

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – April 2017

Saturday April 1, 2017



China: Xining, Qinghai province

Pastor Li Mutian (ordered by the Religious Affairs Bureau and the DSPP on [March 23, 2017](#) to 'suspend all gatherings' of his church, refused; **UPDATE**: officers returned and told church members they would be criminally liable should they continue to meet)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/05/authorities-lock-pastor-in-own-house-to.html>



Pakistan: Sheikhpura, Punjab province

Ansar Masih (aged 21, son of Nasreen Bibi, brother of Samina Bibi, abducted by the family of a Muslim woman he had befriended, stripped, beaten and tortured until unconscious, dumped at his family's home, hospitalized, moved to a specialized burn unit, said "I am still traumatized by the attack and am too scared to leave my home. The men hurt me so bad, they kicked, me punched me, bit me, spat at me, hit me with bars and then burnt me after I first watched them heat the poles they had beaten me with in their fireplace. I was simply a friend of Jameela we did not have any physical affair, but this family simply hate Christians and have enacted such brutality on me because to them I am just like rubbish. I lost consciousness during the burning and then found myself in hospital. I am still in pain and will be scarred for life but at least I am alive. God preserved my life and I will stay forever indebted to him")

Samina Bibi (aged 30, sister of Ansar Masih, filed a police report after her brother was abducted and tortured, police have detained only one assailant)

Nasreen Bibi (aged 50, mother of Ansar Masih, said "My son's life is precious to me, he has undergone brutality the likes of which I have never seen before. I am still shocked by the violence that he has survived and thank God that he is recovering. The men that hurt him so bad deserve to be punished and I am praying God will bring justice into this situation as it happens to so many young Christian men")

<http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-man-burnt-with-hot-rods>

Sunday April 2, 2017



Egypt: Naja Rizq Shenouda hamlet, Tahta district, Sohag province

Bishop Asheiya (wrote in a newly published letter “The Copts of Naja Rizq Shenouda have suffered since 1971 on account of the refusal of the local authorities to grant them a permit to build a church on a 618sq.m plot of land owned by the Church and officially registered as Church property. There is no church in the hamlet which is home to some 3,500 Copts, the Copts worship in a rundown building — if it can be termed ‘building’ — that has no ceiling and thus no privacy and is moreover unshielded against weather conditions”)

Youssef Sidhoum (editor of the Coptic newspaper al-Watani; **UPDATE:** wrote that the church building license was referred to provincial security by the governor in January 2017 in violation of the 2016 Law for Building and Restoring Churches)

<http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/04/02/law-for-building-and-restoring-churches-trouble-in-sohag/>



France: Alfortville

Pastor Gilbert Leonian (husband, church pelted with stones on [March 25, 2017](#), interphone damaged; **UPDATE:** church and home subjected to an arson attack, not injured, said the attack was "a surprise in such a quiet neighborhood")

http://evangelicalfocus.com/cities/2448/Evangelical_church_attacked_near_Paris



Paraguay: Caacupe

Bishop Claudio Gimenez Medina (televised homily cut off by the government after he criticized all political parties and branches of government for the current constitutional crisis)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/62057-AMERICA_PARAGUAY_The_Bishop_of_Caacupe_on_the_situation_The_authorities_that_govern_us_are_the_real_culprits#.WOT1_28rKM8



Venezuela: Caracas and Merida

Church leaders spoke out after the national legislature was dissolved

Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino (**UPDATE:** said "The National Assembly is still blocked. I am deeply concerned about the state of emergency in our country regarding poor economic growth which has persisted for the past twelve months. This situation is not normal. Neither are other measures such as the annulment of the revocatory referendum and postponement of elections for governors. This creates a situation of dictatorship")

Cardinal Baltazar Enrique Porras Cardozo (**UPDATE:** said "corrections to sentences are simply cosmetic changes which do not resolve the situation, since they fail to recognize the National Assembly as an autonomous body thus confusing the people. We continue to uphold valid the request made by Cardinal Parolin, last year, to restore the regular function of Parliament... If parliament is to be accused, it must be the people who decide, however at the moment, the real needs of the people are food and medicine")

Date: April 2, 2017

Locations:

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/62049->

[AMERICA VENEZUELA Concern for social tension this creates a dictatorship wa_rns_Cardinal_Urosa_Savino#.WON-5m8rKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62049-AMERICA_VENEZUELA_Concern_for_social_tension_this_creates_a_dictatorship_wa_rns_Cardinal_Urosa_Savino#.WON-5m8rKM8)

Monday April 3, 2017



Pakistan: Islamabad

Prof Anjum James Paul (**UPDATE:** appeared before the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority [PEMRA] with documentation concerning the television drama 'Baji Irshad' depiction of Christians "There is desecration of religious symbol as there are vulgar dialogues wearing holy Cross. There is racial discrimination as well because there are nick names like Kala Joseph [black Joseph], Peeno, Meedan, Chitti etc...Only Christians in the drama have been presented as non-serious, inferior, beggars, thieves, greedy, without etiquettes, superstitious, scandalizing their daughters, disrespecting parents, disrespecting husband, disrespecting mother...and love affairs but Muslims have been presented very decent and well-mannered. Only Christians have been presented doing menial jobs...Only Christians have been presented uneducated as they wrongly speak Urdu and English language. But it is strange that when they speak with any Muslim then

no wrong pronunciation. The biased writer has deliberately ignored the true picture of Christians who have been torch bearers in education, health, defense and many other fields", the PEMRA officials showed little interest in his presentation)

Pakistan: Uggoki, Sialkot

Ameen Masih (aged 45, husband of Rakhil Bibi, father of three, beaten in his home over a debt dispute)

<http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/pemra-biased-against-christians-grumbles-pakistani-christian-educationist/>

<http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/sialkot-christian-viciously-burnt-alive-over-money-matter/>
<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6392>



Uzbekistan: Tashkent

Yelena Potorochina (home in [Yakkasaray district, Tashkent](#) raided by police during a [March 24, 2017](#) discussion of Christianity among five women, books and electronics seized;
UPDATE: fined US\$2,056)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2280



Sudan: Omdurman

About 20 men attacked and beat Christian women at a church school, then stabbed Christian men who came to their aid

Younan Abdulla (church elder, husband, father of two young children, stabbed, hospitalized, **died**)

Ayoub Kumama (stabbed, hospitalized, released)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/04/mob-kills-christian-elder-evangelical-school-sudan-omdurman/>



Egypt: el-Arish, Sinai

George (aged 62, husband of Sabreen, reported to have been threatened by ISIL with death, in hiding, said "We still don't feel safe here. ISIL know exactly where we are. The security forces are suffering even more than we are: they are also being slaughtered")

Sabreen (aged 53, wife of George, reported to be in hiding, three friends killed by ISIL)

<http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/04/03/they-called-my-husband-an-infidel-and-killed-him/>



Russia: Kirovo-Chepetsk district, Kirov region

Fr Sergei Kriulin (Russian Orthodox Church Abroad member, fined US\$89 for performing a "graceless" rite according to another Orthodox priest)

Russia: Novgorod

P V Kotlyarenko (fined US\$142 for illegal missionary activity for conversing with a street vendor about God)

T A Mandrichenko (fined US\$107 for illegal missionary activity for conversing with a street vendor about God)

Russia: Svetly, Kaliningrad region

L G Pyshnaya (acquitted of illegal missionary activities on [December 8, 2016](#); prosecutorial appeal denied on [January 11, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: second prosecutorial appeal denied, acquittal upheld)

Russia: Vladivostok

A V Rudenko (foreign citizen, fined US\$533 for illegal missionary activity, ordered deported)

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



Greece: Athens

Metropolitan Ignatius Georgakopoulos (aged 61, reported to have said that the country was heading for catastrophe because it will have only 8 million people by 2030 due to abortion, social immaturity, devaluation and belittling of motherhood and the family, false prosperity, and relativism: "Financial incentives are certainly necessary, but the long experience of the Church shows that the demographic problem has its basis primarily in spiritual causes")

<http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/102412.htm>



Nigeria

Kwamkur Samuel (Director of Legal and Public Affairs, Christian Association of Nigeria, reported to have written a letter to the DSS [Department of State Services] protesting the detention of four CAN leaders: “Regrettably, despite assurances from your operatives, led by the Director of Operations, who said that the invitation was only to interact with these distinguished Nigerian Christians and to seek their opinion and advice on how to address the lingering ethno-religious crises in Nigeria, it turned out that the main reason behind the invitation was your interest in the video jingle produced by CAN...to raise funds for the support of the Church and distressed Christians in Nigeria. It was shocking to hear from your establishment that these materials were made to incite violence in response to the attempted annihilation of the Church in Southern Kaduna. With all due respect, such analysis and conclusion were vexatious and very wrong. Unfortunately, you ignored our request while also insisting that the persons invited should report to your Head Office as a matter of extreme urgency, individually and on different dates. The most worrisome and reprehensible aspect of the whole exercise is that these respectable Nigerians, with the exception of General Dogonyaro, were compelled to write statements 'under caution' as if they were common criminals”)

Lt Gen Joshua Dogonyaro retired (CAN leader, reported to have been interrogated by the DSS)

Justice Kalajine Anigbogu (CAN leader, retired justice, reported to have been interrogated by the DSS, forced to write a statement)

Mrs Osaretin Demuren (CAN leader, reported to have been interrogated by the DSS, forced to write a statement)

Mr Tunde Lemo (CAN leader, former Deputy Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria, reported to have been interrogated by the DSS, forced to write a statement)

Dame Priscilla Kuye (CAN leader, former President of the Nigerian Bar Association, reported to have been scheduled for interrogation by the DSS)

Solomon Asemota (CAN leader, reported to have been scheduled for interrogation by the DSS)

Bosun Emmanuel (CAN leader, reported to have been scheduled for interrogation by the DSS)

Rev Dr Samson Olasupo Ayokunle (CAN President; **UPDATE**: reported to have been scheduled for interrogation by the DSS)

Rev Dr Musa Asake (CAN General Secretary; **UPDATE**: reported to have been scheduled for interrogation by the DSS)

<http://dailypost.ng/2017/04/03/dss-can-demands-apology-detention-leaders/>



United States - California

Sandra Palacios (California Catholic Conference associate director for governmental relations, criticized a proposed law that would make it illegal for any church to require its employees to sign an acknowledgement that they would abide by Christian beliefs related to 'reproductive health')

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/how-a-california-bill-is-threatening-faith-based-codes-of-conduct-78338/>

Tuesday April 4, 2017



Australia: Bankstown

Mike (aged 30, assaulted on a train by four Muslim men who ripped off his cross and stomped on it while saying "F*** Jesus", punched and kicked in the face, back and shoulders, girlfriend hit and kicked by two Muslim women, five uniformed transit officers watched but did nothing other than to call police who met the train at the next stop where they took statements, said "I've always worn my cross. For him to rip it off and step on it has to be a religious crime")

Rev George Capsis (has warned Christians to not wear religious symbols in Muslim enclaves, said: "This is not an isolated incident. There are gangs of these young fellows of Muslim background who have been harassing people they identify as Christian...You don't hear about it because no one's reporting it")

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/rendezview/we-rush-to-condemn-islamophobia-what-about-antichristian-attacks/news-story/2bb6f9a158146e963355a6da3adbe70a>



Pakistan: Gujranwala

Suvera (daughter of Rozi Bibi, abducted, forcibly married and converted to Islam)

