

Muslims helping to rebuild Christian school in Kashmir

by [Anto Akkara](#)

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Bangalore, India, September 20 (ENInews)--Muslims in Kashmir, in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent, are supporting the re-building of a Christian school that was destroyed by fire during anti-Christian violence one year ago.

"What happened here is certainly wrong and it should not have happened. I can assure you that our people will not allow it to happen again," Munshi Mukhtar Ahmed, a Muslim teacher in a government school in the town of Tangmarg, told ENInews on 20 September.

On 13 September 2010, the Tyndale Biscoe School was the target of Muslims protesting a reported desecration of the Quran in the U.S. that marked the ninth anniversary of the 11 September 2001 terror attacks. The school is in the town of Phulwama and is run by the Church of North India (CNI), the dominant Protestant denomination in North India.

Two dozen Muslim protesters were killed by security forces and over 100 injured. There are about four million Muslims in Kashmir and 5,000 Christians.

"The burning of the school was a big loss for the local (Muslim) community and they are still feeling the pinch of it," said Ahmed. The church-run school has about 450 students, almost all of them Muslims.

Rajinder Kaul, the school's principal, told ENInews that the school was reopened later in a dilapidated building belonging to the government health department.

Kaul said that the school in June shifted to temporary prefabricated cubicles at the same compound where the former school, built in wood in the elegant Kashmiri architectural style, had been reduced to ashes.

"The arson was led by a mob from outside ... They did not know the damage they have done," Gulam Mohammed Bhat, a Muslim on the school management committee, told ENInews after a 20 September meeting to plan the school's reconstruction.

"We are happy that the (Muslim) community has deplored what had happened," CNI bishop Pradeep Kumar Samantroy of Amritsar told ENInews. "Our loss has been heavy. But the most important thing is that we have been able to rebuild peace," said Samantroy.

The government of Jammu and Kashmir is contributing to the school rebuilding. Bhat said that local Muslims will volunteer to help during construction of the new school building.