

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Events – June 2017

**Thursday June 1, 2017**



### **Vietnam: Ho Chi Minh City**

Peter Pham Minh Hoang (activist and blogger, dual French citizen, told that the government would revoke his citizenship - despite his birth in the country - and expel him)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/outcry-as-vietnam-rescinds-catholic-activists-nationality/79460>



### **Venezuela: Maturin**

Bishop Enrique Perez Lavado (said "The situation in the Country is dramatic, there is no food and people have reached the limit of tolerance. The attitude of closure of Nicolas Maduro's government only aggravates the context. The Bishops' Conference and Venezuelan Caritas continue to make proposals to establish an aid channel. Many Caritas from other countries, as well as other NGOs, are willing to help us by bringing medicines and food. However, the Government hampers any kind of intervention. I happened to see miles of people in a row to buy food. Hundreds of people are dying, including many chronically ill children")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62384->

[AMERICA VENEZUELA Dramatic situation children and sick people die#.WTLA NuvyuM8](#)



### **United States – Michigan: East Lansing**

Steve Tennes (farmer, reported to have been banned from a farmer's market due to his Facebook posts in support of traditional marriage and refusal to host same sex weddings on his farm)

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/catholic-family-banned-from-farmers-market-for-christian-view-of-marriage>

**Friday June 2, 2017**



**Pakistan: Umerkot**

Irfan Masih (aged 30, sanitation worker, **suffocated while in a sewer, died at the hospital after doctors refused to treat him because of the sewage on his body**)

Nasir Saeed (**UPDATE**: said "A life could have been saved if medical aid had been given in time. This is not the first time that any sewer cleaner has died doing his duty. The government should provide safety kits to their workers but since these menial jobs are reserved for the Christians nobody cares about them")

Michelle Chaudhry (**UPDATE**: said "A society becomes extremely dangerous when it becomes inhumane. An innocent life has been lost because someone refused to carry out his duty, at a deontological and public service level. The doctor violated Hippocrates' oath that obliges him to treat a patient in any circumstance, beyond religion and social class")

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1336977>

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62404->

[ASIA\\_PAKISTAN\\_Doctors\\_deny\\_treatment\\_a\\_Christian\\_worker\\_dies#.WTVgAevyuM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62404-ASIA_PAKISTAN_Doctors_deny_treatment_a_Christian_worker_dies#.WTVgAevyuM8)



**Kazakhstan: Taraz, Zhambyl region**

Oleg Getman (taken from a [May 28, 2017](#) worship service along with 19 men and one woman to the police station to be fingerprinted and photographed; **UPDATE**: fined US\$363)

[http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2285](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2285)



**Iran: Urmia, Western Azerbaijan province**

Anousheh Reza-bakhsh aka Veronika (convert, mother of Soheil Zargarzadeh Sani, arrested on [February 20, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: whereabouts still unknown)

Soheil Zargarzadeh Sani aka Augustine (convert, son of Anousheh Reza-bakhsh, senior psychology university student, arrested on [February 20, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: whereabouts still unknown)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3530>



**Cameroon: near Monatele**

Bishop Jean-Marie Benoit Bala (aged 58, disappeared on [May 31, 2017](#), suicide note found in his automobile; **body found in the Sanaga River**)

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/06/07/signs-of-torture-found-on-body-of-bishop-who-allegedly-committed-suicide/>

**Sunday June 4, 2017**



**Kazakhstan: Taraz, Zhambyl region**

**Police raided a worship service, took 7 into custody, all were released, told they would be fined**

Aleksei Tishko

Sergei Tyan

Vitaly Relin

Shukhrat Alzhanov (son of Tamara Alzhanova)

Tamara Alzhanova (mother of Shukhrat Alzhanov)

[http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2285](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2285)



**Ukraine: Kolomiya, Transkarpatya region**

Archpriest Vasily Kobelsky (said “On that day activists and priests of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic [aka Uniate] Church organized a traditional procession to the grave of the stretsky [Russian military corps in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries] of Sech, not far from our church. A representative of the Ukrainian Security Service approached me and

asked me to allow them to come into the church to pray. We gave them permission. But the Uniate priests—and there were thirteen of them—immediately proceeded to the sanctuary to serve their liturgy. We did not expect that...”)