Rozi Bibi (mother of Suvera, reported her daughter's abduction, under pressure to settle the case)

Sardar Mushtaq Gill (attorney; **UPDATE:** said "This issue needs to be tackled by authorities seriously because these cases are prevalent in Pakistan and culprits put counter pressure on the victim's family to withdraw the charges of abduction and get compromised with the abductors")

Pakistan: Uggoki, Sialkot

Ameen Masih (aged 45, husband of Rakhil Bibi, father of three, beaten in his home on [April 3, 2017](#) over a debt dispute; **UPDATE:** **burnt alive** in his home by his attackers)

Rakhil Bibi (widow of Ameen Masih, mother of three, is distraught at her husband's murder)

<http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/sialkot-christian-viciously-burnt-alive-over-money-matter/>
<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6392>

<http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/gujranwala-christian-girl-forcibly-converted-after-abduction-police-reluctant-to-act/>

<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6400>



Uzbekistan: Tashkent

Tatyana Bezhenova (Russian citizen, passport seized by police at the home of Yelena Potorochina on [March 24, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: deported)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2280



Kazakhstan: Taraz, Zhambyl region

Yakov Fot (fined US\$724 for leading a worship service)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2285



Iraq: Bagdad

Yonadam Kanna (Member of Parliament; **UPDATE**: reported to have said "The real estate mafia has struck again. These criminals get counterfeit papers and property deeds to claim assets, houses or businesses owned by Christians forced to leave the country in recent years because of wars and violence...The problem began with the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and involved thousands of seized homes and property. With respect to Christians, we are talking about hundreds of homes and businesses")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Organised-crime-seizing-Christian-assets-in-Baghdad,-says-Iraqi-lawmaker-40378.html>



Syria: Khan Shaykun, Idlib province

Archbishop Antoine Audo SJ (**UPDATE**: commented after a nerve gas attack on civilians "In this fragmented situation, with many interests and actors involved, it is difficult to be sure one hundred percent of the way things are. But what we know based on our experience, I

just cannot imagine that the Syrian government is so naive and ignorant to be able to do such 'errors'")

http://www.fides.org/en/news/62070-ASIA_SYRIA_Massacre_of_Idlib_Bishop_Antoine_Audo_destabilizing_issue_and_what_carries_weight_are_the_interests_of_the_forces_involved_in_the_war#.WOTxvG8rKM8



Russia: Pervomaisk district, Kirov

Consmance Maziku (citizen of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, student, fined US\$534 for posting a video on his VKontakte social media page inviting fellow Congolese students to Church events)

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



Central African Republic: Ngaoundaye

Fr Aurelio Gazzera OCD (**UPDATE:** said "...a group of former Seleka rebels entered the village, ransacking homes, and the two missions in the area, that of the Capuchin Fathers and that of the Polish religious of the Sisters of Divine Charity of Saint Giovanna Antida Thouret. There seems to have been at least four deaths. Thanks to the intervention of MINUSCA [UN Mission in Central Africa] the militiamen withdrew...Some of our mission nuns who were going to the border with a van found the road blocked by thirty armed men, who forced them to follow them as they entered the village...This is a small village which lies at the border of the Central African Republic with Chad and Cameroon, in the extreme northwest of the Country... The sisters told me that the bandits were well armed, but were not molested ...Until substantial forces of MINUSCA peacekeepers and soldiers of the regular army are deployed, the north-west border area will remain in the hands of various armed groups created by former Seleka and their anti-Balaka rivals")

http://www.fides.org/en/news/62078-AFRICA_CENTRAL_AFRICA_The_Catholic_missions_of_Ngaoundaye_have_been_attacked_the_bandits_fled_at_the_arrival_of_the_Blue_Helmets#.W0cStvkrKM8



Nigeria: Riyom local government area, Plateau state

Davou Joro Mangai (attacked by Fulani herdsmen, seriously injured, cactus trees cut down)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/herdsmen-plateau-state-nigeria-quietly-seizing-christians-property-pastors-say/>



United Kingdom: York

Archbishop John Sentamu (reported to have criticized the National Trust for removing 'Easter' from the Easter Egg Hunt it operates with Cadbury, said "If people visited Birmingham today in the Cadbury World they will discover how [John] Cadbury's Christian faith influenced his industrial output. He built houses for all his workers, he built a church, he made provision for schools. It is obvious that for him Jesus and justice were two sides of the one coin. To drop Easter from Cadbury's Easter Egg Hunt in my book is tantamount to spitting on the grave of Cadbury", Cadbury denied involvement in the removal)

<http://www.itv.com/news/tyne-tees/2017-04-04/archbishop-of-york-in-row-with-cadbury-and-national-trust-over-easter-egg-hunt/>



United States – Florida: Orlando

Marshall Polston (suspended from college on [March 24, 2017](#) after he challenged a Muslim's professor's class statement that Christianity was false and a Muslim student's advocacy of Sharia punishment of homosexuals; reinstated on [March 30, 2017](#) after his professor filed a false police report alleging violation of her restraining order against him and he proved with credit card receipts and security video that he was in a restaurant with his grandfather in another town at the time; **UPDATE**: the professor withdrew her restraining order)

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/muslim-prof-s-lawsuit-against-christian-student-dismissed-by-florida-judge-179707/>

Wednesday April 5, 2017



India: Jadhua village, Bihar state

Pastor Sikandar Kumar (aged 45, attacked along with his congregation by Hindu radicals on [February 10, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: lured from his home by a boy on a bicycle, severely beaten by Hindu radicals, lost his hearing due to neurological damage)

Pastor Arun Kumar (**UPDATE**: described the attack on Pastor Sikandar Kumar “When the pastor stepped out [of his home], 15 men started beating him and accused him of conversions in the village. They badgered his head with iron swords and sticks. Pastor Sikandar fell down unconscious: he had a deep injury on his head. He was bleeding severely”, has assumed pastoral leadership in Pastor Sikandar Kumar's absence, has received death threats, added "More than 100 families attend the church. The police have provided us security for the Sunday worship")

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/05/pastor-india-loses-hearing-assault-hindu-extremists/>



Kazakhstan: Stepnogorsk, Akmola region

Ruslan Sadvakasov (arrested for handing out religious literature on [January 28, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: indicted)

Valery Zhigalov (arrested for handing out religious literature on [January 28, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: indicted)

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



Russia: Prigorodny district, Sverdlovsk region

Five Christians were acquitted of unauthorized religious activity in a rehabilitation center, activity was authorized

O A Porokhova

P V Kornilov

S I Golovachev

V I Novoselov

V L Poluboryatsev

Ye V Kalinin

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



Nigeria: Jol village, Riyom local government area, Plateau state

Emmanuel Gankis (crops destroyed by Fulani herdsmen)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/herdsmen-plateau-state-nigeria-quietly-seizing-christians-property-pastors-say/>

Thursday April 6, 2017



Philippines

Archbishop Socrates Villegas (**UPDATE**: reported to have said that although Christians are not persecuted in the country "we have begun to persecute Christian beliefs")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/bishop-vows-to-fight-persecution-of-christian-beliefs/78877>



China: Fuan

Bishop Vincent Guo Xijin (aged 59, imprisoned in 1990; released in 1992; imprisoned in 1993, released in 1994; imprisoned and released in 1996; **UPDATE**: detained for 20 days to 'to study and learn')

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Underground-Mindong-Bishop-Guo-Xijin-missing-for-four-days-40436.html>



Kazakhstan: Karaganda

Fariza Iskakova (indicted in Satpayev, Karaganda region on February 17, 2017 for distributing religious literature; fined US\$669 on March 9, 2017; **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

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



Tanzania: Zanzibar

Pastor Yahana Madai (church service disrupted by a 9 year old Muslim girl on [November 10, 2014](#); arrested on [November 11, 2014](#) after the girl's father alleged that he had touched her breast and removed her veil when he stopped her disruptions the previous night, released the next day, case closed a few days later due to lack of evidence; charges refiled in [early March 2017](#); **UPDATE**: charges dismissed, rearrested on unspecified charges while leaving the courthouse)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/04/muslims-zanzibar-tanzania-jail-pastor-child-abuse-allegation-scheme-group-says/>



Russia: Prigorodny district, Sverdlovsk region

Anna Kosharnova (church in [Nizhny Tagil](#) fined US\$842 on [February 8, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

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



Mexico: Ciudad Juarez

Pastor Chito Aguilar (aged 62, former drug trafficker, said "...eight people walk into a church, one or two will remain at the doors and the others will start collecting watches, rings, wallets...everything. So they become an easy target of the attackers...Seven years ago, the situation was very difficult in Ciudad Juarez. Lots of pastors were kidnapped, their children killed. It seems like for four years we had a period of calm, but in the last year the violence has started increasing again. Pastors are starting to be extorted, leaders threatened with kidnapping, and I believe that among the pastors there is fear because of what we lived and experienced seven or eight years ago")

Adrian Lara (church musician, said "The city of Juarez has been known around the world because the violence has been really hard. Today, in 2017, it's less prevalent. But in 2012, it was very terrible. Every businessman was called by people, who said: 'If you don't pay, we are going to kill your children, or burn your house. We are going to do many things to you if you don't pay'")

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/04/christians-easy-targets-in-mexicos-lawless-borderlands/>

Friday April 7, 2017



Indonesia: North Bekasi, near Jakarta, West Java

Rasnius Pasaribu (church secretary; **UPDATE:** reported to have said "Such protests [against their new church construction] challenge our efforts to maintain diversity. No matter what. We will celebrate Holy Week in a shophouse where we have been holding Sunday services. We will work with police and local people to guard the celebrations")

Indonesia: Bogor, West Java

Rev Abdi Saragih (**UPDATE:** reported to have said of Holy Week celebrations "We have no other place [to meet other than their closed building]. We will hold the celebrations in the house even though there might be protests...It is not easy being a Christian. Carrying a cross is our task")

Indonesia: Parung Panjang

Tyas Utomo (parish council deputy chairman, reported to have said Holy Week celebrations will be in a tent "as this is the only facility we have...We cannot guarantee that Easter celebrations will be safe as there is potential threat")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/indonesian-christians-wary-of-easter-protests/78879>



Thailand

Sarafina Sarfaraz (fled [Pakistan](#) on [January 9, 2014](#) after receiving threats to convert to Islam; **UPDATE:** refugee, has obtained a retirement visa to avoid arrest, cannot afford to renew the visa)

<http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/elderly-asylum-seeker-with-health-conditions-seeks-help-with-cost-of-retirement-visa-in-thailand>



India: Dathauli area, Maharajganj district, Uttar Pradesh state

Pastor Yohannan Adam (church service of 150 worshippers including 11 U.S. tourists interrupted by Hindu radicals)

Dev Raj (parishioner, friend with the U.S. tourists, said "We were all shocked. My friends said: "Is this what normally happens in India? That you visit a church and are mobbed by a group of men?")

Usha Devi (present when Hindu radicals interrupted her church service, said: "[I] have found peace and God. But now I feel extremely scared")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62103->

[ASIA_INDIA_In_a_church_in_Uttar_Pradesh_Hindu_extremists_stop_prayers#.WOxAxPkrKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62103-ASIA_INDIA_In_a_church_in_Uttar_Pradesh_Hindu_extremists_stop_prayers#.WOxAxPkrKM8)

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/christians-forced-stop-church-prayers-india-accusations-conversions-179919/>

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-church-harassed-after-conversion-allegations/78924>



Russia: Moscow

Vasily Kalin (elderly chairman of the Jehovah's Witness Administrative Center, Siberian exile survivor, testified at the Supreme Court hearing which will decide if the Witnesses are an extremist organization, showed the post-Soviet government certificate that listed him as a rehabilitated victim of political repression and asked "What kind of certification does the Ministry want to present to people whom it declares to be extremists?")

