angolan Christian needed 20 stitches after a Muslim mob attacked her village

Mosul, Iraq

Thousands of Christians fled the city of Mosul in terror in October as Sunni Muslim extremists launched a fresh wave of threats and violence to purge the city of Christians. "We left everything behind us. We took only our souls," said Ni'ma Noail (50), a civil servant who had to abandon his home. At least 14 Christians, including a 15-year-old boy, were murdered; many of them killed execution-style by gunmen.

Approximately 12,000 Christians were forced out, after leaflets were distributed threatening Christians with death unless they converted to Islam.

Jos, Nigeria

Hundreds of Christians were killed and an estimated 7,000–10,000 fled their homes after rioting, started by Muslims on 28 November, engulfed the city of Jos, Nigeria. In well co-ordinated attacks, **Christian homes were burnt** and churches vandalised, and clergy were attacked and killed. The violence started after the results of a local election seemed to favour the Christian Berom people over the Muslim Hausa people. Jos lies in Nigeria's troubled "Middle Belt", where Christians and Muslims are in roughly equal numbers and there is a history of large-scale sectarian rioting. These riots often appear to be pre-planned attacks, with young people being paid to participate in the violence and promised heavenly rewards for killing Christians.

Aug 08

Sept 08

Oct 08

Orissa, India

At least 50 Christians were murdered, some burnt alive and others cut to pieces in a rampage of anti-Christian violence in Orissa, India, beginning in August. 300 villages were cleansed of Christians, with homes, churches, relief camps and **even orphanages razed to the ground by Hindu extremists**. With over 50,000 displaced, Christians wanting to return to their homes have been told, "Come back as Hindu or don't come back at all." Some who dared to return to their villages were forcibly converted to Hinduism. Sometimes the Hindu extremists poured petrol over the Christians and then told them to convert; if they refused they were set alight. Thankfully, 2009 saw a new government, but the threat of Hindu extremism remains.



Barnabas Fund aid being distributed in, Kandhamal, Orissa, India

Saudi Arabia

Fatima al-Mutairi, a young Saudi woman, learned about Jesus on the internet and decided to follow Him. When in August her family noticed the cross on her computer screensaver and discovered that she had converted from Islam to Christianity, they **cut out her tongue and burned her to death**. In the last blog that Fatima wrote before her death, she found comfort and strength in the opening verse of Psalm 27, "The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear?" Another Saudi blogger, Hamoud Bin Saleh, has been repeatedly harassed and detained by the Saudi police for writing about his conversion from Islam to Christianity on his website.

a selection of examples from July 2008 to January 2009



Home destroyed by rioting Muslims, Jos, Nigeria

Sangla Hill, Pakistan

Despite eyewitness accounts and medical evidence indicating guilt, police have declared three Pakistani men innocent of raping a 13-year-old Christian girl in the Sangla Hill area of Pakistan. In February, **Ambreen was abducted and gang-raped** at gun-point and was found by her family in a critical condition several hours later. When she was kidnapped, she was told by her captors, "We will kill your parents if you tell them this." Christians in Pakistan are often extremely poor and are employed by the local Muslims. The teenage girl comes from a poor background, while the Muslim men accused of her rape are part of a wealthy family of local landowners. In such circumstances it is exceptionally hard for Christians to get a fair investigation or trial.

Nov 08

Dec 08

Jan 09

Somalia

A 22-year-old Somali Christian convert from Islam, Ahmadey Osman Nur, was **murdered while attending a Muslim wedding** on 14 September. Since the wedding service was held in Arabic, Nur asked for it to be translated into the Somali vernacular. The sheik who performed the ceremony took offence at Nur's request. Knowing of Nur's conversion to Christianity, he declared him to be guilty of apostasy and as Nur left, he was shot dead by an armed guard.

Egypt

Martha Samuel, an Egyptian convert from Islam to Christianity, was detained, stripped and beaten at Cairo airport on 17 December as she tried to emigrate with her family. Her two children witnessed her assault and were deprived of food to pressure their mother to return to Islam. The judge, who tried her case, imprisoning her for a month, told her that if he had a knife **he would kill her for leaving Islam.**



Martha Samuel

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London, UK

The Rev. Noble Samuel, a Christian minister at a United Reformed Church in London, UK, was attacked by three men in March on his way to the TV studio where he films a Gospel programme. Mr Samuel was born in Pakistan and moved to Britain 15 years ago. He does not set out to be confrontational, but shortly before the attack his views had been aggressively challenged by Muslim callers in a broadcast phone-in. The incident, which has been described as a **“faith-hate” crime** by police, happened when a car pulled in front of Mr Samuel

and a man came over to ask for directions. The attacker opened the car door and started punching Mr Samuel and trying to hit his head on the steering wheel; he then grabbed Mr Samuel’s cross and pulled it off, throwing it to the floor. Two other men stole his laptop and Bible. The assailants warned Mr Samuel, “If you go back to the studio, we’ll break your legs.” Following the attack, Mr Samuel went ahead with his show at studios that are owned by local Muslim businessman Tahir Ali, who went on air later that day to condemn the attacks.



