

Pastor Escapes Death, Asks for Prayer Amid Central Africa Persecution

Pastor Yannick* escaped death three times.

The first time they came was at the end of March. There were eight Sekela rebels. It was clear that only one of them was a Central African. The rest were foreigners and did not speak the local Sango language.

“I was in the shower when my wife warned me. She shouted: ‘They’re here, flee!’ When I came outside, they were very near. They shot at me. The bullet did not hit me. I was able to flee into the bush.”

Seleka militia returned in April and again in June. Every time they came, Pastor Yannick escaped, either because he was not there or because he had a moment to run away.

The militia have stolen almost everything.

“Since they have visited us, we have been forced to sleep on mats. They stole all of my clothes. I have practically nothing left. Today, what I wear has been given to me by my brothers in Christ. I was forced to send my children to stay with their grandfather.”

Yannick’s family has spent many desperate moments fleeing Seleka. They have all been traumatized.

“Really, it’s terrible! On one of the occasions when we were on the run, my mother took my little boy in her arms and tried to flee. But at her age she could not go fast like the youths. They fell into a hole.”

By the grace of God they survived the fall and were reconciled

to the rest of the family in the wilderness where they were hiding.

Pastor Yannick finds it hard to speak about all they have endured during their ordeal.

“Reliving these things hurts. Seleka treat people like animals. For them, a chicken is of more value than a human being.

“Because I am a pastor they came directly to target me. They did not ask me anything. They did not reason with me. They just shot at me.”

Yannick explains that all pastors in his area have been victimized. They are targeted because they preach the gospel.

“There are [those] who do not want to hear the Word of God. But I will persevere, even if it is to death. I am committed to die for the cause of Jesus Christ. It is God who has called us, so we have to do what God wants.

“We are not surprised by what has happened. It has been foretold in the Word of God. The Seleka are pawns the enemy uses to hurt us. But I also believe that they are God’s creatures.

“Jesus rebuked the wind the devil wanted to use to overthrow the disciples as they crossed the sea. We have seen what is behind Seleka. They are being used. We must pray for Seleka that they, too, can know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. If they would come to know Jesus Christ, they would not commit these crimes anymore. Pray also for the Central African Republic. God’s people want peace.”

*Name changed for security purposes