

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – December 2016

Friday December 2, 2016



Azerbaijan: Goranboy

Ziyad Dadashov (fined US\$865 for speaking of his faith and offering Bible literature to 4 men)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2247

Saturday December 3, 2016



Myanmar: Mongkoe township, Shan state

Bishop Philip Lasap Za Hawng (expressed dismay over the military airstrike that destroyed a church "We are yet to know detailed facts but I will write a letter to the authorities, the military commander and chief minister of Shan State once I know everything...We need all the armed groups to participate in peace talks", all parishioners had already fled across the nearby border into China, sixty churches have been destroyed by the military in the region since 2011)

Mai Mai (aid worker, said that soldiers used a church during a battle before destroying it "They used the church to get protection. They could have been based somewhere else, but they chose the church to mix themselves with civilians...It is painful to see the church that was bombed. I am hurt to see they destroyed the church. This church is something that we highly admire and respect. In fact, it is not a forgivable act, but God teaches us to forgive and not to take revenge. So only God will punish them...Local residents are still afraid of going home. Some went back to stay in the day time and returned to the China border in the night time, because they dare not to sleep over night in the town")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/catholic-church-building-destroyed-as-fighting-intensifies-in-shan-state/77811>

<http://morningstarnews.org/2016/12/burma-armed-forces-bomb-church-building-previously-seized-as-base-sources-say/>



Iraq

Esam (father of three, said: "My wife's brother was crucified by Daesh [ISIL]. He was crucified and tortured in front of his wife and children, who were forced to watch. They told him that if he loved Jesus that much, he would die like Jesus...A Swedish organization helped his wife and the children, they are now in Sweden. His wife has cancer")

Marijam (alias, brother crucified after being told "We will crucify you like your dog, Jesus Christ")

<http://www.aina.org/news/20161203150349.htm>

Sunday December 4, 2016



Iraq

Archbishop Nicodemus Daoud Sharaf (**UPDATE**: denied a visa to visit the United Kingdom to speak about Christian persecution)

Archbishop Timothy Mousa Shamani (denied a visa to visit the United Kingdom to speak about Christian persecution)

<http://www.aina.org/news/20161204160348.htm>



Syria

Archbishop Selwanos Boutros Alnemeh (**UPDATE**: denied a visa to visit the United Kingdom to speak about Christian persecution)

<http://www.aina.org/news/20161204160348.htm>



Uganda: Amuria

Bishop George Edweu (object of an assassination attempt by a Muslim sheikh, the sheikh abandoned his mission and converted and went into hiding with his family)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/01/pastor-uganda-attacked-sheikh-sent-kill-becomes-christian/>



Egypt

Maher al-Gohary (convert, father of Dina, reported on [December 17, 2015](#) to have filed suit to change his religion on his national id card from Islam to Christianity, said he and his daughter have suffered persecution for years; home invaded in November 2016 by three men, threatened with death, forced to be photographed with signs that denounced Christianity and announced his return to Islam; **UPDATE**: has fled the country to Cyprus)

Dina (aged 22, convert, daughter of Maher al-Gohary, home invaded in November 2016 by three men, threatened with death, father forced to be photographed with signs that denounced Christianity and announced his return to Islam; **UPDATE**: has fled the country for Cyprus, said "My father did this for me, he protected me, and he always does")

Rania (aged 28, widow, husband killed by radical Muslims, father disappeared in 2015, said "They tried to make me convert to Islam, to change my religion and after my husband died, they are trying to make me marry a Muslim", has fled the country for Cyprus)

<http://cyprus-mail.com/2016/12/04/persecuted-egyptian-christians-appeal-protection/>



Nigeria: Iddo village, outside Abuja

Ndubuisi Uzoma (brother of Chidimma Umeh, **beheaded** by Muslim herdsmen on his farm)

Chidimma Umeh (sister of Ndubuisi Uzoma, said "I lost my brother on Saturday, he left in the morning and till night, I didn't see him and I told my husband about it. We went to his farm to search for him, that was when I saw blood and I shouted, 'Jesus, my brother is gone.' Look at my brother's corpse, there is no head, it's been cut off, they beheaded my brother")

<https://www.nigerianbulletin.com/threads/tragedy-as-fulani-herdsmen-behead-graduate-farmer-in-abuja.228656/>

Monday December 5, 2016



Kazakhstan: Karaganda

Natalya Konopleva (cited for selling a religious newspaper from her shop on [October 1, 2016](#); fined US\$316 on [November 2, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

Kazakhstan: Oskemen, East Kazakhstan region

Nadezhda Krasilnikova (detained on [October 14, 2016](#) for praying with residents of a hospice, fined US\$225 on [November 14, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: appealed, case sent back to the lower court)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2240

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2281



Egypt

Naglaa Ibrahim (attorney, minister, reported to have been arrested and sexually harassed by police after complaining about police torture of suspects)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1788&A=28717>

Tuesday December 6, 2016



Indonesia: Bandung, West Java province

Pastor Stephen Tong Eng Tjong (Christmas event in a rented hall stopped by Islamic radicals)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/West-Java:-Islamic-radicals-disrupt-a-Christian-Christmas-celebration-39343.html>



Nepal: Charikot, Dolakha district

Seven Christians were arrested on June 9, 2016 for illegal conversions; UPDATE: acquitted, charges dropped

Balkrishna Rai

Banita Dangol

Bhim Bahadur Tamang

Bimal Shahi (school principal)

Kiran Dahal

Philip Tamang

Prakash Pradhan (school principal)

Pastor Shakti Pakhrin (arrested on June 14, 2016)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2016/12/crack-down-on-christians-in-nepal-hits-snag-as-eight-are-acquitted/>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/07/4559343/>



Pakistan: Hafizabad district, Punjab province

Sumbai Arif (aged 14, daughter of Elizabeth Arif, abducted by a policeman on December 6, 2016 and forced to convert to Islam and to live with him)

Fr Mushtaq Piyara (**UPDATE**: attempted to secure the freedom of Sumbai Arif)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/05/girl-14-rescued-muslim-pakistan-accused-forcibly-converting/>



Kazakhstan: Oskemen, East Kazakhstan region

Lidiya Kosatova (detained on October 14, 2016 for praying with residents of a hospice, fined US\$225 on November 14, 2016; **UPDATE**: appealed, case sent back to the lower court)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2240



Iran: Tehran

Maryam Naghash-Zargarani aka Nasim (aged 38; **UPDATE**: returned to prison after a 5 day medical leave was extended due to her plea for conditional release, sentenced to 45 days' additional imprisonment due to the court extension on her leave)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3255>



Sudan: Khartoum

Pastor Koat Akot (detained by the NISS secret police on [November 18, 2016](#) for preaching and founding three churches, ordered to report to the police every day for three weeks; **UPDATE**: ordered deported, left the country three days later)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/01/sudan-deports-south-sudanese-pastor-for-evangelistic-activities-sources-say/>

