

**MALANKARA ARCHDIOCESE of THE SYRIAC ORTHODOX
CHURCH in NORTH AMERICA
(Under the Holy See of Antioch & All The East)**

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Church Crisis in Malankara - Solidarity of the Archdiocese

August 17, 2020

August 17, 2020 while the Keralites were celebrating 'Chingam onnu' (the New Year's Day), it turned out to be a black day for the entire Jacobite Syrian Orthodox faithful all over the world. The news media from Kerala portrayed shocking details about the persecution took place at our Marthoman Jacobite Syrian Cathedral Church at Mulanthuruthy (renowned as Second Jerusalem) in Ernakulam district. This Jacobite Syrian orthodox church is established under the Holy Apostolic See of Antioch and has been in existence for around thousand years. More than twenty-seven hundred families of this church face persecution, suffer deeply, and are denied basic fundamental rights of religious practices and worship that citizens of India are entitled to. A fasting prayer was in progress under the leadership of His Eminence Joseph Mar Gregorious, the Metropolitan Trustee as well as the Metropolitan of the Kochi diocese, along with other bishops and priests. In the early hours of the morning, following the court order, the police broke open the church gates, arrested those on the premises, dragged the bishops, priests and injuring many faithful. It was done in an inhumane manner, especially while the COVID-19 pandemic threat exists. The police used force to enter the church defying all the government issued guidelines, evicted those inside, and locked up the premises.

Within hours, faithful in another Jacobite Church - St. George JSO Church at Onakkoor experienced similar injustice and confiscation. So many of our other ancient churches and its members are also facing such atrocities to defend their faith. It is highly deplorable that all these are caused by people who call themselves as followers of Jesus Christ and claim to worship the true God.

On behalf of Archbishop, H.E Mor Theethose Yeldho and the entire Malankara Archdiocese in USA & Canada, we hereby, in the strongest terms deplore these acts of injustice. At the same time, proclaiming our solidarity and ardently praying with our brethren in Malankara for Heaven's unfailing protection and divine guidance to liberate our people in this period of struggle. We also pray for the Lord's mercy on those causing this agony and suffering.

Fr. Paul CThotakat

**Archdiocesan Secretary
Malankara Archdiocese**