

Islamist Militias Slaughter South Kordofan Christians

✖ Military intelligence agents killed one Christian, and Islamic militants sympathetic to the government slaughtered another last week after attacking churches in Sudan's embattled South Kordofan state.

Christian sources said a Sudan Armed Forces Intelligence unit detained Nimeri Philip Kalo, a student at St. Paul Major Seminary, on June 8 near the gate of the United Nations Mission in Sudan in Kadugli's al Shaeer area and shot him in front of bystanders. Kalo and other Christians were fleeing the town after Muslim militias loyal to the SAF attacked and looted at least three church buildings in Kadugli, they said.

UNMIS' mandate is to support the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the government of Sudan and the country's Christian and animist south, scheduled to secede on July 9, by helping in the disarmament process, among other means. Armed conflict between southern and northern militaries broke out in Kadugli on June 6 after northern forces seized Abyei last month.

SAF military intelligence agents accused Kalo of being a Christian and suspected he was therefore opposed to the Islamic government, the sources said.

"They shot him in front of our eyes and forced us not to cry, or else we would face the same fate," a Christian source told Compass on condition of anonymity. Likewise, another Christian survivor said while breaking into tears, "They killed him in front of my eyes."

On the same day, Islamic militants loyal to the SAF slaughtered a young Christian man by sword in Kadugli Market, the sources said. Adeeb Gismalla Aksam, 33, a bus driver whose father is an elder with the Evangelical Church in Kadugli, was

murdered by Muslim extremists shouting, "*Allahu-akbar* [God is greater]!"

The Islamic militias were heard shouting, "*Allahu-akbar!*" as they began shooting at a Roman Catholic church building at 3:30 p.m. on June 8, during a mass in which the congregants were asking God to protect them.

"As we were praying, they started to pour bullets at us to the point that we were terribly scared," a Christian who escaped the attack told Compass.

No one was hit by the bullets shot at the building from the outside, but SAF agents on June 8 arrested the Rev. Abraham James Lual in front of his congregation, a priest of a Kadugli parish told Compass. Accusing Lual of preaching that people should oppose the Islamic government, authorities took him to an unknown location and tortured him for two days, releasing him the following morning, the priest said.

The Rev. Paul Okeny, another Catholic priest, told Compass that Islamic militias loyal to the SAF looted other churches in Kadugli as well, besides attacking Lual's church and depriving him of his belongings.

"Authorities confiscated all his belongings and denied him his cell phone," Okeny told Compass.

Christians were in shock as they have become targets for Islamic militants working with the Government of Sudan, sources said.

Another Christian who requested anonymity said he was arrested at gunpoint by SAF military Intelligence agents at 8:30 a.m. on June 8. Accusing him of being anti-Islam and therefore opposed to the Islamic government, the security officers took him to a military jail, where he was severely beaten and "kicked like a ball," he said.

According to the Christian, one high-ranking official told another, “‘Why shouldn’t you shoot him in his house so that his body gets rotten in his own house?’ After taking him to his house, they started to torture him with sticks, guns and knives, saying, ‘We will kill you,’” he said.

“I was praying to God to be with me and forgive them,” he told Compass. “I thought that was my end, but thank God I was released, but warned to quit the town. As I was running they opened fire on me, but the motorbike was running very fast, so no bullet hit me.”

They called after him, “Make sure we will not see your face again,” he added.

The SAF and Islamic militias on June 8 also set fire to buildings of the Episcopal Church of Sudan and the Sudanese Church of Christ in Kadugli, sources said.

“I saw a building of the Episcopal Church of Sudan in flames,” said one eyewitness.

The Rt. Rev. Bishop Andudu Adam Elnail of the Episcopal Diocese of Kadugli confirmed the incident.

“The churches and pastors were directly targeted,” he said. “The guesthouse in Kadugli, where my staff lives, was looted. The militias and SAF broke into the church building, taking all property, including the sound system, projector, beds, chairs and two motorbikes, including one of the bishop’s.”

On June 12, North Kordofan Gov. Mutasim Mirghani Zaki El-deen declared jihad (holy war) on the Nuba people, most of whom are Christians.

Christians in the area said they are still traumatized as result of the atrocities committed against them by Sudan security forces and militias loyal to the government military. Sources in Sudan said Christians are calling their brothers

and sisters worldwide to pray for the crisis in South Kordofan.

“The situation is critical—we need other Christians to fast and pray for us,” said one source.