Wednesday December 7, 2016



Indonesia: Jakarta

Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama aka Ahok (reported on [October 12, 2016](#) to have been accused of blasphemy in Jakarta after he stated that the Quran should not be used for political purposes, apologized, forgiven by some Muslims; object of a [November 4, 2016](#) demonstration in Jakarta by 150,000 Muslims with banners reading "Arrest Asok for insulting Islam" and "Kill Asok"; named as a suspect in a police blasphemy investigation on [November 16, 2016](#) despite the fact that a professor of communications has admitted to altering a recording of his original speech to incriminate him, prohibited from leaving the country, if convicted he could be sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment; **UPDATE**: will be put on trial for blasphemy on December 13, 2016)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/61331-ASIA_INDONESIA_The_governor_of_Jakarta_on_trial_for_blasphemy_on_13_December#.WEgtvsKQw5s



Kazakhstan: Oskemen, East Kazakhstan region

Lyudmila Kerbele (detained on [October 14, 2016](#) for praying with residents of a hospice, fined US\$225 on [November 14, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: appeal denied, fine upheld)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2240



Russia: Moscow

Sergei Korepin (detained on [October 7, 2016](#) for handing out New Testaments on a train, charged with illegal missionary activity; **UPDATE**: charges dropped)

Safarbi Keshokov (detained on [October 7, 2016](#) for handing out New Testaments on a train, charged with illegal missionary activity; **UPDATE**: charges dropped)

Russia: Nolinsk, Kirov region

S R Zharovtsev (acquitted of distribution of banned religious literature)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2242

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2287

Thursday December 8, 2016



Philippines: Mindanao

Bishop Martin Jumoad (**UPDATE**: reported on an upsurge in the recruitment of child soldiers by local terror groups such as Abu Sayyaf)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-bishop-warns-of-upsurge-in-child-soldiers/77828>



Pakistan: Faisalabad

Mehwish Masih (aged 15, daughter of Babar Masih and Ruqiya Bibi, domestic worker, arrested on allegations of theft of her employer's property after she took unauthorized time off from work for appendicitis, held in house arrest at her employer's home)

Babar Masih (aged 48, husband of Ruqiya Bibi, father of Mehwish Masih, arrested on allegations of theft of his daughter's employer's property)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/-Christian-father-and-daughter-arrested-on-false-charges-of-theft-in-Faisalabad-40089.html>



Russia: Kirovo-Chepetsk, Kirov region

O L Grinishina (fined US\$16 for posting an online link to a banned web site)

Russia: Svetly, Kaliningrad region

L G Pyshnaya (acquitted of illegal missionary activities)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2287

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2306



Uganda: Bufuja village, Butaleja district

Malik Higenyi (aged 30, convert from Islam, son of Aimuna Namutongi , husband, father of two, beaten on [November 13, 2016](#) after publicly acknowledging his conversion, right hand broken, head injured, said “The attackers hit me with a blunt object, and I fell down and did not know what happened from there. I just found myself at Bufuja health center”;

UPDATE: attacked while harvesting crops with his mother, said “When I saw the furious relatives, I managed to escape. I thought my mother was safe and that her conversion was still hidden, only to hear one of them telling her, ‘We heard that you joined Christianity’”)

Aimuna Namutongi (aged 60, convert, mother of Malik Higenyi, attacked while harvesting crops with her son, right hand fractured, head lacerated)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2016/12/former-muslims-60-year-old-mother-attacked-in-uganda-for-putting-faith-in-christ/>

Friday December 9, 2016



Pakistan: Lahore

Sajjad Masih Gill (brother of Sarfraz Masih, sentenced to life imprisonment in Gojra district, Toba Tek Singh on [July 13, 2013](#) for allegedly sending a blasphemous text message, the

transmitting cell phone was not recovered by the police and no evidence connecting it to the accused was presented in court, the conviction and sentencing also occurred after the accuser retracted the accusation and admitted that the police had pressured him into making it; second trial for the same offense begun, defense attorneys argued that this second prosecution constituted illegal double jeopardy, judge agreed on [September 30, 2013](#) and dismissed the case; appeal underway as of [November 26, 2015](#), asked for prayers from Christians around the world; **UPDATE**: judge refused to hear his appeal because it was a blasphemy case)

<http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/lahore-high-court-refuses-to-hear-bail-plea-of-christian-defendant-in-a-blasphemy-case/>



Turkey: Izmir

Andrew Brunson (aged 48, husband of Norine Brunson, U.S. citizen, detained as a 'national security risk' on [October 7, 2016](#), denied access to U.S. diplomats, attorneys, and fellow parishioners, told he would be deported; transferred on [October 20, 2016](#) to another detention center; **UPDATE**: ordered held on 'terrorism' allegations from a 'secret informant', attorney denied access to the allegations)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/10/4680155/>

Saturday December 10, 2016



Thailand: Bangkok

Maqsood Iqbal (described the detention of Pakistani Christian asylum seekers, all had their UN High Commissioner for Refugee ID cards seized, said "This morning 45 people were captured and were taken as detainees. I have been there with them from the start till the end. i have seen everything with my sinful eyes. Within those 45 people are 23 Children, 13 Women and 9 men some of them are of old age. It was unbearable for me to see the people crying out for help. As you already know Christmas month has just begun and we are targeted like this after coming here, trying to escape persecution in Pakistan. Now if the fine are not be paid the entire group of asylum seekers will be thrown into criminal jails. So as a brother I ask you to help them in this time of need. May God bless you")

<http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/arrest-of-45-pakistani-christian-asylum-seekers-in-thailand-creates-panic-among-re-persecuted-christ>



Nigeria: Kafanchan, Kaduna state

Catholic bishops issued a pastoral letter *Enough of the Bloodshed* regarding continued Muslim herdsmen attacks "If anything, government has shown outright partisanship in favor of the herdsmen to the disappointment of the majority Southern Kaduna indigenes and Christians. This is what lends credence to our earlier assertion and belief that there is a well-planned Jihad against our people with the sole aim of conquering our people and occupying our land...In most of these attacks, the military stands aloof and watches while our people are being massacred. The viciousness of these self-styled Jihadists sends shivers into the spines of our traumatized people"

Bishop Aaron Tanko

Bishop Emmanuel Okolo

Bishop Ibrahim Yakubu

Joseph Bayei KSJ

Bishop Williams Abba

<https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/print/239628/1/enough-of-the-bloodshed-the-catholic-diocese-of-kafanchan-kaduna-state-north-west-nigeria-speaks.html>

Sunday December 11, 2016



India: Udupi district, Karnataka state

Sajan K George (**UPDATE**: documented the desecration of a church)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/61375->

[ASIA INDIA Violence and abuse of Christians in view of Christmas#.WFKwsMKQw5s](#)



