

Christian Ministry Refutes Online Connection to Militia Group

✖ An Oklahoma-based ministry that advocates for persecuted Christians worldwide refutes an online connection with a militia group accused of plotting an attack against law enforcement officers.

The Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) said its staff did not know the Hutaree militia group existed or that there was a link to VOM on its Web site before several Hutaree members were arrested Sunday in a three-state raid.

"We have not had any connection with this organization," VOM spokesman Todd Nettleton told Mission Network News. "We do not have any contact with any member of this organization. This is simply a situation where they put a link to us on their Web site."

Federal investigators claim the Michigan-based Hutaree—which says its name means "warriors of God"—planned to kill a Michigan law enforcement officer then ambush the officer's colleagues at the funeral, ABC News reported. The Hutaree Web site says the group was "preparing for the end time battles to keep the testimony of Jesus Christ alive."

Nine of its members have been indicted in the alleged murder plot. Eight were arrested Sunday, including leader David Stone. The last, 21-year-old Joshua Stone, surrendered Monday after a standoff

with authorities.

VOM said it allows any individual or group to link to its Web site in order to broaden awareness about the persecution of Christians. But the group said e.

“While we understand that all are innocent until proven guilty and wait for results of the legal process,

we want to clearly state that

violence is not an acceptable response to religious differences,” VOM said in a statement. “Our Christian brothers and sisters who have suffered persecution in Jos, [Nigeria], and other places do not advocate a violent response; they are not calling us to take up arms or to provide them with weapons. Instead they offer love and forgiveness to those who attack them, in the hopes of representing Christ’s love and living out the gospel message.”

Some are using the arrests to suggest that many Christians are terrorists or extreme, which Nettleton sees as an opportunity for believers.

“This is definitely an opportunity for the true followers of Christ to step forward and say we do not believe in violence, we do not believe in attacking those who oppose us,” he told *Charisma*. “So it’s an opporutnity for us to step up as Christians and live out the example of Christ, which is also the example of our

persecuted brothers and sisters around the world.”

VOM was founded in 1967 by Richard Wurmbrand, who spent 14 years in communist prisons in Romania for preaching the gospel. The ministry said it seeks to serve the persecuted church through practical and spiritual assistance, while encouraging Christians in free nations to support them through prayer and advocacy.