

Intercessors Rally to Petition God for Crises in Kenya, Pakistan

Open Doors USA is calling for prayers for the victims and families of a massacre at a church in Peshawar, Pakistan, on Sunday and for the ongoing attack and hostage situation at a mall in Nairobi, Kenya.

According to Reuters, a pair of suicide bombers blew themselves up outside a 130-year-old Anglican church after Mass, killing at least 78 people in the deadliest attack on Christians in the predominantly Muslim country of Pakistan. Reuters' report said explosions struck the historic All Saints Church as hundreds of parishioners, many of them women and children, streamed out of the building. An estimated 100 people were wounded. The Taliban-linked militant group, TTP Jundullah, claimed responsibility within hours of the attack, according to the news service.

In Kenya, the Somali-based, al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab militant group has claimed responsibility for the attack at the Westgate shopping center in Nairobi that left at least 62 dead and more than 175 injured. An unknown number of people remain hostage. The death toll is expected to rise as more bodies are found. Police say they are concerned many are trapped inside the center.

David Curry, Open Doors USA president and CEO, states, "Tragically, these two attacks are examples of how dangerous it is to be a Christian or associated with the West in Pakistan, Kenya and many other countries around the world. There is no doubt these attacks are increasing in intensity and frequency. We ask every Christian to pray for the innocent victims of these violent attacks, their families and

communities. We need to stand in the gap.”

Al-Shabab says the attack came out of revenge for Kenya’s military operations in Somalia, which began nearly two years ago. Open Doors staff reported that the situation across the capital of Nairobi and the country remained tense Sunday. So far Open Doors has no news of staff members being affected by the attack.

“We ask supporters around the world to join us in praying for Kenya as the country comes to terms with this horrific attack,” comments an Open Doors worker closely involved with operations in Kenya. “Our thoughts go out to all those who have lost loved ones. We pray for God’s healing for the injured. There is a very prominent Christian presence in Nairobi, and we pray that the church will have the opportunity and the courage to reveal the character of Christ in the midst of these circumstances. We pray that what the attackers meant for evil, God will use for good.”

Kenya is listed as No. 40 on Open Doors 2013 World Watch List of the worst persecutors of Christians. According to the list, “Islamic extremism is an important source of hostility against Christians in Kenya. Tribal antagonism is an upcoming persecution dynamic. Kenya (as a complete country) is new on the World Watch List. The high level of violence against Christians or churches is remarkable and much of it has to do with al-Shabab or al-Shabab-inspired extremist groups.”

Pakistan is No. 14 on the Open Doors World Watch List. Pakistan’s Christians are “caught between Islamic militant organizations, an Islamizing culture and a weak government with a military complicit in fueling Islamic militants,” according to the list. Pakistan, a country of 179 million, is 96 percent Muslim and 2.5 percent Christian.