Egypt: Cairo

Sts Peter and Paul church was attacked by a suicide bomber during the Divine Liturgy right after the reading of the Gospel, 28 were killed [several days later] and 64 wounded

Madeline Michelle (sister-in-law of Noureen Grace, **killed**)

Angel Anwar (injured in the Sts Peter and Paul church bombing, hospitalized, **died**)

Aida Mikhail (**killed**)

Amal "Souad" Atta Bishara (aged 67, mother of Heba, **killed**)

Amany Saad Aziz (aged 32, wife of Wagdi Wageh, **killed**, had told her family the day before that she expected to die)

Attiyat Saeed Sarhan (**killed**)

Eman Youssef (aged 40, widow [husband killed in December 2012 by the Muslim Brotherhood], mother of Stephen, **killed**)

Ensaf Adel Kamel (aged 18, **killed**)

Jihan Alber (aged 55, **killed**)

Madeleine Tawfiq Hanna (aged 49, wife of Emad Tawil, mother of Verena Emad Amin and Peter Tawil, **killed**)

Marcel Girgis (aged 60, **killed**)

Marina Fahim Helmy (aged 20, sister of Veronaa Fahim Helmy, **killed**)

Mohsena Ammonius (aged 35, **killed**)

Nabil Habib (aged 45, father of newborn son Fady and two girls, brother of Zarif Habib, church security guard, attempted to stop the bomber, **killed**)

Nadia Anwar Shehata (aged 60, **killed**)

Dr Nevin Adel Salama (aged 31, obstetrics and gynecology specialist, Coptic language expert, **killed**)

Nevin Nabil Youssef (aged 30, **killed**)

Rogina Raafat (aged 50, **killed**)

Sabah Wadih Yassa (aged 62, mother of Raymon Wadih, mother-in-law of Basma Sulaiman, grandmother of Thomas, Avon, and Giovanni, **killed**)

Samia Fawazy (aged 60, **killed**)

Samia Gamil (aged 36, **killed**)

Sohair Mahrous (aged 60, **killed**)

Verena Emad Amin (aged 18, daughter of Emad Tawil and Madeleine Tawfiq Hanna, sister of Peter Tawil, **killed**, had a premonition in November 2016 that she boarded a "train of death")

Veronaa Fahim Helmy (aged 18, sister of Marina Fahim Helmy, **killed**)

Widad Wahba (**killed**)

Angel Marcus (aged 40, injured, hospitalized)

Odette Saleh (aged 63, injured, hospitalized)

Lorise Naguib (aged 62, injured, hospitalized)

Magy Momen (aged 10, fourth grade student, Scout, volleyball player, ballerina, actor, injured, hospitalized in critical condition with shrapnel in her brain, has not been responding to treatment)

Heba (daughter of Amal "Souad" Atta Bishara, hospitalized in critical condition)

Thomas (aged 8, son of Raymon Wadih and Basma Sulaiman, hospitalized with shrapnel in his face and head)

Samiha Tawfik (wife of Qelliny Farag, present near the explosion, condition not reported)

Cynthia Michel (aged 14, hospitalized, recovering from surgery, said that just before the explosion "I was very surprised to see a man with something on his head and a big belly walking into the church in the women's section. Then he opened his jacket, and after that I did not see or hear anything")

Avon (aged 4, daughter of Raymon Wadih and Basma Sulaiman, has suffered from post-traumatic stress)

Stephen (aged 6, son of Eman Youssef, survived uninjured, now orphaned)

Saber Milad (church security guard, survived)

Marian (daughter of Nabil Habib, later said: "We had breakfast together, and we were joking with each other. He was exceptionally happy that day", her father sent her home after the first liturgy to make tea: "I had just started the water cooker when I heard a big explosion. I thought of my father immediately. There was white smoke everywhere, and people were running around in panic. I was in shock, but I managed to run outside. I started asking everyone if they'd seen my father...He was just lying there, still holding tight to the keys of the church, even though the explosion had blown him meters away. I put his head on my lap. He gave me the keys and asked me to take care of my younger brother and sister. Then he closed his eyes and smiled peacefully, his face shining. Then he went to heaven...I go to church now each Sunday, my faith has grown. I don't know what tomorrow will bring, but I do know that God will take care of me. I have felt God's incredible comfort through these times. And I've felt the warm love of the Christian community. God takes, but He gives back more. I can't repeat it enough, and I want the young adults around the world to know it as well. God is love. God is kind. God is merciful. I have experienced this in my most difficult hour")

Wagdi Wageh (widower of Amany Saad Aziz, said "I was attending the Liturgy with my wife as usual. Suddenly we heard a huge explosion, the lights went off and the ceiling on the women's side of the church collapsed. I rushed over to search for my wife. Rubble, dust and broken wood of the pews covered most of the bodies. I only recognized her by her clothing - her face was covered with blood and dust...The day before the bombing, my wife felt that she would soon die: she was acting as if to say goodbye. My sister phoned us and said she would like to come to visit, my wife replied, 'Wait for tomorrow and you will attend my funeral'. On Saturday evening, my wife also prepared a present, gave it to

my mother and told her 'this is to remember me by'...Although I feel great pain, I'm sure that she is in a very good place in Heaven. She was always praying, reading in the Bible and going to church. Pray for us")

Magdi Ramzi (aged 59, said "I realized from the shrieks, the many people running around me and those crying out in pain, that it was an explosion. I thought I was going to die, that it was the end of the world", cried about a relative "She's probably dead, she must be dead. Oh God! We were just praying!", daughter hospitalized, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren survived, the one year old 's clothing was stained with his daughter's blood)

Emad Tawil (aged 53, widower of Madeleine Tawfiq Hanna, father of Peter Tawil and Verena Emad Amin, plastics factory operator, later said "Every time they bomb a church or attack us, they increase our faith", has been having chest pains since the attack, pointed heavenward and said "I want to go")

Peter Tawil (aged 21, son of Emad Tawil and Madeleine Tawfiq Hanna, brother of Verena Emad Amin, carried his sister from the church before she died "I was carrying my sister and she was saying, 'Help me!' and I couldn't help")

Nadia Salah (aged 33, widow of Nabil Habib, mother of Fadi)

Attiya Mahrous (church worker, said "I found bodies, many of them women, lying on the pews. It was a horrible scene")

Mariam Shenouda (said "I saw a headless woman being carried away. Everyone was in a state of shock. We were scooping up people's flesh off the floor. There were children. What have they done to deserve this? I wish I had died with them instead of seeing these scenes")

Emad Shoukry (said "As soon as the priest called us to prepare for prayer, the explosion happened. The explosion shook the place...The dust covered the hall and I was looking for the door, although I couldn't see anything... I managed to leave in the middle of screams and there were a lot of people thrown on the ground")