The Rev. Noble Samuel, who was brutally beaten for his Christian faith

Feb 09

Mar 09

Apr 09

North Western Province, Sri Lanka

In March a pastor and a church worker sustained serious injuries when they were **attacked by a man armed with a machete** in North Western Province, Sri Lanka. Many church members have been too frightened to meet together for worship as a result. On Wednesday 8 April, a group of Buddhist militants gathered outside the home of Pastor Kumara in Weeraketiya, Hambanthota district, threatening to kill him if he did not leave the village by the morning. These incidents are the latest in a series of attacks against churches and Christians, who have been subjected to violence, murder of clergy, harassment and intimidation, often initiated by locals who condemn the growth of Christianity in the country.

Machharkay, Punjab, Pakistan

On 9 May, Ishtiaq Masih had disembarked from a bus that had stopped in Machharkay village to give the passengers an opportunity for rest and refreshment. A sign hung on the roadside tea stall, which read, “All non-Muslims should introduce their faith prior to ordering tea. This stall serves Muslims only.” When Ishtiaq went to pay for his tea the owner noticed his necklace with a cross on it. The owner called on his employees to punish the Christian for not abiding by the sign. **A group of men then beat Ishtiaq to death** with whatever they could lay their hands on, including stones from the ground on which he lay.



Braving persecution, Christians in Pakistan distribute Gospels and other Christian literature.

Xinjiang, China

Authorities in the Muslim-majority Xinjiang region of China have been detaining a local Christian church leader for over a year. His family have not been allowed to see him since his arrest and only limited, restricted access has been given to his lawyer. Alimujiang Yimiti is an ex-Muslim who has been a believer in Jesus Christ for 14 years. According to his wife, “Faith in Jesus has made great changes in Alimujiang’s life and has made him really a good citizen who loves his country and his people.” **His family have received no news about him** and no communication from him since soon after his arrest.

a selection of examples from February to July 2009

Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan

Owning a Bible became illegal and a reason to be raided by the state police in Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan this May. The already tight restrictions have come close to suffocating the local church when the senior religious official for the region announced they were banning the Bible, the film "The Passion of the Christ" and other religious literature, including a hymn book, a Bible encyclopaedia, a Bible dictionary and a children's Bible, for "import, distribution or use in teaching". For example, a Bible

was confiscated when police ransacked the home of Polat Smetullaev without a warrant. Government officials insisted the raid had been justified as Smetullaev's mother is known to host a Bible study for Christian women twice a week. Officials warned that if she carried on her Christian teaching without the approval of a registered, centralised religious organisation, she could face administrative punishment or even criminal prosecution.



A view of Uzbekistan from space, Karakalpakstan is in the top left corner

May 09

Jun 09

Jul 09

Burma (Myanmar)

Since 2 June some 4,000 of the mainly Christian Karen tribe again had to flee to the mountains owing to renewed attacks by the Burmese military. If captured they can be forced to endure heavy labour and even undertake mine clearing duties. The army often sets fire to the villages or plants landmines to kill anyone who returns. As a result many stay in the jungle out of fear, and **succumb to starvation**, disease or snake bite. As a result of this conflict there are 140,000 refugees in camps over the nearby Thai border.



A displaced Burmese family

Yemen

On 12 June a group of nine expatriate Christians living in Yemen, comprising a German doctor, his wife and their three young children, a British man, two German nurses and a South Korean teacher was kidnapped by armed men. Three days later the bodies of the two nurses and the teacher were found in a riverbed, with gunshot and stab wounds. Following the discovery, Yemeni troops began searching for the other six hostages, but their fate remains unclear at the time of writing.

They all worked for a Christian organisation, and there is concern that they were targeted as **an act of revenge for their alleged attempts to convert local Muslims** to Christianity.



The uplands of Yemen

Laos

Dozens of Christian in Katin village, Saravan province were threatened on 16 July with losing their livestock and their homes unless they **abandoned their faith** in favour of the 'local spirits' of Lao tradition. This incident follows the killing of nine pigs by the authorities on 5 July, each belonging to a Christian family and worth six weeks' salary for the average labourer in the area. The village leader said, "If any villager is found following the Christian faith without renouncing that religion, he or she will no longer be under the official provision and protection of the village."