

Pastor Beheaded in Tanzania in Religion-Linked Brawl

International Christian Concern (ICC) has learned that the pastor of an Assemblies of God Church in Tanzania was killed Monday in a brawl between Christians and Islamic extremists. All Africa News reported that Pastor Mathayo Kachili was beheaded by a mob of **Islamic extremists**.

According to Denis Stephano, the local police commander, tensions between Muslims and Christians in Buseresere, a town located in Tanzania's Geita Region, had been boiling over for quite some time before the attack. The source of these tensions was whether Christians were allowed to open and operate butcheries in Buseresere.

Witnesses told ICC's contact in Tanzania that Muslims in the area were upset that Christians had opened up butcheries that catered to other Christians. According to All Africa News, Muslim leaders demanded the immediate closure of butcheries owned by Christians.

Monday at around 9 a.m., Christians delivering meat to the Tanzania Assemblies of God Church were attacked by a gang of youths believed to be Muslim extremists. "A group of radical Islamists armed with machetes, big clubs, knives and sticks assaulted [the Christians] and seriously beat them," said an ICC contact in Tanzania.

When Pastor Kachili heard about the attack, he rushed to the scene to intervene. "When the Muslims saw him they rapidly attacked him," ICC's contact said. In the process of the attack, Pastor Kachili was beheaded.

When news of the attack spread, Christians in the area rushed to the scene and began attacking the Muslim extremists. According to ICC's contact, the attackers were driven away and

hid from the Christians in a Mosque before the police were able to intervene. One of the attackers was seriously injured and later died in the ICU unit of a nearby hospital.

Riot police were dispersed into the area and the situation is starting to return to normal, local police told the press. Pastor Kachili leaves behind a wife and several children who depended on his salary to make a living.

ICC's Regional Manager for Africa, William Stark, said, "Violent attacks against Christians are on the rise in East Africa. Just last week, two Christian pastors in Garissa, Kenya were attacked by Islamic extremists suspected to be connected with al-Shabab. The increase of attacks on Christians can be linked to the spread of radical Islam across East Africa. Groups like al-Shabab and its sympathizers have shown that they are not afraid to attack and kill Christians in countries that are traditionally thought of as Christian.

"Until the issue of **radical Islam** is confronted in East Africa, we will continue to see attacks on Christians and other minority groups. If ignored, the spread of radical Islam has the potential to turn East Africa into another Nigeria or Mali, where Christians are persecuted and killed by the hundreds."