Qelliny Farag (aged 80, husband of Samiha Tawfik, said "I could not see anything, everything turned black suddenly...We were all in shock, covered in dust, running through corpses that got thrown by the intensity of the blast. A minute passed by and I started to see flesh scattered everywhere around us. Even the ceiling had collapsed")

Noureen Grace (sister-in-law of Madeline Michelle, said "She was completely destroyed. I spoke to her only yesterday. We spoke every day")

Tahani Gabriel (aged 65, cousin of Amal "Souad" Atta Bishara, said "The [church] turnout was bigger than normal" due to a memorial for her cousin's husband)

Tadros Zaki (aged 63, said "It was terrifying. Things were falling down on us. I couldn't get down from behind the altar because of the smoke")

Kamel Hanna (witnessed the attack, said at least 10 women were killed [the actual number of women was 22] "We were about to pray when the explosion occurred. My friends and I were outside because the church was full of faithful. There was blood everywhere")

Fr Antonios Mounir (had been celebrating the Liturgy at the time of the explosion, said "The door next to the main entrance was the easiest for the bomber. No one saw him, neither

the deacons, nor the volunteers who work for the church", added that he had he had met the attacker the day before during an apparent reconnaissance of the church "[He said he was] buying books. Since there were no books in that room, he asked to go and pray in the church but his request was denied")

Amin Mohamed Mowafy (cleaner, survived the [December 31, 2011](#) church bombing in [Alexandria](#); **UPDATE**: survived the Sts Peter and Paul church bombing, said he will never forget the sights of the two bombings for the rest of his life)

Fr Mikhail Anton (said of Dr Nevin Adel Salama "Nevin worked as an Obstetrics and Gynecology doctor in Sheikh Zayed hospital in Cairo. She was single and was an active servant of the church, she taught the Coptic language and was loved by all the church members. She was kind and humble and had a strong relationship with God. She lived like an angel on the earth, loved all people and a smile was never absent from her face. She was always talking about martyrs and she hoped to be like them. Those who were martyred in this incident moved from the Liturgy on the earth to the Liturgy on heaven to complete their prayer with Jesus Christ")

Bishop Suriel (said "Today has been one of the most difficult days of my life. Hearing about such barbaric events on the news or watching them on television is one thing but experiencing them firsthand is something else altogether...Walking up to the Church of St Peter in the Cathedral complex and seeing from afar that the roof has blown out made me think, "O My Lord, what lies ahead inside the Church then???" What I saw on Ramsis Street made me realize that this is a huge disaster of gigantic proportions. The number of police on the street and the number of protesters who were very sad and chanting...It was then that I entered the church with some difficulty due to the large crowds. Nothing could prepare me for what I saw next. It was complete pandemonium...My heart dropped and I could not stop crying from what I was seeing. Then I saw the clock on the wall which had stopped at 9:57 am, the time of the bombing exactly. This moment in time will always be embedded in my mind and heart forever. It is the moment when we gained new martyrs in 2016 and new intercessors on our behalf in front of the throne of God...I began to try to imagine what it would have been like to be praying in that church this morning. A Sunday morning, families going to celebrate liturgy during the beginning of the holy month of Kiahk before the Feast of Nativity, days that are full of joy. Then moments later the church looks like this? Tears ran down my face, my heart was weeping blood for the families that are suffering and have lost loved ones. Many mothers had lost their lives as the bomb was on the right side of the church where women stand...I looked at the roof that had blown out and I could see the heavens and asked myself, O Lord of heavens, why have you forsaken Your people? Why have you allowed for this tragedy to befall your beloved people of Egypt? Why Lord? I do not understand. Even if my mind cannot comprehend, I will always accept Your will and say "Thy will be done")

Fr Rafik Greich (**UPDATE**: said "We are deeply saddened and have cried for what happened to our Orthodox brothers and we share their grief with all our heart. We pray for the speedy recovery of the injured and we present our most sincere condolences to His Holiness Pope Tawadros II. We ask those responsible for security to find the perpetrators of this crime and to stop them. May God save Egypt from all evil")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Terrorist-attack-near-the-Coptic-cathedral-in-Cairo.-At-least-25-dead-and-dozens-wounded-39371.html>
<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Cairo-attack:-Catholic-Church-condemnation.-Reactions-of-Arab-world-39372.html>
<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Islamic-State-claims-responsibility-for-Cairo-attack-on-Copts,-vows-more-carnage-39405.html>
<http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/at-least-25-killed-in-cairo-as-an-explosion-rocks-the-coptic-cathedral-complex/>
<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1794&A=28832>
<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1794&A=28833>
<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1794&A=28834>
<http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2016/12/12/attack-on-coptic-cathedral-in-cairo-kills-dozens/>
<http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2016/12/11/bomb-at-egypts-main-coptic-christian-cathedral-compound-kills-dozens/>
<http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2016/12/15/church-bombing-the-aftermath/>
<http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2016/12/11/breaking-news-bomb-explodes-in-egypt-by-cairos-coptic-cathedral-at-least-25-dead/>
<http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/02/05/demiana-14-becomes-29th-victim-of-attack-on-st-peters-church-in-cairo/>
<http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/a-sad-day-for-egypt-reflections-by-bishop-anba-suriel-on-the-coptic-church-bombing/>
<http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/dead-bodies-everywhere-video-from-the-coptic-church-bombing-graphic/>
<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/12/4790725/>
<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/stories/father-died-arms-exact-spot-outside-church/>



Nigeria: Maiduguri, Borno state

A Boko Haram double suicide bombing by two 7-year old girls in the main marketplace killed at least one and injured 18

Fr Gideon Obasogie (**UPDATE:** said "There are fears that this attack might mark the beginning of a series of Boko Haram attacks during the Christmas period...Attacks of this kind seem to be a reprisal of Boko Haram for the reconquest by the Nigerian army of areas of northern Nigeria that were under the control of the Islamist sect. It is also a way to encourage their members not to give in, showing that they are still able to hit in a big city like ours")

http://www.fides.org/en/news/61354-AFRICA_NIGERIA_The_Diocese_of_Maiduguri_We_fear_new_attacks_during_the_Christmas_period#.WE6eTcKQw5s

Monday December 12, 2016



Vietnam: Phuoc Co jail, Vung Tau

Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh (aged 50, husband of Tran Thi Hong, on [July 31, 2012](#) an appellate court in [Gia Lai](#) upheld his sentence of 11 years for "undermining unity"; showed signs of having been beaten by inmates during an [October 15, 2013](#) visit by his wife, said repeatedly that his life was in danger; has suffered from high blood pressure and sinusitis, on [August 17, 2016](#) was allowed a visit with his wife who later said "He was too weak to walk and officers had to help him into the meeting room...I give him medicine but officers dispense it irregularly"; reported on [October 12, 2016](#) to have been fed food and water contaminated with ground glass, lead, insecticide, and dead flies along with three other Christians; **UPDATE**: transferred to another prison, family not notified)