Russia: Ufa, Bashkortostan

Pastor Mikhail Pugachyov (case dismissed on [March 1, 2017](#) due to the statute of limitations; **UPDATE:** prosecutorial appeal dismissed, case closed)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Experts-slam-baseless-charges-in-recessed-Jehovah's-Witnesses%E2%80%99-trial-40448.html>

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

Saturday April 8, 2017



Bangladesh: Dhaka

Nirmal Rozario (general secretary of the Bangladesh Christian Association; **UPDATE:** spoke at an interfaith council "In recent years, minorities have been pressed against the wall. We are not just deprived of our rights by the state but also face abuse and oppression from the majority community...Bangladesh is turning into a dangerous place for minorities, similar

to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Minorities can't survive here without these [proposed] [proposed] protective measures")

Theophilus Nokrek (**UPDATE:** said the church was backing the interfaith council's proposals with reservations)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/bangladeshi-interfaith-group-creates-charter-of-minority-rights/78913>

Sunday April 9, 2017



India: Sitabedi village, Khandwa district, Madhya Pradesh state

Amarsingh (aged 35, arrested on illegal conversion charges)

Kishor Barela (aged 30, arrested on illegal conversion charges)

Prabhakar Barela (aged 39, arrested on illegal conversion charges)

India: Jahanpur village, Ghazipur district, Uttar Pradesh state

Krishna Paul (beaten by a Hindu mob which then turned him over to police, released)

India: Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan state

Saji Mathew (arrested on false conversion charges along with seven parishioners, released)

India: Keeranur, Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu state

Gunasekaran (prayers with extended family in his home interrupted by government officials, told he required approval for his actions despite having led family prayers for 24 years)

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/three-christians-held-for-attempting-conversion-in-madhya-pradesh-4607223/>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/04/indias-churches-also-targeted-palm-sunday-modi-stays-silent/>



Pakistan: Faisalabad

Pastor Shahid Masih (attempted to file a police report after parishioners were threatened with dire consequences if they engaged in a religious procession, some parishioners were beaten, police arrived two hours too late, said "If police had provided security to the congregants [as requested] this incident had never have took place")

<http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/faisalabad-vandals-attack-palm-sunday-procession-congregants-seek-protection/>



Burundi: on the Concorde Bridge over the Ruzizi River

Fr Adolphe Ntahondereye (abducted)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62267->

[AFRICA BURUNDI A priest died in April because of the ill treatment suffered#. WRXJv_krKM8](#)



Egypt: Tanta

A suicide bomber attacked a church during the Divine Liturgy, killing 30 and wounding 78

Fr Bishoy Wadie (present during the attack, survived)

Fr Daniel Maher (father of Deacon Beshoy Maher, said “In just seconds, the entire church was filled with smoke, fire, blood, and screams...He was like an angel, standing in the middle of the deacons singing”)

Deacon Beshoy Maher (aged 23, son of Fr Daniel Maher, **killed**)

Emil Edward (brother of Edmond Edward, wounded in the head, hospitalized)

Wahby Lamie (one nephew was killed in the bombing and one injured, said “How much longer are we going to be this divided? Anyone who’s different from them now is an infidel, whether they’re Muslim or Christian. They see them as infidels. How much longer are these people going to exist?”)

Madeleine (housewife, said “I saw a blue light on the belt of a person who was next to the deacons, then the explosion took place”)

Edmond Edward (brother of Emil, said “After the explosion, everything became dark from the smoke. There was a clear lapse in security, which must be tightened from now on to save lives”)

Susan Mikhail (apartment across the street shaken in the blast, said “Deacons were the first to run out of the church. Many of them had blood on their white robes”)

Deacon Magdy George Youssef (aged 58, thrown under a pew by the explosion, said “All I could think of was to find my wife, and all I could see was smoke, blood and completely charred bodies”, later found his wife at home with burns on her face)

Deacon Rafet Habshy (cousin of Hany Ezat, injured)

Hany Ezat (cousin of Deacon Rafet Habshy, said after the explosion “As a Coptic Christian, I no longer feel safe in Egypt”)

Vivian Fareeg (said “There was a huge explosion in the hall. Fire and smoke filled the room and the injuries were extremely severe”)

Fr Youssef Sabry (said “How did this suicide bomber reach the nave? Where were the security forces who were guarding the church? How did they allow a person wearing a suicide vest to enter the church without searching him?”)

Deacon Michael Nabil Ragheb (aged 29, pharmacist, husband of Dr Sara Fekry, father of Priscilla, son of Nabil Ragheb, **killed**)

Dr Sara Fekry (widow of Michael Nabil Ragheb, said "On Palm Sunday he was actually one of those responsible for the hymns, so on Sunday morning the three of us went to the church to attend the Liturgy and celebrate the feast of Palm Sunday. Michael asked me not to sit in the front row of benches, but to sit in the back of the church and wait for him there until after the celebration. He then got dressed in his deacon clothes and started with the service. I didn't know why he asked me to do sit in the back of the church, but it was God's will, as in the middle of the service, at about 9.10am, the explosion took place. I heard the sound of a very huge explosion and the whole church shook like it was struck by a violent earthquake. Then it became dark in the building and people started to scream. For a moment, I thought it was Judgment Day, but then I got up and rushed to the front of the church, where the choir of deacons had been standing. When I got there, I saw many bodies and body parts lying in a pool of blood. It was like a massacre and I got a very big shock when I found Michael, lying on the ground in a pool of blood...My husband lived the life of heaven on the earth. He continuously prayed and read the Bible. I'm very happy for him as I know he is in a good place, with Jesus in heaven")

Priscilla (aged 3, daughter of Michael Nabil Ragheb and Dr Sara Fekry, granddaughter of Nabil Ragheb, present in the church during the explosion, no reported injuries)

Nabil Ragheb (father of Michael Nabil Ragheb and Kerolos Nabil Ragheb, said ""On Sunday morning I was surprised by one of my neighbors, who was knocking on the door of my flat, asking me where Michael and his wife were. I told her they went to Mar Girgis. She then told me that she heard about an explosion that had taken place at Mar Girgis. I immediately rushed to the church. When I arrived the street was filled with a great number of people, including police and ambulance personnel. I saw one of Michael's friends and when I asked him if he knew where Michael was, he told me that he had gone to heaven. Then I went in to the church and found my son drenched in blood...Michael was a very kind person. He had a very strong relationship with God and is now in a very good place, in heaven, where he will celebrate Easter with Christ")

Kerolos Nabil Ragheb (brother of Michael Nabil Ragheb, said “The parting of my brother is very difficult for us. At the same time, however, we are very happy for him because he met his fate and went to heaven. We, on the other hand, are still struggling in this mortal life, and our fate isn't known yet. I love him so much and I hope to be with him soon. I'm sure that he is in very good place in heaven, with the others who died because of their faith and with the Saints. I envy him. I want to say to my martyred brother: 'I love you so much and I want to be like you'. I also want to say something to ISIL: 'I'm ready to die

for my faith, like my brother. It's my desire to follow him in this. I'm waiting for you, so don't delay and please tell me which church you will bomb next so I can wait for you there. I look forward to meet Jesus, so please don't delay, as I wait for you")

Fr Ishak Habib (uncle of Michael Nabil Ragheb, said "Michael was very diligent. He was top of his class in university, where he graduated from the Faculty of Pharmacy with distinction. He was also a graduate from the Coptic Theological College. He was successful, both in his working life and spiritual life. He was a son of the Church from childhood onwards and was a very obedient, humble and honest person. Since 2006 he served at Mar Girgis as a deacon, teaching the children in Sunday school. We are sure that he has gone to a good place, to heaven, and that comforts us")

Ashraf Ramzy (aged 25, said "My father and I still have headaches and a buzzing sound that has been in our ears since after the attack. The microphone made a really intense noise, then I was sure something was about to happen. I even thought of leaving the prayer. It was 9:05 when the bomb exploded. I was standing next to my father behind a column, and we were ten steps away from the blast. [It was] horrific...everyone was scattering around, looking for loved ones...looking for a wife or for a son. Anyone that was far from sight could have been dead...What can we do? Are we expected to stop praying? We're not going to stop praying")

Ishaq Ibrahim (Coptic activist; **UPDATE:** said "the idea is that the solution isn't in an emergency law, already existing laws could be used properly to remove discriminatory policies and hate speech...when putting the most recent attacks into context of Egypt, part of the problem is that sectarianism, whether societal or institutionalized, is not taken seriously. The state is doing nothing to fight the roots of this discrimination...There's clearly something faulty [with government policy] if in the past six months we have seen three bombings and Christians have been displaced from their homes in Arish")

Mina Thabet (**UPDATE:** said "There's a huge question mark around the state's strategy in combating terrorism. From 2011 until now, these terrorist operations have moved from the borders and hot spots like Sinai to the heart of the capital and to the cities of the Nile delta. At the same time, there's an increase in human rights violations happening on the premise that this is for the fight against terrorism. The attackers are only gaining more confidence and expertise, and developing ways by which to kill more victims each time...Now Christians are the primary targets, but no one knows who is next")

Mina Abdo (husband of Yvonne, father of Kerollos and Miriam, engineer, Kuwaiti resident, had returned for a visit, **killed**)

Kerollos (aged 11, son of Yvonne and Mina Abdo, brother of Miriam, Kuwaiti resident, injured in the explosion with shrapnel wounds to the face and right leg, hospitalized)

Yvonne (widow of Mina Abdo, mother of Kerollos and Miriam, doctor of gynecology, Kuwaiti resident, present during the attack, said "I love Egypt. I love my memories here. But I'm scared now. We will come back for visits, we must. My husband is buried here")

Miriam (aged 14, daughter of Yvonne and Mina Abdo, sister of Kerollos, Kuwaiti resident, present during the attack)

Egypt: Alexandra

A suicide bomber attacked the cathedral but did not get through the security checkpoint, 17 were killed and 41 wounded

Pope Tawadros II (**UPDATE:** was finishing the Divine Liturgy when the attack occurred, refused to move after the explosion and sat in prayer)

Rezk Helmy Kelnton (said "I saw blood stains on the church roof, 30 meters high. And I saw a man with his intestines pouring out of his body. Hands and feet scattered everywhere")

Sameh Fahim (said "I walked just 20 meters out of the church and heard the sound of a huge explosion. White dust filled the place, body parts were flying through the air, people were screaming and running in the street. One was screaming, 'My son!', another was screaming, 'My wife!', and another was screaming, 'My grandson!', as they searched for their loved ones. I saw body parts like a body without a head, it was a terrifying sight")

Fr Sergius (assistant to Pope Tawardos, said "The Church will celebrate Easter and the terrorism cannot prevent it from doing that. We will not...let them break our joy")

