

More Than 100 Muslims Attack Christians in Bangladesh

A group of radical Islamists have targeted and attacked Christians in Bangladesh. Two incidents in recent weeks have left priests and seminary students among those severely beaten. In both incidents, the attackers have operated with impunity.

On June 5, Muslim extremists went to the Tumilia mission, a Catholic compound, and physically harmed Fr. Abel when he came out of his room. Some say the extremists went simply with the intention of robbing the property; however, International Christian Concern (ICC) sources confirm that this is “targeted persecution on the Christians by the same group of Islamists.”

On June 6, another attack by the same group of radical Islamists occurred after a Muslim man died from a heart attack during a conflict between Christians and Muslims regarding trespassing. The Christians report that the Muslims continued to trespass on their land to steal mangos and that their requests to cease and desist were ignored.

Blaming the Christians for the man’s death, the Muslims staged an attack on the entire village. Two of the Christians fled and sought shelter at the Catholic Church’s mission compound in Dinajpur, in Northern Bangladesh. However, a mob of Muslims numbering over 100 stormed in, armed with local weapons.

“They broke the main gate, destroyed the barb wire fence and entered the compound. They beat up Fr. Uzzal, seminarians and destroyed some parts of the buildings ... vandalized and looted everything,” says an ICC source.

“The police arrested some of the Christians and took them to the police station but did not take any action against the Muslims who were trespassing on the Catholic compound,” the

ICC source continues. "The Muslims wait for any excuse to attack the religious minorities."

Not one perpetrator has been arrested in either of these cases.

"The priests are afraid to do anything against the perpetrators," says an ICC source. "Most of the time the Muslim extremists are protected by the [Muslim] ruling party. This is Bangladesh, where we [Christians] live without any security and protection from the government or law enforcing agencies."

Corey Bailey, ICC's regional manager for Bangladesh, says, "According to their Constitution, there is religious freedom in Bangladesh, but that exists only on paper. Muslims attack religious minorities with impunity. This is outrageous and must end. I urge those interested in religious freedom to contact the embassy of Bangladesh and demand better protection for religious minorities, as well as justice in these cases."

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