Tran Thi Hong (wife of Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh, taken from her home by police on [April 14, 2016](#) after she refused to answer questions concerning her [March 30, 2016](#) conversation with U.S. diplomats, beaten at the police station in [Pleiku, Gia Lai province](#), returned and dumped unconscious in the road in front of her home; taken by police at 6 AM on [May 13, 2016](#) along with her 18 year old son [leaving her other children unattended], abused for 3 hours which including having chopsticks forced into her mouth, released, her son was released later that day; **UPDATE**: arrived at Phuoc Co jail, Vung Tau, after waiting 3 hours in the rain was told her husband had been moved to another prison)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/ailing-lutheran-pastor-left-to-languish-in-vietnam-jail/77921>



Egypt: Cairo

Pope Tawadros II aka Wagih Sobhy Baqi Suleiman (**UPDATE**: presided at the funeral for the 24 victims of the [December 11, 2016](#) church bombing, said "God, protect us and your people from the conspiracies of the evil ones...It is the destiny of our church to offer martyrs")

Nora Sedki (government employee, demonstrated outside the funeral for the 24 victims of the [December 11, 2016](#) church bombing, said "People have a volcano of anger inside their chests")

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/egypt-mourns-25-christians-killed-church-explosion-44135416>

<http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/photos-from-the-funeral-of-coptic-orthodox-martyrs-killed-in-the-horrific-church-bombing/>



Canada: Toronto

Mary Wagner (aged 43, **UPDATE**: arrested after entering the waiting room of an abortion clinic in an effort to persuade the clients to leave, refused to agree to bail conditions that required her to avoid entering abortion clinics)

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/mom-tells-judge-my-baby-is-alive-because-of-mary-wagner>

Tuesday December 13, 2016



Vietnam: District 2, Ho Chi Minh City

Local authorities have been trying to close a church in favor of commercial development

Mai Thị Thanh T (mother of four, said "we live far away from the church, my children and I continue to come here to attend Mass and study the catechism. I am very angry with the authorities...who want to eliminate the parish")

Fr James Le Jang Niem (parish vicar)

Vietnam: Xuan Loc Prison, Dong Nai province

Tran Thi Hong (wife of Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh, arrived at Phuoc Co jail, Vung Tau on [December 12, 2016](#), after waiting 3 hours in the rain was told her husband had been moved to another prison, **UPDATE**: said "I arrived at Xuan Loc Prison the following day, and prison officials told me 'Chinh was not allowed to call his family or inform them that he had been relocated because he refused to accept his crimes. I told them that my husband did not do anything wrong and that they treated him in an inhumane way", later spoke with him by phone "He is kept in a cell that is away from others, and given food through a small window two times a day. Prison officers have taken away all his belongings including a copy of the Bible. They also didn't allow him to get food, medicine and clothes from me")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Feast-of-Our-Lady-of-Fatima-in-Ho-Chi-Minh-City-parish-threatened-by-the-government-39387.html>

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/ailing-lutheran-pastor-left-to-languish-in-vietnam-jail/77921>



Indonesia: Jakarta

Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama aka Ahok (**UPDATE:** blasphemy trial begun, pled innocent, stated: “I had no intention of insulting Muslims or insulting the clergy. On that basis, I plead with the judges to consider my exception plea”, charge arose from his criticism of an interpretation of the Quran that would prohibit non-Muslims from any elected office with power over Muslims)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2016/12/emotions-swirl-as-blasphemy-trial-begins-in-indonesia-against-ahok/>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/11/4749532/>



Egypt: Cairo

Angel Marcus (aged 40, injured in the [December 11, 2016](#) Sts Peter and Paul church bombing, hospitalized; **UPDATE:** **died**)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/12/4790725/>



Nigeria: Danbango village, Yauri local government area, Kebbi state

Joshua Wede (church leader, reported to have said “The district head of Yauri, accompanied by a Muslim vigilante group, came to our church and disrupted the worship service. They beat us and claimed that the land our church was built on wasn’t approved by the government. But it belongs to one of our church members, who gave it to us to build a place for our services. The mosque close by was not pulled down, despite the fact that they didn’t get additional approval to build on the land either. On 11 May, we were arrested and taken to prison, where we were beaten again and given hard labor. We had no opportunity to contact a lawyer, and some officials told us if we pleaded guilty we would be set free. We didn’t have anyone to speak to or anyone who could stand for us, so we agreed. Some representatives from the Christian Association of Nigeria came to court to plead that the hearing be postponed so that they could talk with us, but it was too late. We had already pleaded guilty. The final judgement was passed on 18 May and we were sentenced to three years’ imprisonment with hard labor or a fine of \$150 each”)

Kabiru (church leader, reported to have said: “I have been arrested many times on false accusations and have been imprisoned three times. It is all just an effort to frustrate evangelism”)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/12/4772864/>

Wednesday December 14, 2016



India: Tikariya village, near Banswara, Rajasthan state

Fr Stephen Rawat (attacked along with 20 parishioners for singing Christmas carols in a private home after a procession from Mass, hospitalized with 7 parishioners, said "I have no enemies, I was beaten because of my Christian faith...[the RSS paramilitary organization has a nearby hostel] where the ideology [Hindutva] is imparted to young people. It is not improbable that they were behind this attack against Christians")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/61375->

[ASIA INDIA Violence and abuse of Christians in view of Christmas#.WFKwsMKQw5s](http://www.fides.org/en/news/61375-ASIA_INDIA_Violence_and_abuse_of_Christians_in_view_of_Christmas#.WFKwsMKQw5s)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Rajasthan,-20-Carol-singing-Catholics-beaten-for-forced-conversions-39408.html>



Russia: Pyatigorsk, Stavropol region

A.D. Posokhov (fined US\$81 for possession of banned religious literature)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2287

Thursday December 15, 2016



Iraq: Karamles

Fr Thabet (returned to his home after ISIL was pushed out, described their deliberate destruction of Christian homes: "It seems they wanted to make sure nothing of value would remain. The effect is a mounting feeling of hopelessness among the Christians when they discover the damage. They will really need time to recover from this news, to adjust to the new perspective of living in displacement longer than they might have expected...That my family's house. It's completely destroyed. ISIL used to shoot mortars from there...People have the feeling that their history has been erased [with the

destruction of family photos]. They feel emotionally displaced because of this...There is no electricity, no water, nothing. Do you know how difficult it is to start cleaning without water available? This process is going to take longer than some people have expected. We have to prepare for a long time of reconstruction. Yet, I firmly believe this is Christian ground, and I will work hard to help the Christians return to this place – God willing, to live here in peace”)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/12/4776149/>

Friday December 16, 2016



Egypt: Cairo

Odette Saleh (aged 63, injured in the [December 11, 2016](#) Sts Peter and Paul church bombing, hospitalized; **UPDATE: died**)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/12/4790725/>



