Christian News 16 November 2026 | English article

Jordan Churches Cancel Christmas Today in Solidarity With Karak Church Attack Victims

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

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Martyrs of the nation"

(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

The Council of Church Leaders in Jordan announced on Saturday, 14 November 2026, the cancellation of all Christmas celebrations this year, in solidarity with the victims of the Karak church attack. The decision honours the "martyrs of the nation" - the nine people killed when gunmen opened fire during a funeral at St George's Greek Orthodox Church in Hamoud village, Karak governorate, on 23 October 2026, plus a security officer stabbed to death on 5 November outside the Sri Lankan embassy in Amman. Prayers, religious services and pastoral duties will continue as normal. Only the festivities are cancelled, and the observance is to be "marked by simplicity and solemnity".

It is a decision that turns Christmas itself into an act of mourning. For Jordan's Christians - roughly 200,000 to 300,000 people out of a population of around 10 to 11.5 Million, about 2 to 3 per cent - Christmas is normally the brightest season of the year. This year there will be no celebrations, no parties, no festive gatherings. The council made the decision after meeting the victims' families and relatives, and the message is unmistakable: no family in Hamoud will grieve alone while the rest of the country's Christians celebrate.

Jordan Churches Cancel Christmas: What The Karak Attack Took

The attack that lies behind the cancellation happened on 23 October 2026, during a funeral at St George's Greek Orthodox Church in Hamoud village, in the Karak governorate. Gunmen opened fire on the mourners, killing nine people and wounding 34 - some wires put the wounded figure at 25. A funeral, of all places, turned into a scene of terror, and the shock ran through Jordan's small Christian community and far beyond it. The funerals that followed drew thousands of mourners, as reported in Jordan Church Attack Funerals Today: Thousands Mourn 8 Victims in Hamoud October 2026, and the country declared three days of national mourning. King Abdullah II condemned the attack as terrorism.

The tenth martyr honoured by the council's decision was killed later, and in a different place. On 5 November, a security officer was stabbed to death outside the Sri Lankan embassy in Amman. The council counts him among the martyrs of the nation, and the cancellation covers his memory too. Ten lives, ten families, and a whole Christian community deciding that its Christmas will belong to them this year.

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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