

7-Year-Old Boy in India Tortured, Murdered for Christian Faith

The body of a 7-year-old boy in India retrieved from a pond last week revealed horrific details of torture before he was brutally murdered because of his Christian beliefs.

The son of a believer, Anmol went missing after attending Sunday school at a Believers Church on Nov. 17 in northern India. His body was found the following day. Previous threats and persecution of his family indicate he was targeted because of his family's faith.

"The unprecedented torture and death of this innocent child sadden our hearts incredibly," says K.P. Yohannan, **Gospel for Asia** founder and international director. "Persecution of Christians is a weekly occurrence, but this intensity of brutality against a child is unthinkable. In this horrible tragedy, we find strength and hope in Jesus."

According to Yohannan, **persecution of Christians** has increased by more than 400 percent in the past few years.

Anmol's parents last saw him when he left their home for Sunday school. When he did not return, they filed a missing persons report with local authorities. By Monday evening, they identified their child's body at the hospital.

Anmol's face was burned, his hands were slashed and destroyed by fire, and his mouth was tied shut. Hot fragments of coal or firewood had been placed on his stomach, burning his abdomen, and his toes were broken.

Autopsy reports came back indicating Anmol's final cause of death was drowning.

At least 200 people attended the final viewing and funeral.

“The wail of the people and the parents was heartbreaking,” says one official. “It was truly a painful and intolerable incident. The kidnappers had tortured the child in such an inhuman way. It was very clear that he was brutally killed.”

Details identifying the murderer have not been released, pending further investigations. Anmol’s family had been the target of persecution since 2003, when his father, Harish, made a decision to live for Jesus after witnessing the miraculous healing of his brother. At least 45 people began following Jesus at the same time, resulting in ongoing persecution in the community.

Gospel for Asia is calling for **prayer** for the consolation of Anmol’s parents, brother and sister, grieving extended family members, that the persecutors would come to know the love of Christ, and the protection of all believers.