Russia: Sernur district, Mari El republic

Vasili Zaitsev (fined US\$80 for organizing a religious festival)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2306



Nigeria: Issele-Azagba, Delta region

Fr Jude Onyebadi (abducted, ransom demanded)

Fr Sylvester Onmoke (said "the recent spate of kidnappings of priests and religious as an assault on the Church")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/61415->

[AFRICA NIGERIA Another priest kidnapped in the Delta region#.WFqmZIMrKM8](#)

Saturday December 17, 2016



China: Changsha, Hunan province

Jiang Tianyong (human rights attorney, abducted by police on November 22, 2016; **UPDATE:** reported to have been charged with illegally revealing state secrets)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Jiang-Tianyong,-a-Christian-lawyer,-arrested-by-police-on-charges-of-revealing-state-secrets-39433.html>



India: Imphal, Manipur state

Rev Solomon Rongpi (described attacks on two churches in which the attackers threw stones and posted signs reading “No one is allowed to worship and celebrate Christmas without prior permission”, the attacks came after militants from mostly Christian tribes attacked a police station and killed 3 policemen following their loss of tax exempt status)

Archbishop Emeritus Thomas Menamparampil (**UPDATE:** called on people “for a well thought-out solution [to the tribal conflict]. Meanwhile, pray for Manipur”)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Curfew-imposed-in-Manipur-after-two-church-attacks-and-threats-against-Christians-to-stop-Christmas-celebrations-39472.html>



Pakistan: Chishtian, Bahawalnagar district

Saiba Masih (aged 3, daughter of Shafqat Masih and Catherine Bibi, sister of Altaf and Daud, raped, hospitalized, underwent surgery, reportedly will not be able to conceive)

Daud (aged 10, son of Catherine Bibi, brother of Saiba Masih, told by a Muslim neighbor to buy cigarettes when he was supervising his sister, returned to find she had been raped, tried to comfort her until their mother arrived, has felt guilty for leaving her)

Catherine Bibi (mother of Altaf, Daud, and Saiba Masih, sanitation worker, under pressure by Muslim leaders to not pursue prosecution of her daughter's rapist)

<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6277>
<http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-mother-calls-for-prayers-to-help-get-justice-for-3-year-old-daughter-who-was-raped-by-neig>

Sunday December 18, 2016



Indonesia: Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara province

Four men alleged to be Protestants disrupted Mass in the Catholic cathedral

Kistoforus Mbora Kaka (chairman of the Kupang branch of the Union of Catholic University Students, spoke concerning church security "The police must be able to ensure that this Christmas everything is calm so we can mark the birth of the Savior with peaceful hearts")

Yuvens Tukung (said "People should remain calm and leave everything entirely to law enforcement agencies")

Petrus Selestinus (attorney, said "There are indisputable facts that tolerance, harmony and security in the province is under threat")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/tense-indonesian-christians-worry-about-christmas-security/77938>



Jordan: Karak

Fr Rifat Bader (**UPDATE**: commented on a terror attack that killed 10 and injured 27)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Jordanian-priest:-Karak-attack-work-of-local-terrorists-to-undermine-the-country's-unity-39443.html>



Egypt

Hanaa (aged 21, newlywed of 40 days, sister of Mina Samuel, abducted while on her way to church, US\$15,563 ransom demanded)

Mina Samuel (electrician, brother of Hanaa)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1797&A=28889>

Monday December 19, 2016



Vietnam: Ho Chi Minh City

Bishop Peter Nguyen Van Kham (said "Negative issues still remain in the relationship between the government and religions", added that the new law regulating religions "fails to properly care about the people's need for religious activities")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/religious-believers-in-vietnam-experience-increasing-repression/78138>



Bangladesh: Dhaka

Nirmol Rozario (**UPDATE**: said that the government will be providing extra security for 62 churches across the country on Christmas)

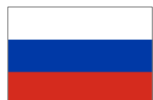
<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Police-deployed-to-protect-62-Dhaka-churches-39452.html>



Turkey: Ankara

Andrey Karlov (Russian ambassador, husband of Marina Karlova, father of Gennady, **shot dead** while speaking at an art exhibition by an elite police officer with ties to ISIL)

<http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/patriarch-kirill-prays-for-andrey-karlovs-repose/>



Russia: Maikop, Adygea

Yuri Dachev (fined US\$81, reason not reported)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2306

Tuesday December 20, 2016



Egypt: Cairo

Magy Momen (aged 10, student, volleyball player, Scout, injured in the [December 11, 2016](#) Sts Peter and Paul church bombing, hospitalized in critical condition with shrapnel in her brain, had not responded to treatment; **UPDATE: died**)

<http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2016/12/20/maggie-10-the-27th-martyr-of-church-attack/>



Russia: Naberezhny Chelny

Pastor Victor-Immanuel Mani (husband, father of a 12 month old son, Indian citizen, convicted of illegal missionary activity only 2 hours after prosecutors filed their case and so was illegally denied legal representation, fined US\$488)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2261

Thursday December 22, 2016



India: Raikia, Kandhamal district, Orissa state

Fr Pradosh Chandra Nayak (sent a letter to police requesting protection for churches during Christmas, said "Every year during the Christmas holidays, as a precautionary measure we ask the police protection, to guarantee the peace of the Christian community, who could still end up in the crosshairs of Hindu fanatic groups. We hope that nothing unpleasant happens, and that Christians can celebrate Christmas in peace. We will pray for the coming of Christ who is the Prince of peace")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/61421->

[ASIA INDIA Christians in Orissa seek protection for Christmas#.WFvsfFMrKM8](#)



Nepal: Salyan

Four Christians were convicted of witchcraft, false imprisonment, and violence for praying over a mentally ill woman, all sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment, the woman and her family denied the charges

Ruplal Pariyar (husband of Ganga Pariyar, arrested on [July 21, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: convicted)

Ganga Pariyar (wife of Ruplal Pariyar, arrested on [July 21, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: convicted)

Lali Pun (arrested on [July 21, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: convicted)

Bimkali Budha (arrested on [July 21, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: convicted)

Rupa Thapa (arrested on [July 21, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: acquitted)

Rev Mukunda Sharma (organized an appeal)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/12/4789977/>



Pakistan: Faisalabad

Church pastors reassured of police protection during Christmas

Pastor Aftab Nazir

Pastor Ashfaq Masih

Fr Bashir

Pastor Emric Joseph

Pastor Ishaq Khan Pasha

Pastor Kamal Chughtai

Pastor Khursheed Bashir

Pastor Nazir John Gill

Pastor Peter Riaz

Pastor Safeer Qadir

Pastor Shakeel

Pastor Shamaun

Pastor Professor Tahir Javed

Pastor Tahir Naushad

Pastor Waqar Manzoor

Pastor Zahoor

<http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/faisalabad-christmas-gaiety-to-be-souped-up-by-fool-proof-security-at-churches/>



