

Muslim Mob Attacks Christian Missionaries in Ethiopia

When Meda Welabu University students set out on a short-term mission trip to Ethiopia, they probably never imagined the evil awaiting them in the Oma village.

One can imagine the excitement of the young missionaries as they started distributing Bibles and sharing the love of Christ with Muslims in the Bale province.

Then it happened.

One of the Oma villagers started arguing with the missionaries. The situation quickly escalated as the man's anger incited a mob that attacked the students. The Muslim mob was shouting "Allah Akbar," which means "God is great" as they stoned the Christians and beat them with rods.

The Christian missionaries fled the village, but the angry mob didn't end its attack. The Muslim persecutors tried to set fire to the car. The arson attempt failed, but 17 Christian college students were wounded in the Feb. 26 assault, according to International Christian Concern (ICC).

"We thank God that no one was killed," one of the victims, who wanted to remain anonymous, told ICC. "It's sad that we suffered the attacks despite the Ethiopian laws which say there is freedom of religion and equality in the country."

Indeed, Ethiopia is supposed to be a Christian nation. The 2007 National Census reports that Christians account for 62.8 percent of Ethiopia's population while Muslims are still a minority with 33.9 percent of the population. Ethiopia's constitution guarantees freedom of religion but Christians living in Muslim majority areas of Ethiopia are occasionally attacked by Muslims, ICC reports.

"We are alarmed by the spike in attacks against Christians in Muslim majority areas of Ethiopia," says ICC's Regional Manager for Africa, Jonathan Racho. "We urge Ethiopian authorities to investigate this latest attack and prevent similar attacks from occurring in the future."

ICC is asking concerned Christians to contact Ethiopian officials and politely ask them to bring the perpetrators to justice and guarantee the right of Christians to worship freely in Oma village.

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