

Despite Rampant Reports, Priest 'Crucified by ISIS' May Still Be Alive

Despite rampant reports of a brutal crucifixion, Indian priest Rev. Tom Uzhunnalil may still be alive.

"Over the past few days there have been several Whatsapp messages, blogs and media outlets that have been reporting that Fr. Tom Uzhunnalil was crucified by ISIS on Good Friday," according to an Archdiocese of Bombay Facebook post.

"There has been no confirmation of this by friends, family or Fr. Uzhunnalil's community. The reports being circulated are based on an alleged statement by Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna, during the Easter Vigil services. Rumours of a possible impending crucifixion had also been spread last week on the basis of an unconfirmed e-mail and were dismissed by Fr. Uzhunnalil's Salesian community as hearsay.

"Bishop Paul Hinder of Southern Arabia, the country just north of Yemen where Fr. Uzhunnalil was kidnapped, told Catholic News Agency (CNA) on Monday that he has 'strong indications that Fr. Tom is still alive in the hands of the kidnappers,' We request people to please stop forwarding unconfirmed reports, as this might jeopardise Fr. Tom's safety. Please continue to keep him in your prayers," the post concludes.

Reports circulated over Easter weekend that the Islamic State carried out their execution threats.

The *Washington Times*, among others, initially reported Cardinal Christoph Schonborn of Vienna said at his Easter Vigil Mass that the Islamist group had followed through on

those threats.

However, they are now reporting the Cardinal walked back on his confirmation.

The Archdiocese of Vienna released the following statement:

There is still uncertainty in the matter of the abducted and allegedly crucified Catholic priest Tom Uzhunnalil in Yemen. So the bishop responsible for the region, Paul Hinder to the German Catholic news agency (KNA) was cautiously optimistic on Sunday, March 27, 2016: He had until the hour has reason to believe that the religious live and in the hands the kidnappers located. Reports of an alleged execution by Islamists he could not confirm that efforts to secure the release of the priest and religious who continued.

There Is Still Hope

Hopeful also had opposite "Kathpress" Cardinal Christoph Schönborn shown: "There is still hope," says Schönborn on Sunday after speaking with bishops from the Arab Information about the alleged crucifixion of the priest came from the environment of the mother-Teresa sisters in the Yemeni capital Aden. The standing with the sisters in close contact Prayer Community "Corpus Christi Dubai" has reported the crucifixion of the priest on their Arabic website. The prayer community in turn relied on information of the Catholic Archbishop of the Indian city of Bangalore, Bernard Moras.

Please intercede on behalf of Uzhunnalil.