Ethiopia: Gelemiso

Four teenaged girls from Babile were released from an adult prison after being sentenced on November 15, 2016 to one month's imprisonment on a charge of inciting religious violence, they had distributed a book that gave Christian answers to questions posed in an Islamic book about Christianity, pretrial incarceration was not counted as time served

Deborah (aged 18, arrested on September 20, 2016, later said "It is an honor to be jailed for God's Kingdom"; released on bail on October 19, 2016, re-arrested hours later, reason unknown; **UPDATE**: released)

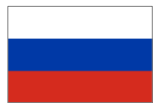
Eden (aged 15, arrested along with her mother on September 20, 2016, beaten, mother released the next day, later said "This is an honor for us. We should expect persecution. We are not afraid. We are singing and praying here in prison"; **UPDATE**: released)

Gifti (aged 14, arrested on September 23, 2016; **UPDATE**: released)

Mihiret (aged 14, arrested on September 23, 2016; **UPDATE**: released)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/01/4886909/>

Thursday December 22, 2016



Russia: Sharypovo, Krasnoyarsk region

Igor Osipenko (fined US\$480 on November 10, 2016 because the sign outside his church did not state its full legal name; **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

Russia: Tver

Ebenezer Tuah (Ghanaian citizen, detained on July 31, 2016 for performing baptisms in a sanatorium, fined US\$748 on August 1, 2016; appeal denied on November 9, 2016; **UPDATE**: second appeal denied)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2306



Chile

Bishop Hector Eduardo Vargas SDB (**UPDATE**: spoke on the 16 churches that had been destroyed by arson in Araucanía province "It is very serious but we must vigorously condemn this kind of facts that do not contribute to an overall solution to the problems in the area, nor of the Mapuche people, nor of the rest of civil society")

http://www.fides.org/en/news/61444-AMERICA_CHILE_Work_for_Araucania_go_ahead_despite_the_arson_attacks_on_churches#.WGXaE1MrKM8

Friday December 23, 2016



Iraq: Bagdad

Rayan al-Kildani (described an attack on two liquor stores, said 8 Christians and one Yazidi were killed)

Joseph Warda (human rights activist, said "What a bloody gift they gave us for Christmas")

Maria Polos (retired schoolteacher, said "We fear getting killed like those in the alcohol shops. We feel we're aliens in this country")

<http://www.aina.org/news/20161225150242.htm>

Saturday December 24, 2016



Myanmar

Assistant Pastor Dom Dawng Nawng Latt (cousin of La Jaw Gam Hseng, disappeared, had told media of the [December 3, 2016](#) bombing of the church in [Mongkoe township](#), last seen near a military base)

La Jaw Gam Hseng (cousin of Dom Dawng Nawng, church youth leader, disappeared, had told media of the [December 3, 2016](#) bombing of the church in Mongkoe township, last seen near a military base)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2016/12/clergymen-missing-helping-reporters-cover-bombing-church-building-burma/>

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/concern-mounts-for-two-missing-baptists-in-shan-state/78053>



Uganda: Kitoikawononi village, Butebo county, Pallisa district

Peninah Fatuma Asiire (convert, single mother of three, home destroyed after she refused to revert to Islam)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2016/12/christians-flee-single-mother-homeless-christmas-attacks-eastern-uganda/>

Sunday December 25, 2016
Christmas – Western Calendar



China: Shanghai

Zheng Enchong (aged 66, husband of Jiang Meili, civil rights attorney, sentenced in [2003](#) to 3 years[imprisonment for defending people against local corrupt officials; released in [2006](#), placed under house arrest; detained and tortured on [June 17, 2009](#); **UPDATE:** allowed to attend Christmas services without restrictions, his police escorts expressed goodwill, one office confided “My mother visits that church in Zhabei District that we were at several times a week. The next time you go to church, I’m prepared to be a believer”, attributed the relaxation of his surveillance to a government anti-corruption campaign that has apparently ensnared the corrupt officials he has opposed)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/01/epoch-times-confined-shanghai-lawyer.html>



Uganda: Obokora village, Pallisa district

Pastor Erod Okaali (church attacked by 19 masked Muslims, beaten along with 15 parishioners, 5 seriously injured with broken bones)

Yasiini Mugoya (convert, beaten)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2016/12/christians-flee-single-mother-homeless-christmas-attacks-eastern-uganda/>

Monday December 26, 2016



Thailand: Bangkok

Maherwar Ishaq (Pakistani asylum applicant, subjected to an attempted rape by a Pakistani embassy official when she applied for a passport renewal)

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-charity-says-pakistan-embassy-worker-sexually-harassed-tried-to-drug-asylum-seeker-186214/>



Yemen

Fr Tom Uzhunnalil SDB (aged 57, Indian citizen, abducted when armed men attacked a nursing home in Aden on March 4, 2016, killing 16 employees and residents including 4 nuns; **UPDATE:** appeared in a video and appealed for help in his release, reported his health was in decline)

[http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Fr.-Tom,-kidnapped-in-Yemen,-is-alive-and-asks-Pope-for-help:-I-have-been-forgotten,-I-need-care-\(VIDEO\)-39501.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Fr.-Tom,-kidnapped-in-Yemen,-is-alive-and-asks-Pope-for-help:-I-have-been-forgotten,-I-need-care-(VIDEO)-39501.html)



Egypt: Assiut

Amir Mourice (pharmacist, reported to have been abducted, ransom demanded)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1803&A=28990>



Russia: Oryol

V S Sidorov (fined US\$82 for handing out religious literature)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2306

Tuesday December 27, 2016



China: Hohhot, Inner Mongolia

Zhang Kai (civil rights attorney; disappeared in [Wenzhou, Zhejiang province](#) on [August 25, 2015](#), apparently detained in response to his defense of churches during the cross removal campaign; reported as of [August 31, 2015](#) to have has been sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment for 'endangering national security' and 'gathering a crowd to disturb public order', denied legal representation due to the national security charge, has been held in a 'black' jail outside of the normal judicial review, had said "I've made up my mind: the most they can do is jail me. But if I stay silent, I'll regret it my whole life"; appeared on Chinese television on [February 26, 2016](#) where he confessed "Such religion cases are sensitive, they can lift my fame quickly and bring some economic interest. Foreign countries also focus on the cases, it also improves my fame overseas"; reported on [March 23, 2016](#) to have been released from the 'black jail', has returned to his home; posted a statement on the internet on [August 30, 2016](#) "With a Christian faith and a free conscience, I am officially stating that the interview with a number of media...over the trial of Zhou Shifeng was against my own will...My elderly parents were living in fear and worry during the six months of detention. [I was] powerless to resist the pressure imposed by a strong regime...I am willing to confess to God for weakness and fear in my heart and spirit and I ask the forgiveness of other family members of 709" [709 is the name of the group of dissidents and Christians, derived from the number detained in mid-2015], the statement was quickly removed, fled his parents' home [in [Hohhot, Inner Mongolia](#)] before it was surrounded by police, on the run; **UPDATE** arrested)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/12/zhang-kai-back-in-police-custody.html>



