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Latest: ACN Persecuted and Forgotten Report Finds Persecution Worsened in 18 Countries

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"We are illuminating churches and other buildings in red, the red of the blood of the martyrs. We wear red, but most importantly, we are praying for these Christians,"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) has published a new 43-page report, Persecuted and Forgotten?, Finding that Christian persecution remained the same or worsened in 18 countries over the past two years. The report landed during Red Week 2026, when more than 130 cathedrals and over 1,000 churches and landmark buildings across five continents were lit in blood red for Christians who suffer for their faith.

Picture Notre-Dame de Paris glowing red against the November night, the Sacré-C?Ur basilica on Montmartre red too, Knock Basilica in Ireland, San Petronio in Bologna, and 250 churches across Spain, all lit the colour of blood. Tonight, Monday 23 November, the European Parliament building in Strasbourg joins them. It is the tenth year of Red Wednesday, and the red has never spread so far.

The numbers behind the light are hard to sit with. ACN warns that 413 million Christians live in countries where religious freedom is severely violated. About 125,000 people are taking part in Red Week events around the world, and the campaign's message is simple: these Christians are not forgotten, even when the world looks away.

"We are illuminating churches and other buildings in red, the red of the blood of the martyrs. We wear red, but most importantly, we are praying for these Christians," said Regina Lynch, ACN International's executive president, in a video message for the campaign.

Persecuted And Forgotten Report: 18 Countries Where Christians Suffer

The Persecuted and Forgotten? Report examines the situation of Christians in 18 countries between 2024 and 2026, and its conclusion is bleak: in those countries, persecution has either stayed at the same terrible level or grown worse. The campaign behind it began in 2015, and this year's tenth anniversary has drawn attention to children and families in particular, with ACN highlighting countries such as Nigeria and Pakistan, where children are growing up in circumstances few of us can begin to imagine.

The report honours the memory of Shahbaz Bhatti, a Pakistani Christian minister who gave his life for his faith and the defence of religious freedom 15 years ago. His name opens the report as a reminder that persecution is not a statistic. It is a person, a family, a community that keeps gathering to worship while the danger grows.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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