

BREAKING: ORU Grad Killed by Remote Tribesmen

A young American adventurer and evangelist visiting one of the islands in India's remote cluster of Andaman and Nicobar has been killed by a tribe of hunter-gatherers who live there isolated from the outside world, police said on Wednesday.

The North Sentinel Island, which is out of bounds for visitors, is home to the Sentinelese community, believed to be the last pre-Neolithic tribe in the world.

The American, identified as 26-year-old John Allen Chau, was killed after being illegally ferried to the island by fishermen, Dependra Pathak, the director general of police in Andaman and Nicobar, told Reuters.

Chau graduated from Oral Roberts University.

"Oral Roberts University alumni have gone to the uttermost bounds of the earth for the last 50 years bringing hope and healing to millions. We are not surprised that John would try to reach out to these isolated people in order to share God's love. We are deeply saddened to hear of his death," said ORU President William Wilson.

"A murder case has been registered against unknown persons," said Pathak, adding that the fishermen had been arrested.

Chau's social media posts identify him as an adventurer and explorer. Responding to a travel blog query about what was on the top of his adventure list, Chau said: "Going back to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in India."

Chau also said in the blog: "I definitely get my inspiration for life from Jesus."

Based on his social media posts, Chau appears to have visited

India multiple times in the last few years, exploring many parts of southern India and preaching in some places too.

The police said in a statement late on Tuesday they had launched an investigation after being contacted by the U.S. consulate in the southern city of Chennai.

"We are aware of reports concerning a U.S. citizen in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands," a consulate spokeswoman said in an email, but declined to provide further details.

North Sentinel Island is about 50 km (31 miles) west of Port Blair, the capital of the island cluster.

In 2006, two fishermen, whose boat strayed onto the 60-sq-km island, were killed and their bodies never recovered. An Indian Coast Guard helicopter sent to retrieve the bodies was repelled by a volley of arrows from the community.

"WHY ARE THEY SO ANGRY?"

Pathak said a Coast Guard vessel with police and experts on the tribe had gone to scout the island and formulate a plan to recover Chau's body.

Chau made two or three trips to the island by canoe from Nov. 15, making contact with the tribe but returning to his boat. He told the fishermen on Nov. 16 he would not come back from the island and instructed them to return home and pass on some handwritten notes he had made to a friend, Pathak said.

The next morning they saw his body being dragged across a beach and buried in the sand, the police chief said, adding: "This was a misplaced adventure in a highly protected area."

A source with access to Chau's notes said Chau had taken scissors, safety pins and a football as gifts to the tribe.

In his notes, the source said, Chau wrote that some members of the tribe were good to him while others were very aggressive.

“I have been so nice to them, why are they so angry and so aggressive?” the source quoted Chau as saying.

Reuters was unable to immediately trace contact details for Chau’s family or a representative.

The source, who asked not to be named, said Chau wrote that he was “doing this to establish the kingdom of Jesus on the not blame the natives if I am killed.” {eo}

© 2018 Thomson Reuters. All rights reserved.