Patriarch Ibrahim Isaac Sidrak (aged 61; **UPDATE:** said "The day of the attacks I was in Alexandria celebrating the Divine Liturgy in our Cathedral, which stands only 200 meters away from the Copt Orthodox Cathedral. We clearly heard the loud explosion...from all over we receive requests to tighten security measures in front of churches in view of our Holy Week liturgies. And we churches have to pay the price for security services. I have no intention of accusing anyone, but many are saddened to see the same attacks time and time again, with the same method, nothing seems to change. In this situation, very often it is our lay people who offer comfort and support and hope to all. Let us pray that the Lord will demonstrate his victory and change the hearts of these murderers")

Amgad Bakheet (rickshaw driver, witnessed the suicide bomber self-detonation, hospitalized with shrapnel wounds)

Naseem Fahim (father of George Naseem Fahim, church security guard, **killed**)

George Naseem Fahim (son of Naseem Fahim, took his father's place as a church security guard after his father was killed, said "I'm continuing what he started. Why worry or be afraid? He has gone to heaven, and I am ready to join him if necessary")

Karim Ghattas (husband of Mary, injured, hospitalized)

Mary Ghattas (wife of Karim Ghattas, injured, hospitalized)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Attacks-on-Egypt%E2%80%99s-churches,-what-really-happened-40431.html>

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/04/09/death-toll-rises-following-cairo-church-bombing-on-palm-sunday/>

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/04/10/priest-mourns-deacon-son-killed-in-egypt-terrorist-attacks/>

<http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/04/09/how-much-longer-will-security-be-this-incompetent-says-survivor-of-egypt-church-attacks/>

<http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/04/09/bombings-at-egyptian-coptic-churches-kill-36-injure-more-than-100/>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/04/16492/>

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62113->

[AFRICA EGYPT Copt Catholic Patriarch let us look to the new martyrs and ask more insistently for Christ to protect us in hope#.WO2hi krKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62113-)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/04/real-toll-egypts-palm-sunday-attacks-devastated-lives/>

<http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/04/17/after-church-bombings-egyptian-christians-are-resigned-but-resolute-2/>

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1880&A=30414>

<http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/egypt-church-bombings-leave-copts-insecure-in-the-face-of-isis-threats>

<http://www.aina.org/news/20170514153146.htm>

Monday April 10, 2017



Tajikistan: Khujand

Pastor Bakhrom Kholmatov (arrested by the NSC secret police on charges of 'extremism', condition unknown)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2276



Venezuela: La Victoria, Aragua state

Br Diego Bedoya (Colombian citizen, **stabbed to death** in his office, food stores for the elderly and for disabled children stolen)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62104->

[AMERICA VENEZUELA Franciscan brother murdered food provisions for old people and disabled children stolen#.WO2kUvkrKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62104-)



Chile: Ercilla district

Bishop Hector Eduardo Vargas SDB (**UPDATE**: condemned the arson attack on a church)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/62107-AMERICA_CHILE_Another_evangelical_church_is_torched#.WO2jo_krKM8

Tuesday April 11, 2017



Indonesia: Surabaya, East Java

Church security has been reportedly increased after six suspected terrorists were shot dead by police and three arrested

Yohanes Kanto (diocesan official, said "They aren't afraid and many attended Palm Sunday Masses the day after the incidents")

Indonesia: Jakarta, West Java

Rev Jeirry Simampow (**UPDATE:** said "We are putting on a brave face and, but our guard is up")

Maria Wijaya (aged 53, said "I believe Jesus Christ will protect us")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/indonesian-christians-on-alert-after-terrorist-deaths/78921>



India: Gujarat state

Fr Jimmy Dabbhi SJ (criticized the state government for increasing the penalty for killing a cow to life imprisonment as "nothing but a political gimmick to garner votes and divide communities")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-nationalists-increase-cow-slaughter-penalty/78908>



Belarus: Minsk

Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz (**UPDATE:** said at a news conference regarding the government regulation of the ministry of foreign clergy "I don't know any country which has this. The Law is not in line with the spirit of the age and should be amended", added that an upcoming meeting of European bishops will require that each get government approval to say Mass)

Wednesday April 12, 2017



China: Lieshan District, Huaibei, Anhui province

Pastor Chen Shixin (arrested and charged with 'damaging forestry resources')

Gu Quanzhao (described the arrest of Pastor Chen Shixin “The people from Duji District forcibly occupied 3,000 mus [494 acres] of land [in Lieshan District] for more than 20 years. They ought to have returned the land by now, but they nevertheless do not want to comply with the law. Those people want to build a temple here, so they are trying hard to find our faults. We contracted 20 mus [3 acres] of land on a hill, and we cleaned up the weeds and wild vegetation from previous cultivation. They then accused us of damaging more than 3,000 trees, which we’ve never laid our hands on”, administratively detained for 10 days)

China: Wezhou

Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin (**UPDATE**: detained by police, whereabouts unknown)

[http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Msg.-Peter-Shao-Zhumin,-bishop-of-Wenzhou-\(underground\)-seized-by-police-40473.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Msg.-Peter-Shao-Zhumin,-bishop-of-Wenzhou-(underground)-seized-by-police-40473.html)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/05/anhui-authorities-deceive-pastor-into.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/06/officials-arrest-pastor-detained-on.html>



India

Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX (**UPDATE**: said following several attacks on Christians on Palm Sunday "We are distressed that people have begun taking the law into their own hands in various matters. This is not good for the country and not good for social and religious harmony. We call upon the prime minister to rein in these unruly forces and restore India's image")

Dr John Dayal (**UPDATE**: said “The rash of violence against Christians, disrupting Palm Sunday prayers speaks of a heightened impunity. We suspect a more direct collusion of police and local authorities, especially in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan [Indian states currently ruled by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party - BJP] in an aggressive competition to prove they are the most

nationalist defenders of Hindutva [Hindu nationalism], cleverly disguised as a ‘way of life’. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the chief ministers of the states, including Yogi Adityanath of [Uttar Pradesh], cannot shrug off their responsibility and must be held accountable for...encouraging, directly or indirectly, their political and religious cadres”, added that Modi's condemnation of the ISIL church bombings in Egypt "...should not blind us to this violence against a community that numbers a mere 26 million in a population of a billion and a quarter and is extremely vulnerable. Threats by government members in Parliament and state legislatures for a ban on evangelization, extra-judicial curbs on the freedom of faith and expression, and a penetration of the police and sections of the judiciary by Hindutva elements makes it a real and present danger to freedom of religion in secular India...[it] camouflages bigotry and persecution, acts as a smokescreen and helps evade international scrutiny")

India: Santacruz West, a suburb of Mumbai, Maharashtra state

Sajan K George (**UPDATE**: condemned the desecration of a crucifix with a garland made of slippers)

India

Christians and their political allies protested the federal government's decision to hold Digital India Day events on Good Friday, the government cancelled the event in Christian majority Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram states after two of them refused to observe it

Chief Minister [Governor] Mukul Sangma (aged 51, physician, said “I have written to the [federal] union cabinet secretary because it is necessary for me to express concern on behalf of the people, with special reference to the north-east, which has a significant Christian population. We have to be candid in asking: ‘What is their agenda?’ Observing Good Governance Day at Christmas [in 2015] and now Digital India Day on Good Friday. Are they trying to marginalize the minority?”)

Alwan Masih (general secretary of the Church of North India; **UPDATE**: said “Our appeal fell on deaf ears. Good Friday is a sacred, holy occasion for all Christians. It will be inappropriate to have the Digital Day on Good Friday, as it will hurt the religious sentiments of the Christian community”)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Cross-desecrated-in-Mumbai:-garland-of-slippers-twisted-around-body-of-Christ-40470.html>

<http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/amid-rise-in-anti-christian-violence-church-wants-indian-prime-minister-modi>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/04/indian-christians-protest-good-friday-launch-digital-india-day/>



Sweden

Ellinor Grimmark (aged 40, wife of Carl Johan, mother of two, refused employment as a midwife because she refused to perform abortions, as of [March 6, 2014](#) has filed a discrimination complaint; reported on [November 30, 2015](#) to have lost her employment appeal in a Swedish court, the court ruled in effect that her rights had been violated but that the maternity clinics' right to provide abortions superseded her rights, has been forced to work as a midwife in Norway; as of [April 15, 2016](#) has appealed the lower court decision, has been ordered to pay all court costs for the defendant - a municipal maternity clinic - which total approximately US\$100,000, will be forced to sell her home if her online fundraising fails; **UPDATE:** appeal denied by the Labor Court of Appeal, has not decided if she will appeal to the European Court of Human Rights)

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/swedish-court-denies-pro-life-midwives-appeal-its-reasonable-for-employer-t>

Thursday April 13, 2017



Pakistan: Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province

Christian and Muslim leaders condemned the killing of 23 year old Muslim journalism student Mashal Khan on his campus by a mob comprised of hundreds of university students after he posted comments on Facebook favorable toward the Ahmadiyya branch of Islam

Bishop Jimmy Mathew (**UPDATE:** said "I spoke with some local young people who told me that clashes had occurred in the past. The blasphemy charge is only to cover up the crime. The government has ordered an investigation. What is needed is exemplary punishment for this mob violence")

Rojar Randhawa (Caritas manager; **UPDATE:** reposted the graphic video made by the killers to his social media, wrote "This shows that we have sown hatred in society and now we are reaping the fruits of this hatred. This is not a new thing here. Religious extremism is at its peak in this part of the world")

Prof Anjum James Paul (**UPDATE:** said "When students at a higher education institute exhibit so much intolerance, what can we expect at the ground level?")

[http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christians-and-activists-outraged-by-student-lynched-for-alleged-blasphemy-\(Video\)-40479.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christians-and-activists-outraged-by-student-lynched-for-alleged-blasphemy-(Video)-40479.html)



Egypt

Bishop Raphael (General Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church, announced in the aftermath of the [April 9, 2017](#) double Palm Sunday church bombings that all celebration of Easter in the country will be cancelled)

Egypt: Qai village, Ezbet Saida, Beni Suef province

Gamal Bishay (aged 16, son of Allam Bashay Gabriel, **throat slit** while on the way to a private school lesson)

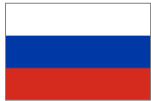
Allam Bashay Gabriel (father of Gamal Bishay, said “They slaughtered my son because of his faith in Jesus Christ. It’s a war on Christians, and all honest people should stand up to those who are waging this war”)

Samy (cousin of Gamal Bishay, said “There are many Islamic militants in Qai who were arrested by police after the deposing of the Muslim Brotherhood President, Morsi. However, since then they have been released. Why did the government do that? Did they release them so they could then come back and slaughter us? They targeted Gamal and killed him because he is a Christian and it was a message from them before Easter, to intimidate us”)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1882&A=30449>

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1877&A=30357>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/04/coptic-boy-16-murdered-islamic-extremists-seeking-scare-christians/>



Russia: Sterlitamak, Republic of Bashkortostan

R R Mannanova (fined an unknown amount on [March 15, 2017](#) for handing out the Gideons' New Testament; **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

V I Polkovnikova (fined an unknown amount on [March 13, 2017](#) for handing out the Gideons' New Testament; **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

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

Friday April 14, 2017



China

Wang Qiaoling (wife of imprisoned human rights attorney Li Heping; **UPDATE:** reported to have written of increased police surveillance "The cameras are staring at me, and there are several hefty guys...tailing me...The appearance of this cluster of cameras [across the street] unnerves me, and I can't help feeling frightened because no policemen had watched me even during the [annual parliament last month], and now I'm being tracked by cameras...From this point forward, if I haven't been heard from in more than an hour, it's possible that I have been disappeared")

