

**News from
the ministry
of
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ANU: We Stand with Garissa

NAIROBI, KENYA - Africa Nazarene University was not immune to the fear and dread that rippled across Kenya this month after militants stormed Garissa University College.

ANU in Nairobi is 370 kilometers (230 miles) from the attack site. But the news that on April 2 a handful of Somali militants gunned down 142 students at Garissa - some while they were still in bed - rattled the entire country.

"I was really shocked and outraged," said ANU student Ms. Diana Karuri, chairperson of the Executive Student Council.

"And I think it really hit home because these are students just like me."

Many ANU students asked, 'Could something like that happen here?'



*Ms. Diana Karuri,
Executive Student Council
chairperson, ANU*

"People are looking at their environments more than before, to try to see how they can escape in case of an attack," said Rev. Gift Mtukwa, a lecturer in ANU's religion department.

Groundskeeper Mr. Simon Mutiso Mutinda said, "(Students) are asking, 'have you taken measures to make sure we are safe?' And the answer is yes."

Although never having experienced an attack, ANU, along with other Kenyan institutions, have been looking at ways to tighten security to lower the risk of any possible attack in the future, the school's public relations officer Ms. Wambui Mwangi said.

"Within the campus, of course you worry about what can happen, but I think the general atmosphere is calm," Ms. Karuri said.

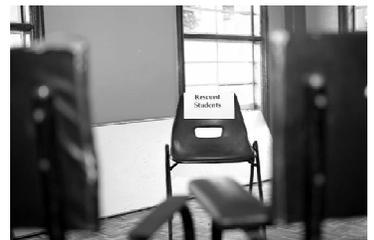
As students quietly went about their exams last week, there was a somber mood on campus, said Mr. Kimutai Kemboi, a student and former student council chairman.

"There is a lot of brokenness. There is a lot of struggle. It's just hard, it's hard," he said.

The struggle isn't just a physical concern for safety, but it's a struggle to guard one's heart against hatred and bitterness,

he said. Painful questions cropped up when details of the attack emerged. Mr. Kemboi said he was initially angry that Kenya was being attacked again and that the militants chose such vulnerable targets.

The al-Shabab militants that carried out the [Garissa attack](#), along with numerous other attacks in Kenya over the past few years, reportedly singled out non-Muslims. The group used this same tactic when raiding Nairobi's Westgate mall in 2013, according to the New York



Times.

"We are all human, so sometimes we can look at things from that prism as a human being and start asking God, where was he," Mr. Kemboi said.

He cautions fellow Kenyans against letting their pain become discrimination against Muslims or Somalis. "If it's a blanket condemnation, it will not help anything, (such as), 'Because it was promoted by a Muslim, so all Muslims are terrorists.' That type of thinking

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." - Philippians 1:3-5 NIV



An ANU student prays for victims of the Garissa attack at a special prayer session on April 10. (Photos: Africa Nazarene University).

*So do not fear,
for I am with you;
do not be dismayed,
for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and
help you;
I will uphold you with my
righteous right hand
(Isaiah 41:10, NIV).*

doesn't help," he said.

Several students at ANU are Muslim. Respect for all religious backgrounds and love within a community are major values at the school, Ms. Karuri said. The attack has not created tension or division among the students, she said.

"Our students don't see Muslims as the problem, they understand that those who do such things misrepresent Islam and that they have been radicalized," Rev. Mtukwa said. "... Even when some students ran away from the (Garissa) campus, Muslims took them in and did a lot to help Christians who had been injured."

ANU REACHES OUT TO THE HURTING

In the days after the attack, families of Garissa students gathered at the Chiromo Mortuary in Nairobi for the agonizing task of identifying victims' bodies. ANU staff and students met with the families there, offering comfort, food and prayers. ANU staff members were among those providing counseling services to affected families at makeshift clinics, ANU Assistant Chaplain Ms. Rachael Ngugi said.

Back on the ANU campus, students gathered for prayer sessions and vigils. They met with community members and students from other universities at a park in Nairobi for a service to honor victims.

ANU Vice Chancellor Leah. T. Marangu issued a statement for the university, saying the school was deeply saddened by the attack and mourns with all those affected.

In chapel, students and staff were reminded to depend on God's protection. "Our hope is that Christ's peace will guard our hearts and minds to be fixed on Him and not on fear," ANU Chaplain Dr. Cindy North said.

Mr. Mutiso Mutinda asks Christians around the world to pray for wisdom for Kenya's leaders as they decide how to move forward. Also pray for the ANU community, which, he said, is hurting.

"In our weak and most delicate situations, we don't have the strength of our own. It comes from above," he said. "When Jesus is speaking about the Helper, the Counselor, the Comforter, he is talking about the Spirit who will come. Especially in the most difficult moments of our life and of our faith, he will come and encourage us. ... We are not in it alone."

by Holly Beech, Church of the Nazarene Africa Region newsletter | April 2015 - Issue 2

Prayer Requests

- Pray for the Garissa victims families and for healing of the nation.
- Pray for Russ who has been asked to preach Holiness Week, May 18-22. Holiness Week occurs at the beginning of each trimester and endeavors to set the spiritual tone for the campus. Russ requests very special prayer for this need.
- Pray for us as we have been extremely busy in our roles, Russ in teaching and other responsibilities and Carla in the finance office.
- Pray for our children and family in the States.
- Pray that God will continue to supply all of our needs for our ministry here.
- Pray for the students attending ANU for whom English is not their first language. We feel this need deeply for some of our students from French speaking Africa.