Pakistan: Lahore

Fr Joseph Louis (aged 66, **UPDATE: died of cardiac arrest**)

[http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Fr-Joseph-Louis,-%22activist-for-Lahore%E2%80%99s-poor%22,-has-died-\(photos\)-39540.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Fr-Joseph-Louis,-%22activist-for-Lahore%E2%80%99s-poor%22,-has-died-(photos)-39540.html)

Wednesday December 28, 2016



Egypt: Assiut

Amir Mourice (pharmacist, reported on [December 26, 2016](#) to have been abducted, ransom demanded; **UPDATE**: reported to have been released)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1805&A=29026>



Russia: Kemerovo

Pastor Olga Matyuzhova (fined on [November 27, 2016](#) for an unauthorized public sermon; **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2306

Thursday December 29, 2016



China: Hohhot, Inner Mongolia

Zhang Kai (civil rights attorney; arrested on [December 27, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: released)

China: Langfang, Hebei province

Han (described an attack by gang members who were hired by government officials in an attempt to force a church to close so that it could be seized without adequate compensation "My son and his friend went out to eat, and, when they had finished eating, came out [of the restaurant]. Seven or eight gangsters surrounded them, dragged them from the car and beat them up. His friend was injured so badly that he could barely open his eyes. He was bleeding profusely, and his nose bridge was fractured. The police came out after I reported the case, but they colluded with the gangsters. We went to the police

station and recorded the incident, but nothing was done about it. On the next day, several church elders went to the municipal government to petition...We are prepared to petition the provincial government,” Han said. “First of all, we are not violating any laws. Secondly, we are defending our legal rights. The believers are not afraid of any consequences, even death. Today, the brothers, sisters, and leaders from every church throughout the Langfang area came to support us, promising that they would accompany us even to Beijing. We have about six or seven thousand believers now”)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/12/zhang-kai-released-after-two-day.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/01/christian-protestors-hospitalized-after.html>

Friday December 30, 2016



China: Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, Xinjiang province

Ma Huichao (on trial for 'gathering a crowd to disturb public order' for a church meeting, trial currently in adjournment as of [November 30, 2016](#), attorney prohibited from entering a plea of innocent; **UPDATE**: convicted, sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/01/xinjiang-woman-receives-three-year.html>



Pakistan: Kamahan village, near Lahore

Pastor Babu Shahbaz (aged 41, son of Vero Masih, arrested on Quran desecration charges)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/61462->

[ASIA PAKISTAN A Christian arrested for alleged blasphemy#.WG0X3IMrKM8
http://morningstarnews.org/2017/01/christian-pakistan-jailed-vindictive-blasphemy-charge-sources-say/](http://morningstarnews.org/2017/01/christian-pakistan-jailed-vindictive-blasphemy-charge-sources-say/)

<http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/lahore-police-arrests-christian-over-alleged-blasphemy-charges/>



Egypt: Hurghada

Fr Benjamin (church reportedly subjected to a bomb hoax)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1806&A=29060>



Russia: Ulyanovsk

Pastor Vitaly Shmidt (fined US\$496 for distribution of unapproved religious literature)

Russia: Vladivostok

Hegumena Kseniya Chernega (Russian Orthodox Church legal department, complained of government destruction of confiscated Salvation Army Bibles, prosecutors agreed and asked the court to rescind its order)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2261

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2306

Saturday December 31, 2016



Pakistan: Sukkur, Hyderabad district, Sindh province

Munawar Gill (described an attack on 20 Christians by police which was motivated by a effort to drive them from their homes)

Bishop Kaleem John (**UPDATE**: condemned the attack n which 20 Christians were injured)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/61458->

[ASIA_PAKISTAN_Land_grabbing_and_assault_on_Pakistani_Christians_in_Sindh#.WG0YiVMrKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/61458-ASIA_PAKISTAN_Land_grabbing_and_assault_on_Pakistani_Christians_in_Sindh#.WG0YiVMrKM8)

<http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/sukkur-mission-compound-attack-draws-a-ripple-of-protest-from-church-of-pakistan/>



United States – Missouri: St Louis

John Ryan (arrested on domestic terrorism charges while standing on a sidewalk outside an abortion clinic, clinic was searched for explosives but was not evacuated, released on his own recognizance the following day, the arrest was allegedly made to justify newly proposed anti-protest legislation)

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/missouri-pro-lifer-begins-2017-in-jail-after-suspicious-arrest-outside-plan>

December 2016, date unknown



China: Hangzhou, Zhejiang province

Senior Pastor Joseph Gu Yuese (husband of Zhou Lian Mei, was reported on [February 3, 2016](#) to have been arrested on embezzlement and corruption charges, sent to a black jail, had written that his church had been experiencing “unprecedented, chilling trials. Everyone must equally rely on the Lord’s grace to confront [this trial] and triumph over it”; released on [March 31, 2016](#), placed under travel and meeting restrictions; **UPDATE:** re-apprehended [before Christmas](#))

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/01/authorities-arrest-highest-profile.html>



India: Dokawaya village, Chhattisgarh state

Samari Kasabi (aged 55, mother of Sukura, stripped naked, **beaten to death**, and burned by her neighbors in [early December 2016](#), other Christians in the village converted to Hinduism as a result)



Iraq: Karamles

Jalal (said of conditions in his village "Everything is damaged. Houses have been burned by fire. There's no water, no anything. People will only return if there is some sort of promise of protection")

<http://www.aina.org/news/20170415141513.htm>



United Kingdom: Luton

Chris Oakey (principal of Luton Pentecostal Church Christian Academy, said that students were questioned behind closed doors by Ofsted inspectors on [December 16-18, 2016](#) about 'British values' and their beliefs about human sexuality, one student described the questioning as "patronizing" and "entrapment")

United Kingdom: Windsor

Wesley Richards (chairman of the management board at The King's House School, said "We were criticized for our safeguarding, whilst [Ofsted] inspectors are allowed to interview our children behind closed doors, without a teacher present and without parental consent. We were unable to verify what questions were asked or the manner in which they were put to the children. Our teachers are required to leave doors ajar or blinds up if they happen to be the only adult present - something Ofsted does not practice...Ofsted is operating without accountability and undermines the 'British values' it promotes, by failing to show respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, in this case, Christian", added that the inspector said to teachers on [December 16-18, 2016](#) "Do you teach about other religions or do you pretend they don't exist?" and was overheard on the phone to say "I think I can nail this one on progress in reading and writing alone")

<http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/education/ofsted-has-gone-too-far-say-christian-schools>

Today's Martyrs

For more information please visit our web site at: <http://todaysmartyrs.org/>

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