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/liberty-04142017110742.html>



India: Sogandi, Tamil Nadu state

Fr Masiladaikalam Jacob (described the police suppression of a Good Friday service on public land "Government officials stopped the service midway, pulled down the altar and manhandled nuns")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-nuns-manhandled-at-good-friday-service/78961>



Pakistan: Lahore

Rani Mughal (church damaged in an arson attack, filed a court petition after police refused to file a report)

Kashif Sohail (social worker, said there were no injuries in the arson attack)

<http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/lahore-vandals-torch-church-torched-after-congregants-marked-good-friday/>



Iraq: Erbil, Kurdistan

Salam Ablaha (aged 36, grocer, refugee along with his extended family of 36 since August 2014, brother abducted and ransomed in 2007, reported to have said "None of us want to go back. We're still scared of what will happen after ISIL...Before 2003, we had a perfect life. I never thought about leaving. But we're a minority. We don't have support or someone to protect us. Christians are now waiting to go to Jordan and from there to Australia. Seventy per cent of the people from Hamdaniya have already left Iraq...By 2020, most Christians will have left Iraq")

Archbishop Bashar Matti Warda CSSR (**UPDATE**: reported to have said "It's very hard to maintain a Christian presence now. Families have ten reasons to leave and not one reason to stay. This is a critical time in our history in this land. We are desperate....We have to stay. But how many will stay? I doubt fifty, a hundred, or a thousand families will stay in the end. We will have to become missionaries")

<http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/war-terrorism-and-the-christian-exodus-from-the-middle-east>



Egypt: Minya

Bishop Makarios (**UPDATE**: reported to have said that the state of emergency declared after the double Palm Sunday church bombings will not help, added "We can consider ourselves in a wave of persecution, but the church has gone through a lot in 20 centuries")

Emad Aziz (aged 56, clothing salesman, reported to have said sales were down following the church bombings: "People are sad, and people buy new clothes when they are happy. The situation is really bad. Why would any Egyptian do this to his country? Is this loyalty to the country? Many people don't want Egypt to get better")

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-violence-christians-idUSKBN17F1YG>

Saturday April 15, 2017



China: Zhengzhou, Henan province

Pastor Xu Rongzhang (Taiwanese citizen, detained for leading worshippers in a Christian song on a Saturday, released, ID and visa held for 2 days)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/04/officials-declare-singing-worship-song.html>



Pakistan: Tehsil Bure Wala village, Vehari district, Punjab province

Maria (aged 14, daughter of Bushra Bibi, abducted at gunpoint from her home, money and jewelry worth US\$600 taken but the shouts of men outside the home indicate her abduction was the primary motive)

Bushra Bibi (widow of Ashraf Masih, mother of Maria, Tahmur, Hanook, and Kiran, said after Maria's abduction "Every day I am without my daughter I feel like dying. These men will do terrible things with Maria, she is so alone and vulnerable. I asked the men to take me and leave my children but they stole my eldest child from me. The police first refused to register a crime now they are doing little to retrieve my daughter. I just want her back safe and sound I fear I will be like many other mothers who never see their daughter again. The thought of this is filling me with despair. I have been praying for a miracle and plead with other Christians to pray for Maria")

Taimoor (aged 10 or 13, son of Bushra Bibi, threatened at gunpoint during their home invasion)

Hanooq (aged 8 or 12, son of Bushra Bibi, threatened at gunpoint during their home invasion)

Kiran (aged 5 or 11, daughter of Bushra Bibi, threatened at gunpoint during their home invasion)

Boota Masih (brother of Bushra Bibi, uncle of Maria, said "No action has been taken in order to recover our daughter")

Shahab Masih (grandfather of Maria, Taimoor, Hanooq, and Kiran, said "Let my voice be heard in front of the Chief Minister [Governor] of Punjab")

<http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/14-year-old-christian-girl-abducted-from-parents-home-at-gun-point>

<http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/gaggo-mandi-fir-registered-against-richling-for-sexually-assaulting-a-christian-teenage-girl/>

<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6470>



Nigeria: Asso, Jema'a local government area, Kaduna state

The Christian Association of Nigeria, Southern Kaduna branch, condemned a Fulani Muslim attack on Easter Vigil "It is with heavy hearts that we now tell the world that we have again commemorated another major religious festival mourning the death of 12 of our beloved brothers and sisters that were murdered in cold blood"

John Bwankwot (signed the statement, said "[local inhabitants] are so troubled on every side that at a time when we were supposed to be celebrating the suffering, death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ for the sin of mankind, we were plunged into wailing, the anguish of soul, bitter cries and burying loved ones...these continuous unprovoked attacks on innocent citizens have the potency of overstretching our peaceful nature and tolerance level")

Pastor Michael Maikarfi (signed the statement)

Fr Alexander Yayock (presided over the funerals of "at least 10 Catholics" following the attack on the Easter Vigil Mass)

Bishop Joseph Danlami Bagobiri (**UPDATE**: blamed the governor for the continuing crisis, said "He unabashedly takes sides with the armed herdsmen [his kinsmen], thereby failing in

his responsibility as a true statesman, becoming therefore a biased umpire who blames and criminalizes southern Kaduna victims as the cause of the mayhem”)

Samuel Adamu (**UPDATE:** said “Herdsmen keep on attacking us right under their [security forces] nose and nothing happens. Our people now have no option other than to defend themselves against these attacks”)

<https://guardian.ng/news/can-condemns-fresh-attacks-killings-by-herdsmen-in-southern-kaduna/>
<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/04/nigeria-bishop-blames-government-after-12-killed-in-easter-rampage/>



United Kingdom: Portsmouth

Bishop Philip Egan (**UPDATE:** said in a homily "In our world, two dangerous ideologies are mounting. Just as in the 20th century it was Communism versus Fascism, so in the 21st a new battle is brewing. On the one side is fundamentalism, religion without reason. It breeds fanaticism, violence, terrorism, to cause disruption and to force upon others its extremist views. This is a tragic reality in the volatile nations of the Middle East. It now threatens the West also. On the other side is secularism, reason without religion. Its champions seek to privatize religion, driving it out of the public domain. Egged on by Stonewall [a homosexual activist group] and by others, secularists are on the rise in local government, in education, in the media, in the social services, in the BMA, in the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, in the European Court of Justice, and in many other institutions too. Hell-bent on burying the Christian patrimony of this land, they propose Orwellian changes to our language and place ever more draconian restrictions on religious expression, even on what we wear. Both fundamentalism and secularism are extremes. They are totalitarian. They are destructive of the human person. They pose a grave threat to human happiness and to a healthy society...this is now having lethal consequences for the weakest, for the unborn child, for the handicapped, the elderly, the dying. This is why this Easter, as Christians, it's time we said, 'enough is enough!'. We need to rise up to the challenge. We need to roll back the agenda. We need to revive and celebrate our Christian history, art and architecture, music and literature, liturgy and ethics")

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/uk-bishop-teach-kids-bible-in-state-schools-to-combat-totalitarianism>



Venezuela: Merida

Fr Jose Luis Arismendi (aged 35, **died from meningitis and from lack of medicine** caused by government economic policies)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/62122-AMERICA_VENEZUELA_35_year_old_priest_dies_due_to_the_lack_of_medicines#.WPdhq_krKM8



United States – Alabama: Birmingham

Karleigh (aged 11 months, daughter of Danetris Caves, shot in the foot during an altercation at a church fair, released from the hospital)

Danetris Caves (mother of Karleigh, said "They really didn't know she was shot or grazed or whatever, but they know a bullet came her way where her stroller was and the stroller was flipped over. It is our first time coming out to a fair. You know, her first Easter, first birthday all in just two weeks and this happens? Just keep praising God because He's the reason that she's still here")

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/mother-praises-god-baby-shot-church-carnival-survives-180885/>

Sunday April 16, 2017

Easter and Pascha



Vietnam: Muong Khuong, Lao Cai province

Fr Peter Nguyen Dinh Thai (subjected to an attempted arrest as he prepared to celebrate Mass, people who surrounded him to protect him were pushed and shoved)

Fr Joseph Nguyen Van Than (**UPDATE:** said "I called provincial officials to tell them to intervene in the incident. Finally, the authorities left the house and Father Thai celebrated Easter Mass")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnam-authorities-harass-catholics-on-easter/78978>



Nepal: Kathmandu

Santosh Khadka (shot while returning home from church, underwent surgery, has had lingering fears but has hopes they will pass)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/07/nepals-christian-worker-who-was-shot-at-on-easter-says-hes-still-fearful/>



Kazakhstan: Taraz, Zhambyl region

Pastor Pyotr Panafidin (detained, fined US\$730)

Vitaly Ryzhkov (detained, fined US\$365)

Vitaly Relin (detained, fined US\$365)

Kazakhstan: Temirtau

Ivan Yantsen (aged 70; **UPDATE**: home raided by police during a worship service)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2275

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2285

Monday April 17, 2017



Vietnam

Vang Atu (aged 28, convert, father of two, said “...me and other believers in my village were having a prayer gathering at my house. Later that day, the local authorities knew about it and prohibited us from worshipping together. The first time they went to my house they didn’t say anything. But an hour later, they came and told us to stop the worship or else they will destroy my house...My brother took a club, it was about one and a half meters long, and used it to hit me on my arms. I raised my arm to block it. Blood dripped all over me. Now, my arm is fractured. My arm’s bone cracked and then the other people started destroying my house...If I continue to live there, something will happen to me. With what they said, I decided I must move to Central Vietnam”)

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/vietnamese-christian-brutally-beaten-banished-from-village-vows-to-return-share-gospel-with-oppressors-217435/>



India: Junwani village, Chhattisgarh state

Christians were prosecuted and fined for attending Easter services

Somari Komra (aged 40, forced to stand in the village square, fined, said "I will not stop going to church and I am ready to pay the fine and face the consequences of social boycott")

Shivaram Tekam (forced to give offerings to the local Hindu deity "I had to do this because I attended church on Easter Sunday", later told a local pastor "They can stop me from going to church but they cannot take Jesus from my heart. I will find ways and secretly come to church")

Kanesh Singh (aged 51, refused to pay his fine or renounce his faith, said "What crime have I committed that I should pay the fine? I have not stolen anything. I have not defiled any woman. I have not quarreled. I have not killed anybody. If you think going to church and worshiping Jesus is the crime, I will commit this crime every day")

<http://www.persecution.org/2017/05/13/indian-christians-fined-and-forced-to-convert-to-hinduism-for-attending-easter-service/>



Uzbekistan: Tashkent

Yelena Potorochina (home in [Yakkasaray district, Tashkent](#) raided by police during a [March 24, 2017](#) discussion of Christianity among five women, books and electronics seized; fined US\$2,056 on [April 3, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: fine reduced on appeal to US\$205)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2280



Russia: Oryol

Andrei Novikov (fined US\$78 in [Urisky district, Oryol region](#) on [March 10, 2017](#) for illegal missionary activity; **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

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

Tuesday April 18, 2017



China: Changji, Xinjiang

A meeting of leaders of several house churches was raided on [March 5, 2016](#) by 200 police, five were taken into custody, **UPDATE: all five were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment, all filed appeals**

Chen Yajie (**UPDATE:** sentenced to 4 years' imprisonment)

Liu Yan (**UPDATE:** sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment)

Wang Lulu (**UPDATE:** sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment)

Yang Zhaocun (**UPDATE:** sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment)

