

Islamic Somali Militants Confiscate Christian Farms

Bringing Muslims to Jesus is bringing a new wave of persecution in Somalia.

Members of an Islamic Somali extremist group have confiscated farm lands owned by Somali Christians and Muslims who attended Bible studies in the cities of Afgoye and Baidawa. Al-Shabaab is the name of the group behind the persecution, International Christian Concern (ICC) reports.

It's not a one-time incident, either. The Islamists have confiscated eight farms since January 19. A Somali church leader confirmed to ICC that five of the farms were owned by Somali Christian converts from Islam and three were owned by Muslims who attended Bible study groups to learn about Christianity. Most of the landowners fled their homes and remain in hiding. There are also unconfirmed reports of additional Christian farm seizures in Dinsor and Burhakaba districts.

Al-Shabaab handed over the confiscated lands to businessmen who regularly donate to the group. The Islamic group has vowed to cleanse Somalia of any Christian influence. Since January 2009, Al-Shabaab has killed 23 Christians, most of whom were church leaders. Al-Shabaab has also desecrated three Christian cemeteries in Mogadishu and destroyed a Christian library in the Luuq district.

"Christians in Somalia have endured unspeakable persecution for choosing to leave Islam and follow Jesus Christ," says Jonathan Racho, ICC's regional manager for Africa. "Members of Al-Shabaab, like many Islamic radicals, don't respect religious freedom. We urge Christians around the world to pray for Somali Christians to persevere, and for members of Al-

Shabaab to repent of their wicked ways and embrace the love of Jesus Christ.”

The Somali church has demonstrated remarkable growth despite intense persecution from Muslim radicals.