

# Militant Muslims Kidnap Pastor in Iraq

A house church leader has been kidnapped by Muslims in Duhok, Iraq, according to a report from Voice of the Martyrs, Canada. A young Iraqi girl recently told VOM contacts that Muslims broke into her home and took her father, Jamal.

VOM reports that Pastor Jamal works among the Shabak people—a people who have Jewish roots and speak Arabic and Kurdish.

VOM sources suspect militants targeted Jamal for working to evangelize Muslims. Several weeks ago, the home of one of Jamal's recent converts was sprayed with machine gun fire, VOM reports, and many fear that the militants, possibly members of al-Qaida, will immediately kill him.

"Throughout Iraq, Christians in environments of violence continue to face the agonizing choice of fleeing their homes or remaining in a climate of fear and pressure. Most Christians have left the country or have been forced to move from their hometowns due to continuous attacks, and it is estimated that less than half of a million Christians remain," VOM says. "Despite threats against them, hundreds of Iraqi Christians in Kirkuk recently celebrated the opening of a new church—the first to be built in eight years.

VOM is asking for readers to pray for Jamal's release and safe homecoming, and that he will rest in the knowledge that the Good Shepherd is with him through his sufferings according to Psalm 23. VOM also asks for prayer that Jamal and his family will remain faithful to the Lord in this time of trial and that his house church will continue to strengthen and grow despite ongoing persecution.