Zheng Lan (home raided; **UPDATE:** sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/05/christians-argue-sentences-illegal-file.html>



Nepal: Kathmandu

Fr Ignatius Rai (residence and cathedral damaged in an arson attack)

Fr Silas Bogati (**UPDATE:** noted the cathedral had been bombed in 2009, said of the latest arson attack "Nobody left anything in the church premise this time, so we don't know whether it was a personal attack or by some disgruntled organization")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/arson-attack-on-church-in-nepal/78977>

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/04/19/arsonists-attempt-to-set-fire-to-cathedral-in-nepals-capital/>



Pakistan: Lahore

Asia Bibi (**UPDATE:** reportedly the subject of new calls for her execution in the wake of the lynching of Muslim student Mashal Khan)

Fr Emmanuel Yousuf Mani (director of the National Commission of Justice and Peace;

UPDATE: reportedly condemned the televised "misrepresentations" made by a Muslim cleric who said that the execution of Asia Bibi [who has spent nearly a decade on death row for a blasphemy conviction] would have deterred the mob violence that caused the lynching of Muslim student Mashal Khan for similar allegations: "They should look at the reality. They should discourage people from taking the law into their own hands. The mosques should stop these provocative announcements")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Pakistani-Imam-call-for-Asia-Bibi%E2%80%99s-execution-after-the-lynching-of-Mardan-student-40497.html>



Kazakhstan: Temirtau

Ivan Yantsen (aged 70, home raided by police during a [April 16, 2017](#) worship service, ;
UPDATE: fined US\$729)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2275



Russia: Abinsk district, Krasnodar region

Vladimir Klimenko (fined US\$78 on [March 14, 2017](#) for illegal missionary activity on the internet; **UPDATE:** appeal denied)

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



Nigeria: on the road between Benin City and Onitsha

Fr Samuel Okwuidegbe SJ (aged 50, abducted along with two others)

Fr Rigobert Kyungu Musenge SJ (reported on the abduction of Fr Samuel Okwuidegbe)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/62137-AFRICA_NIGERIA_A_Jesuit_kidnapped_in_southern_Nigeria#.WPtW6vkrKM8

Wednesday April 19, 2017



Indonesia: Jakarta

Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama aka Ahok (blasphemy trial begun in [Jakarta](#) on [December 13, 2016](#), pled innocent; **UPDATE:** apparently defeated in his re-election bid, will remain as governor until October 2017 or he is convicted of blasphemy, said "Let's forget all of the problems faced during the campaign because Jakarta is home for us all. We will work fast, work hard to fulfill our promises and hopefully Mr Anies and Mr Sandi can continue our work. To our supporters we understand you're disappointed but it's OK because God

has decided. I also lost during the gubernatorial election in 2007 and I told my supporters then 'please be patient, this is God's plan' and what do you know? In 2014 I became Jakarta governor, so you never know")

Retno Setyawati (aged 53, said "What can I do? I must accept the election results. I am afraid he [Anies] would pay more attention to his supporters and that radicalism will grow in Jakarta")

Yohanes Handoyo Budhisedjati (political analyst, said "I can understand if religious minorities are worried and afraid after his [Anies] victory")

Meydie Early (aged 27, disappointed at Ahok's electoral defeat)

Kevin Reiner Hidayat (aged 22, said "We cannot imagine what will happen to us, as radicals who support him [Anies] have also made anti-Chinese statements")

Eko Suwarno (businessman, said "We will support him and we hope he [Anies] continues what Ahok has done")

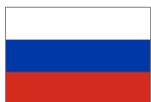
<http://www.ucanews.com/news/sectarianism-looms-as-anies-wins-jakarta-poll-in-quick-counts/78990>



Egypt

Karim Ghattas (husband of Mary, injured in the [April 9, 2017](#) suicide bombing of the Coptic cathedral in [Alexandria](#), hospitalized; **UPDATE: died**)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1880&A=30414>



Russia: Kyzyl, Tyva Republic

Marat Sharakhov (fined US\$18 for holding a religious gathering)

Russia: Muravlenko, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Region

Z Dzhafarov (fined US\$88 for sharing his religious views with his neighbors)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2282



Nigeria: Delta State

At least 16 churches have been victimized by armed robbers

Pastor Dam Ngozi Iyio (said “With these attacks on churches, members are not left out as many Christians have lost their cars in church premises while worshipping. Many cars have been snatched or stolen from church compounds in Asaba and other parts of the country”)

Pastor Blossom (frightened away robbers with flashlights)

Pastor Andrew Ozobeme (said “This attack is happening every day, we are afraid it will degenerate more than this as many churches have lost their musical equipment to these hoodlums. You close from church today, even very late, the next morning, you will be surprised that robbers have broken into the church and removed all valuables”)

Pastor Bethel Onuoha (condemned the church robberies)

Pastor Dan Ohanugor (church robbed twice)

<https://guardian.ng/news/hoodlums-attack-churches-in-delta-cart-away-offerings-musical-equipment/>



United Kingdom: London

Tim Farron (Member of Parliament, under attack for refusing to agree that homosexual behavior was not a sin and for saying "We are all sinners")

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2017/04/21/the-outrage-at-tim-farron-could-have-serious-consequences-for-christians-in-politics/>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/04/19/absolute-disgrace-tim-farron-fire-refusing-answer-asked-gay/>

Thursday April 20, 2017



Philippines: Bohol Island

Fr Chito Lozada (described local reactions to an [April 11, 2017](#) terror attack "It is natural for people to be afraid, especially because there are reports that [terrorists] are still here", added that Holy Week celebrations were not cancelled)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/appeals-for-calm-after-philippine-terror-attack/78997>



China: Guiyang, Guizhou Province

Archbishop Emeritus Andrea Aniceto Wang Chongyi (aged 97, **died of natural causes**, had been arrested during the Cultural Revolution and sent into forced labor)

China: Shenzhen, Guangdong province

Zhang Rongxian (wife of Pastor Zhang Fei, detained and questioned for 15 hours after a police raid on a church service, fingerprinted and blood drawn)

Pastor Zhang Fei (husband of Zhang Rongxian, said that the church's landlord begged that services stop after the police said the services were illegal)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/04/pastors-wife-interrogated-for-15-hours.html>

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62228->

[ASIA_CHINA_Death_of_Mgr_Andrea_Wang_Chongyi_one_of_the_oldest_Bishops_in_mainland_China#.WRHX5vnyuM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62228-ASIA_CHINA_Death_of_Mgr_Andrea_Wang_Chongyi_one_of_the_oldest_Bishops_in_mainland_China#.WRHX5vnyuM8)



India: Madhya Pradesh state

A bishop, two priests, a nun, and two lay people who were accused of illegal conversions in May 2009 were acquitted due to lack of evidence

Bishop Emeritus Mathew Vaniakizhakkal (acquitted, said the case was "part of a motivated campaign against the church for its role in helping weaker sections of society")

Fr Jolly Kannukodan (acquitted, said "The court has vindicated our stand. We had tough time going for bail and other proceedings, from police station to trial court and then to the high court. From day one we have been telling the investigators that this was a fake case aimed at discrediting the Catholic Church", added that they do not plan to bring a defamation suit against their accusers because "Christ has taught us to love even our enemies")

India: Pappathshola hills, Kerala state

A Communist state government demolished a hilltop cross, the Chief Minister [Governor] issued an apology

Varghese Vallikkat (bishops conference official; **UPDATE**: said "The demolition of the cross has pained the entire Christian community")

Fr Jose Karivelickal (said officials did not consult with Christians prior to the cross demolition "This is wrong. The government should have dealt with the issue more carefully")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Madhya-Pradesh:-After-eight-years,-bishop-absolved-from-charge-of-forced-conversion-40580.html>

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/catholics-exonerated-of-conversion-charges-in-india/79015>

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/cross-bulldozed-in-communist-led-kerala/79013>



Uzbekistan: Nukus, Karakalpakstan autonomous region

Christians were sentenced and fined for possession of religious materials and teaching without training or permission

Atamurat Tajimuratov (sentenced to 15 days' imprisonment)

Joldasbai Zhanabergenov (sentenced to 15 days' imprisonment)

Marat Mambetaliyev (sentenced to 15 days' imprisonment)

Salamat Biskeyev (sentenced to 15 days' imprisonment)

Barshyn Bazarbayeva (fined US\$1,624)

Sarbinaz Kaypbayeva (fined US\$1,624)

Yerkin Tansykbayev (fined US\$1,624)

Zamira Utemuratova (fined US\$1,624)

Zhamila Tajibayeva (fined US\$1,624)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2304



Palestine: Gaza

Fr Mario da Silva (Brazilian citizen, pastor of the only Latin-rite Catholic church in Gaza;

UPDATE: reported to have said "The situation is very difficult. Easter celebrations did not go well. There is a lot of fear among Christians because of the attacks in Egypt. Few, Catholic and Orthodox, have attended Mass, both. Only 50 people came to our church. As far as I know, 25 were Orthodox...There are fewer and fewer. Those who manage to get out do not come back. They seek peace elsewhere. On feast days, the church is increasingly empty")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christians-celebrate-Easter-in-Gaza-amid-restrictions-and-fear-of-terrorism-40525.html>



Congo, Democratic Republic: Malole, Kananga, Central Kasai

Fr Richard Muembo (seminary rector; **UPDATE**: spoke on the continuing civil conflict and its relation to ore extraction “Anyone who uses modern technology nowadays is in some way using the blood of the Congolese people. Looters from all over the world come here to exploit the country...The Catholic Church is highly respected in this country because it has never let itself be co-opted by any political group. Now attempts are being made to embroil the Church in the conflict...Schools have been closed, hunger reigns, parts of the population are hiding in the jungle...We dream of an end to this pointless war”)

Fr Apollinaire Cikongo (seminary teacher and bishops' conference secretary, said “We have also heard of superstitious rituals. They recruit children and adolescents, give them a potion and a ritual bath, and let them believe that they cannot be harmed by bullets, that they are immortal. And so they commit barbaric crimes, just as if they were under the influence of drugs”)

<http://members4.boardhost.com/acnaus/msg/1492648150.html>



United States – Michigan: Gaylord

Pastor Derek Hagland (shouted down while giving an invocation at a town meeting)

<http://christiannews.net/2017/04/25/prayer-at-michigan-town-hall-gathering-drowned-out-with-shouts-of-separation-of-church-and-state/>

Friday April 21, 2017



China: Guiyang, Guizhou

Pastor Li Guozhi aka Yang Hua (husband of Wang Hongwu, detained on [December 9, 2015](#) for ‘illegally holding state secrets’; attorney reported that he had to be carried by prison guards to their [March 20, 2017](#) meeting, leg ulcerated, has been in great pain; **UPDATE**: reportedly his health has improved, but further improvement is necessary)

Wang Hongwu (wife of Pastor Li Guozhi aka Yang Hua; **UPDATE**: reported to have visited her husband in prison with their younger son, said “We were forced to hang up only after 10 minutes of conversation. One of Yang Hua’s inmates laid him on his back and carried him to the meeting room. Although he still couldn’t walk, I could tell that the infections on his legs were under control, and the festering was also beginning to heal. His mental condition was good. Yang Hua cried when he saw his younger son, but we didn’t cry. We were so happy and full of gratefulness and peace...Yang Hua is a new prisoner, which means that only immediate family members are allowed to visit him, and only once a

month. The government is paying a lot of attention to Yang Hua. We were surrounded by police officers when we were chatting. He will stay in the [prison in Baiyun, Guiyang] for two-and-a-half months, and then he will be transferred to another prison”)

