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Muslim Extremists in Uganda Threaten to Kill Family of Pastor

Islamists seek revenge for pursuit of legal case against them.

Morning Star News (12.05.2017) - <http://bit.ly/2rsBL3m> - A pastor in eastern Uganda who relocated after an Islamist attack has had to shift to yet another site, but he can only visit his family there briefly as his life is in danger, his wife said.

Muslims continue to track pastor Christopher James Kalaja of Nakabale village, Kaderuna Sub-County, because he filed a court case against those who recently destroyed his farm, home and church building, his wife (name withheld) told Morning Star News.

"He makes a brief appearance at our current residence because the Muslims are trailing him," she said. "They can do anything to kill him, so as stop the court case to proceed since he is the key witness."

Nine Muslims bearing swords, clubs and metal objects rampaged through his property on March 27, shouting the jihadist slogan "Allah Akbar [God is greater], Pastor Kalaja said.

The leader of the 86-member Agape Sanctuary International Church reported the case to Kaderuna police, but officers initially took no action, he said. Unable to elicit any police help, on March 28 he filed suit in Budaka District court, which he said prompted police to file a case.

After relocating his family from a friend's hut to another unidentified location, Pastor Kalaja continued receiving threats, his wife said.

"We just want to inform you that the battle is now on, and you risk losing the whole family," read one text message. Another on May 2 read, "You think we are kidding. Be informed that our warning still stands.

The family has spent sleepless nights over the anonymous text messages, his wife said.

"The children are also very fearful," she said.

Their seven children (not six as previously reported), she said, ask them, "Why are we here? What have we done that we are undergoing such a great suffering?"

"These are questions that I cannot answer," she said. "I only tell the children to pray.

The family relocated to a site on Sunday (May 7) where they have no bedding or food, she said.

The Islamists that destroyed their property have stationed a member of their band on the pastor's land. The legal case to recover losses remains unresolved, with a court hearing scheduled on Monday (May 15) and the family without any legal representation, she said.

"We have suffered so much as a family," she said. "We are seeking prayers and financial help for food and money for hiring a lawyer."

Residents of the predominantly Muslim area opposed a church building under construction on his farm, but Pastor Kalaja said they have persecuted him for decades due to his outreach to Muslims.

A similar attack took place in 2008, he said.

The recent destruction was the latest of many attacks by non-state figures on Christians in eastern Uganda. Uganda's constitution and other laws provide for religious freedom, including the right to propagate one's faith and convert from one faith to another.