China: Wenzhou, Zhejiang province

Zhang Lingmei (disappeared into police custody when Christians attempted to prevent officials from installing video surveillance cameras in their church, two other Christians were severely injured)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/04/pastors-condition-improving-not.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/04/christians-report-spine-neck-injuries.html>



India: Uttar Pradesh state

Seven Catholic bishops met with the new Chief Minister [Governor], Yogi Adityanath, who was the founder of a Hindu youth organization responsible for the April 7, 2017 church invasion and who has been an opponent of Mother Teresa

Bishop Gerald John Mathias (said "We assured him of our prayers for the success of his work as the head of the government of the largest Indian state. We also expressed some concerns, calling for security and protection of our minority, especially in its places of worship. We also asked the eminent chief minister to investigate people who take the law into their own hands")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Uttar-Pradesh:-bishops-call-on-new-chief-minister-to-defend-persecuted-Christians-40560.html>



Pakistan

Salim Masih (aged 35, husband of Salma, father of Anum, Naveed, and Nabeel, home invaded by a former employer's henchmen, beaten, abducted, ransom of US\$382 demanded, police took no action, whereabouts unknown)

Salma (wife of Salim Masih, mother of Anum, Naveed, and Nabeel, home invaded by a former employer's henchmen, husband abducted, said "I have cried and prayed every day since Salim was taken from me. I have no idea if he is still alive and my children ask me time after time. My children and I had to watch Salim being beaten and we are still traumatized. The pain will not go away till Salim is returned to us. We paid off Sheikh Mustafa's debt through hard work over a year. We waited till our loan had been completed before leaving as we did not want any anger. We only wanted a better future but the cruel man has destroyed our hope")

Anum (aged 8, daughter of Salma and Salim Masih, witnessed her father's beating, threatened with rape)

Naveed (aged 5, son of Salma and Salim Masih, witnessed his father's beating, threatened with rape)

Nabeel (aged 4, son of Salma and Salim Masih, witnessed his father's beating, threatened with rape)

<http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/pakistans-police-refuse-to-emancipate-christian-ex-brick-kiln-slave-kidnapped-and-tortured>



Nigeria: Rafin-Acha, Jol village, Riyom local government area, Plateau state

Mathew Samuel (miner, attacked by Fulani herdsmen)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/herdsmen-plateau-state-nigeria-quietly-seizing-christians-property-pastors-say/>

Saturday April 22, 2017



Philippines

Fr Angel Calvo CMF (Spanish national; **UPDATE**: condemned the beheading of a Muslim government soldier, Staff Sergeant Anni Siraji, who had been active in peace efforts)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/christians-muslims-condemn-abu-sayyaf-beheading/79025>



Vietnam: Nha Trang

A local Communist party has opposed the efforts of a cathedral to stop rude actions by foreign tourists

Nguyen T (church leader, complained of tourists at the cathedral "They come to the shrine to show off their cameras and take pictures. They talk and laugh loudly. Such behavior negatively affects the church's sacredness and its parishioners")

Maria Nguyen (wrote to her bishop to complain of the actions of tourists at the cathedral including threats against worshippers)

Mai (said "Chinese tourists come into the church, speak in a loud voice, go here and there. Some turn their back to the altar, put their chin on the table, and sit down")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Catholics-outraged-by-bad-mannered-Chinese-visitors-in-Nha-Trang-cathedral-40545.html>



India

Sr Laurel Judith Seaton MC (Australian citizen, may be forced to leave the country after denial of her visa renewal, has more than 30 years' experience in the country)

India: Gujarat state

Fr Ignacio Zuazua SJ (Spanish citizen, may be forced to leave the country after denial of his visa renewal, has more than 50 years' experience in the country)

India: Jharkhand state

Fr Aurele Brys SJ (Belgian citizen, may be forced to leave the country after denial of his visa renewal, has more than 50 years' experience in the country)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/elderly-foreign-missionaries-in-india-may-be-deported/79009>



Pakistan: Phul Nagar, Kasur district, Punjab province

Twenty-one armed Muslims were reported to have attacked a Christian ghetto, several Christians severely beaten, police have made no arrests

Afaq Masih (teen, son of Pulus Masih, cell phone snatched by a Muslim, got into a physical altercation with the thief, the altercation triggered the attack on the Christian ghetto)

<http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/phul-nagar-armed-assailants-attack-christians-neighborhood-torture-residents/>



Madagascar: Ambendrana Antsohihy

Fr Lucien Njiva OFM Cap (**shot dead** during a robbery)

Deacon Jeremy (aged 26, wounded)

Fr Eric Franck Randriamiandrinarivo (reported on the murder of Fr Lucien Njiva)

[http://www.fides.org/en/news/62165-
AFRICA_MADAGASCAR_Capuchin_father_killed_in_attack_on_friary_deacon_wounded#.WQNYmfnyuM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62165-
AFRICA_MADAGASCAR_Capuchin_father_killed_in_attack_on_friary_deacon_wounded#.WQNYmfnyuM8)



Lebanon: Beirut

Bishop Daniel Kourie (chairman of a commission which has been investigating the 2013 abduction of Syrian Bishops Boulos al-Yazigi and Yuhanna Ibrahim, said that as far as he knew "the two bishops are still alive")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Beirut-Bishop-Kourie-says-the-two-bishops-abducted-in-Syria-in-2013-are-still-alive-40553.html>



Zambia: Lusaka

Archbishop Telesphore Mpundu (issued a statement along with the other Catholic bishops which read "...Our country is now all, except in designation, a dictatorship and if it is not yet, then we are not far from it. Our political leaders in the ruling party often issue intimidating statements that frighten people and make us fear for the immediate and future...")

<http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2017/04/27/zambias-bishops-our-country-is-becoming-a-dictatorship-in-all-but-name/>

<http://www.catholiczambia.org.zm/images/24042017.pdf>



Nigeria

Fr Samuel Okwuidegbe SJ (aged 50, abducted [on the road between Benin City and Onitsha](#) along with two others on [April 18, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: released)

[http://www.fides.org/en/news/62160-
AFRICA_NIGERIA_Jesuit_abducted_on_18_April_released#.WP9lfPkrKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62160-
AFRICA_NIGERIA_Jesuit_abducted_on_18_April_released#.WP9lfPkrKM8)

Monday April 24, 2017



Sudan: Omdurman

Azhari Tamba (aged 28, husband of Mona Matta, father of three, church security guard, home ransacked by a mob and police, was not present at the time)

Mona Matta (aged 27, wife of Azhari Tamba, mother of three aged 6, 4, and 2, home ransacked by a mob and police, detained with her children, release after 10 PM, prevented from re-entering their home)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/04/police-mob-attack-synod-guards-quarters-arrest-family-omdurman-sudan/>



Egypt: Tanta

Victor Fayez (injured in the [April 11, 2017](#) church bombing, hospitalized; **UPDATE: died**)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1884&A=30485>

Tuesday April 25, 2017



China: Guangdong province

Pastor Paul Wang (U.S. resident, seminar on "Reformation and Life Change" interrupted by government agents)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/04/virginia-pastor-summoned-by-chinese.html>



India: Jalalabad village, Ghazipur district, Uttar Pradesh state

Four Christian couples were beaten, forced to participate in Hindu rituals and denied water

Manoj Kumar (husband of Pushpa Kumari)

Pushpa Kumari (wife of Manoj Kumar)

Sasikala Kumari (wife of Ramkreet Ram, said “How will we survive if we don’t grow our crops?”)

Ramkreet Ram (husband of Sasikala Kumari)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/06/christian-families-india-forced-hindu-ritual-denied-water/>



Belarus: Mstislav, Mogilev region

Fr Robert Maciejewski (Polish citizen, left the country after authorities refused to extend his religious activities permit)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2284



Cuba: Guantanamo

Pastor Ramon Rigal (husband of Adya Rigal, sentenced to one year at hard labor for removing his children from government schools to avoid anti-Christian teaching)

Adya Rigal (wife of Pastor Ramon Rigal, sentenced on [April 25, 2017](#) to house arrest for one year for removing her children from government schools to avoid anti-Christian teaching)

<http://www.cswusa.org/files/Documents/News/Cuba/20170804%20CUBA%20Pastor%20Barred%20From%20Working%20as%20Church%20Leader.pdf>

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/cuban-pastor-jailed-homeschooling-kids-told-he-can-resume-work-church-leader-but-cant-leave-house-195053/>

Wednesday April 26, 2017



China: Hebei province

Paul (underground church leader, expressed concern that a major development project will be used to suppress the church "It is hard to say how this far-reaching project will affect the church but 'maintaining stability' is always something we can expect under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party")

China: Liaoning province

Pastor Guo Pingxi (**UPDATE**: hosted a 'Unity in Christianity' meeting for 40 pastors that was raided by police, three pastors were taken away, accused of belonging to a foreign anti-China group)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/underground-catholics-ruffled-by-mega-project-in-chinas-north/79035>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/05/meeting-of-christian-leaders-raided-in.html>



Pakistan: Tehsil Bure Wala village, Vehari district, Punjab province

Maria (aged 14, daughter of Bushra Bibi, abducted at gunpoint from her home on [April 15, 2017](#), money and jewelry worth US\$600 taken but the shouts of men outside the home indicate her abduction was the primary motive; **UPDATE**: had been raped by 4 men, forced into an Islamic marriage, reported to have been returned to her family but also reported to have been unable to defend herself in court)

Pakistan: Islamabad

Prof Anjum James Paul (**UPDATE**: met with the Chairman of the National Commission for Human Rights to discuss the case of abducted teenage girl Sana John Shahid)

Fr Sarfraz Simon (attended the meeting with the Chairman of the National Commission for Human Rights)

Aasiya Noreen aka Asia Bibi (aged 52, wife of Ashiq Masih, mother of five including Isham, daughter of Soran Masih, still incarcerated on a [2009](#) blasphemy conviction and death sentence; **UPDATE**: application for an expedited hearing by the Supreme Court rejected by the Chief Justice)

Joseph Nadeem (Renaissance Education Foundation executive director, said of the Supreme Court decision to not expedite the case of Aasiya Noreen aka Asia Bibi: "This is very unfortunate. Her husband became quiet when he heard the latest developments. We shall again apply for the hearing and keep struggling for justice. There are many factors at work behind the slow pace of judiciary. Her case has been in the doldrums due to huge pressure. There will be a strong reaction if Bibi is freed, opposing groups have made it matter of honor and ego")

Naeem Shakir (civil rights lawyer; **UPDATE**: said "Our plight is that the socio-political atmosphere of the country has no space for discussion on blasphemy laws. The judges know what is happening outside as non-state actors show their strength on the roads demanding death for [Asia] Bibi. The sensitivity surrounding blasphemy laws has made it

a political tool to threaten and put down others. The state has a weak narrative regarding this law and its functionaries usually try to evade questions regarding its misuse...Such atrocities have become routine. The plight of Bibi has had a dampening effect on minorities. Their grief cannot be addressed because of religious retrogressive and extremist groups. Islamists consider her freedom a defeat for their movement")

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; **UPDATE**: freed by a court order, returned home)

Elizabeth Arif (widow, mother of Sumbai Arif, said that after her abduction "One day, when Munir [the abductor] was not home, I succeeded in bringing Sumbal back to my house, but as soon as the ASI returned, he came to our house and forcibly took her away with him, claiming that she was a Muslim now and cannot live with a Christian family. He also beat up my young sons when they tried to stop him from taking away Sumbal...The accused used to force her to do household work and had restricted her from leaving the house. It was during her detention there that Sumbal came to know that the police official and his wife were in the business of selling girls for over 10 years. They told her that apostates are liable to be killed, and my poor daughter had started believing that she would not be able to return to us as she would be guilty of apostasy")

Pakistan: Tehsil Bure Wala village, Vehari district, Punjab province

Maria Bibi (aged 14, daughter of Ashraf Masih and Bushra Bibi, abducted at gunpoint on [April 20, 2017](#) and raped by 4 men, forced into an Islamic marriage; **UPDATE**: unable to defend herself when presented in court)

Bushra Bibi (widow of Ashraf Masih, mother of Maria Bibi)

<http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/gaggo-mandi-teenage-christian-abductee-recovered-from-richlings-custody/>

<http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/islamabad-nchr-hears-case-of-christian-victim-of-forced-conversion/>

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/asia-bibis-plight-blamed-on-pakistans-islamists/79081>

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

<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6470>



Burundi: near the Congo border

Fr Adolphe Ntahondereye (abducted on the Concorde Bridge over the Ruzizi River on [April 9, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: released, hospitalized in ill health)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62267->

[AFRICA BURUNDI A priest died in April because of the ill treatment suffered#. WRXJv krKM8](#)



Russia: Sterlitamak, Republic of Bashkortostan

A G Vakhitova (fined an unknown amount on [March 16, 2017](#) for handing out the Gideons' New Testament; **UPDATE**: fine reduced on appeal)

F R Muratov (fined an unknown amount on [March 16, 2017](#) for handing out the Gideons' New Testament; **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

R A Akhmetyanova (fined an unknown amount on [March 16, 2017](#) for handing out the Gideons' New Testament; **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

V I Sergeyeva (fined an unknown amount on [March 9, 2017](#) for handing out the Gideons' New Testament; **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

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



Belarus: Minsk

Vitaly Antonchikov (**UPDATE**: church ordered closed by court bailiffs and police, parishioners refused to leave, police left)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2284



United States - New York

Cardinal Timothy M Dolan (aged 67, **UPDATE**: called the position of Democratic National Committee chair Tom Perez that the party will exclude its anti-abortion members from public office “disturbing” and “intolerant” and called on Democrats to “challenge their leadership to recant this intolerant position”, added "now the DNC says that to be a Democrat – indeed to be an American – requires supporting that extreme agenda [of unrestricted abortion]”)

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/04/28/cardinal-dolan-slams-democrat-pledge-to-support-only-pro-abortion-candidates/>

Thursday April 27, 2017



Philippines: Sorsogon

Bishop Arturo Bastes (publicly supported a case filed at the International Criminal Court which accused President Duterte and 11 others of crimes against humanity, said “It is our hope that this move will inject fear into the hearts and minds of the accused officials so that they will eventually and sincerely put a stop to these merciless killings [of persons involved in the illegal drug trade]”)

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/04/28/philippine-bishop-backs-case-against-duterte-in-international-court/>

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-bishop-backs-complaint-against-duterte/79062>



China: Qinshan, Wudalianchi

Fr Shen Yanjun (underground priest, Mass reported to have been interrupted by police, attempt to arrest him failed)

China: Wenzhou, Zhejiang province

Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin (underground bishop, detained by police on [April 12, 2017](#);
UPDATE: reported to have been allowed to return home)

China: Fuan

Bishop Vincent Guo Xijin (aged 59, detained on [April 6, 2017](#) for 20 days to 'to study and learn';
UPDATE: still missing)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Police-raid-at-the-underground-Catholic-Mass-in-Heilongjiang-40593.html>



Thailand: Bangkok

Sarafina Sarfaraz (refugee from Pakistan, as of [April 7, 2017](#) has obtained a retirement visa to avoid arrest, cannot afford to renew the visa; **UPDATE:** thanks to donations was able to renew her visa)

<http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/thanks-to-your-donations-sarafina-now-has-a-retirement-visa-for-thailand>



Kazakhstan: Taraz, Zhambyl region

Yakov Fot (fined US\$724 on [April 4, 2017](#) for leading a worship service; **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2285



Cuba: Santa Clara

Felix Yuniel Llerena Lopez (aged 20, student, arrested after bringing accounts of Christian persecution to a congressional committee in Washington DC in the U.S.)

<http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue28107.html>

Friday April 28, 2017



China: Tianjin

Li Heping (husband of Wang Qiaoling, civil rights attorney, disappeared on [July 10, 2015](#); **UPDATE**: convicted of 'subversion of state power' in a secret trial, sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment and 4 years' suspended sentence, will likely be released soon but will remain subject to arbitrary arrest)

Wang Qiaoling (wife of Li Heping; reported on [April 14, 2017](#) to have written of increased police surveillance at her home in [Beijing](#) "The cameras are staring at me, and there are several hefty guys...tailing me...The appearance of this cluster of cameras [across the street] unnerves me, and I can't help feeling frightened because no policemen had watched me even during the [annual parliament last month], and now I'm being tracked by cameras...From this point forward, if I haven't been heard from in more than an hour, it's possible that I have been disappeared"; **UPDATE**: received a call from her husband in which he said he had been freed, refused to come for him due to fears she would be arrested, he replied he understood before the line was disconnected)

China: Yunnan

Tu Yan (detained on [October 22, 2015](#) for 'cult activity', released, arrested a month later on the same charge; **UPDATE**: still jailed, prosecutors have again delayed her trial)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/04/prominent-human-rights-lawyer-sentenced.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/05/christians-case-delayed.html>

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-human-rights-lawyer,-Li-Heping,-sentenced-to-three-years-of-jail-40606.html>



Vietnam

Pastor A Dao (sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment for 'illegally taking people to Thailand')

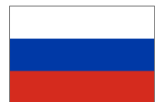
<http://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnam-officials-smear-jailed-pastors-wife/79363>



Egypt

Erini Elisha (teenaged girl, abducted, family told after 2 weeks that she will be forced to wear an explosive vest into a church if they do not stop trying to recover her)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1887&A=30538>



Russia: Oryol

Aleksandr Khrumugin (fined US\$78 in [Uritsky district, Oryol region](#) on [March 10, 2017](#) for illegal missionary activity; **UPDATE**: appeal successful)

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



Greece: Patras

Metropolitan Chrysostomos (protested the government's removal of the name 'St Andrew' from the city hospital, wrote "As you know, the holy apostle Andrew the First-Called is the founder of the Church in Patras and the patron of our city. Our city is inseparably linked

with his name. The apostle Andrew is the breath and life of Patras. [He taught and worked miracles here. Patras is the place of his burial, his precious head, and his cross, on which he suffered martyrdom] In short, to change the name of the hospital is to deny the city's history itself. In this regard, we believe the hospital should be returned to its historical name. This decision will correct this injustice and greatly delight the residents of our city")

<http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/conflict-between-greek-orthodox-church-and-state-growing-govt-renames-st-andrews-hospital/>



Belgium

Br Rene Stockman FC (superior general of the Brothers of Charity, objected when the mostly lay board of directors of the psychiatric hospitals operated by his order voted to allow euthanasia, said "We deplore this new vision...as general superior we cannot accept this decision, because it is going totally against our charism of the charity...Yes, there was a lot of pressure, but pressure doesn't mean that we have to capitulate. All those who were against us are now singing that finally the group of the Brothers of Charity capitulated and came into their camp...[secularization is] poisoning the congregation")

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/religious-brothers-push-back-on-euthanasia-directive-for-catholic-hospitals-51607/>

Saturday April 29, 2017



India: Bandra district, Mumbai

Fr Nigel Barrett (**UPDATE**: reported on the illegal demolition of a 122 year old Cross on private land by the municipal government)

Nicholas Almeida (said the Cross destruction "hurt our religious sentiments")

[http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mumbai-Christians-hold-silent-protest-over-demolished-cross-\(Photo\)-40630.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mumbai-Christians-hold-silent-protest-over-demolished-cross-(Photo)-40630.html)

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/christians-protest-demolition-of-holy-cross/1/944384.html>

Sunday April 30, 2017



China: Xining, Qinghai province

Pastor Li Mutian (ordered by the Religious Affairs Bureau and the DSPS on [March 23, 2017](#) to 'suspend all gatherings' of his church, refused; officers returned on [April 1, 2017](#) and told church members they would be criminally liable should they continue to meet;
UPDATE: locked in his home to prevent him from leading a church service)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/05/authorities-lock-pastor-in-own-house-to.html>

April 2017, date unknown



Vietnam

Fr John Nguyen Ngoc Nam Phong CSSR (prevented from leaving the county to visit Australia to study)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnam-bars-another-priest-from-leaving-country/81003>



Pakistan: Attock

Muqadas Sukhraj (student, niece of Munir Nasir, said of efforts starting in [early April 2017](#) to pressure her to take Islamic studies: "class teacher, Zahida Parveen unnecessarily began creating problems for me and expressing her displeasure with me because I chose Ethics. First, the teacher argued over the textbook of the Ethics class. Then she sent me out of the class as punishment. Later, she told me that if I could not study Islamic education, then why do I study in a Muslim school in the first place? She even told me, that, when she comes into the class, I must leave")

Munir Nasir (uncle of Muqadas Sukhraj, municipal councillor, wrote to the school administration that his niece's teacher also told Muslim students not to eat or drink with her "Rather than addressing the matter, Sukhraj was shifted to evening classes", received no answer)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/05/pakistani-christian-schoolgirl-told-do-islamic-studies-instead-of-ethics-or-leave-this-school/>



Tajikistan: Qurghonteppa, Khatlon region

Daniil Islamov (aged 18, conscientious objector, forcibly conscripted in [April 2017](#) despite serious health issues)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2327



Belarus: Minsk

Pastor Pawel Godawa (Polish citizen, denied a visa to attend a women's conference)

Bishop Leonid Voronenko (later spoke on Pastor Pawel Godawa' visa denial "We asked for permission for Pastor Godawa for three days. They rejected the application, claiming our documentation was not correct, even though we had fulfilled all the requirements. They always try to find some reason to make it look like it is your fault")

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2387



Mali: Djalloube

Sory (alias, husband, father, said: "I started to face serious problems when the Islamists heard about me and the conversion of some of the people [from Islam to Christianity]. They sent me warnings through friends, telling me to stop talking about Jesus or risk getting killed. They said they knew it was easy to kill Christians because [Christians] don't have any weapons. They can simply be slaughtered...Neighbors warned me that they were also looking for me. I did not waste a moment, but fled immediately. My wife and children stayed behind with my neighbor", returned home the next day, said of his family "They were badly traumatized by the incident. One of my daughters still struggles to forget what happened and whenever she hears a vehicle outside the house, she flees indoors and clings to us", he and his family have left the area)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/12/mali-christians-can-simply-slaughtered/>



United States – Ohio: Columbus

Fr Joseph Klee (struck by an abortion supporter's motor vehicle on [April 8 or 9, 2017](#) after she fled the scene following her attempt to steal anti-abortion signs, hand injured, treated and released from the hospital)

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/priest-injured-by-driver-at-pro-life-vigil-doesnt-resent-attacker>

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