<http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/104086.htm>

**Monday June 5, 2017**



**Egypt: Al Khosous, outside Cairo**

Suzan Ashraf Rawy (aged 22, church employee, abducted on her way to work, ransom demanded)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/06/young-christian-woman-said-kidnapped-outside-cairo-egypt/>



**United States - District of Columbia**

Lance Corporal Monifa Sterling USMC (convicted at court martial for refusing an order to remove a displayed Bible verse from her workstation at [Camp Lejune, North Carolina](#) despite the existence of personal messages on other workstations, **UPDATE**: the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear her appeal)

<http://www.charismanews.com/politics/issues/65324-scotus-members-of-the-military-have-no-religious-liberties>

**Tuesday June 6, 2017**



**India: Ranagath, West Bengal**

Archbishop Thomas D'Souza (**UPDATE**: condemned the burglary and vandalism of a church in which the tabernacle was profaned, the church was only yards away from the location of the [March 13, 2015](#) gang rape of a 72-year old nun)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Archbishop-of-Calcutta:-saddened-by-vandalism-of-St.-Luke's-Church-40951.html>



### **Pakistan: on the road from Hyderabad to Karachi**

Tabish Shamoun (aged 24, driver for attorney Jacqueline Sultan [who is now in hiding due to death threats], beaten and threatened at gunpoint by two men who demanded to know the attorney's hiding place)

### **Pakistan: Lahore**

Bishop Emeritus Andrew Francis (aged 70, survived a 1996 assassination attempt in Lahore by two men; condemned the July 4, 2012 lynching of a mentally ill young Muslim accused of Quran desecration; **UPDATE: died of natural causes**)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Msg.-Andrew-Francis,-%E2%80%98spiritual-healer%E2%80%99-has-died-40957.html>

<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6491>

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistan-mourns-as-it-loses-a-good-shepherd/79446>



### **Cameroon**

Bishop Jean-Marie Benoit Bala (aged 58, disappeared on May 31, 2017, suicide note found in his automobile; **body found in the Sanaga River** near Monatele on June 2, 2017; **UPDATE: autopsy showed signs of torture and that death occurred before the body was placed in the river**)

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/06/07/signs-of-torture-found-on-body-of-bishop-who-allegedly-committed-suicide/>



### **United States – Massachusetts: Springfield**

Pastor Scott Lively (sued by a homosexual group for allegedly inciting ‘a dozen minor incidents’ of persecution against homosexuals in Uganda over the past decade, he denied the charges, a Federal judge ruled on August 28, 2013 that the trial may proceed; petition for dismissal denied on December 5, 2014 by a three judge panel of the Federal First Circuit Court in Boston; **UPDATE: suit dismissed, issued a statement which noted the judge’s 4**

year delay after an [April 17, 2013](#) U.S. Supreme Court ruling eliminated the statutory basis for the suit)

<https://www.lc.org/newsroom/details/060617-victory-for-american-pastor-falsely-accused-of-crimes-against-humanity>

**Wednesday June 7, 2017**



### **China: Shanghai**

Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin (ordained as bishop on [July 7, 2012](#), then disappeared after stating in his first homily that he would resign from the state-sponsored church; **UPDATE**: still missing despite apparently having rejoined the state-sponsored church)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/shanghais-bishop-ma-still-in-limbo-with-ordination-no-show/79458>



### **Vietnam: Xuan Loc Prison, Dong Nai province**

Tran Thi Hong (wife of Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh; **UPDATE**: spoke after discovering during a family visit that her husband had been confined to a cramped punishment cell after telling U.S. diplomats on [May 25, 2017](#) about the mistreatment he has suffered: "Chinh said on the previous day, prison officials informed him about the meeting [with U.S. diplomats] and asked him not to tell the visitors anything that would make them look bad. Chinh could not obey their order. He told the delegation his experiences of torture, threats and mistreatment that he has endured over six years")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/jailed-vietnamese-pastor-punished-after-us-visit/79479>



### **Iran: Tehran**

Fr Hormoz Aslani Babroudi (condemned the ISIL terror attack on the Iranian parliament which killed 17: "I am saddened by such inhumane acts, mostly accomplished by people who present themselves faithful to God and Islam, and therefore spread a false image of faith and religion")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62425->

[ASIA IRAN Iranian priest following the massacres in Tehran terrorists will not succeed in frightening our people#.WTIZYevyuM8](#)



### **Greece: Piraeus and Samos**

#### **Bishops defended doctors who have refused to participate in abortions**

Metropolitan Eusebios Pistoris

Metropolitan Seraphim Mentzenopoulos (UPDATE)

<http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/104140.htm>



### **United States**

Jaelene Hinkle (aged 24, soccer player, announced that she would not be attending the Friendlies competitions in Norway and Sweden for 'personal reasons', the announcement came after U.S. Soccer announced that players would all wear gay pride jerseys, had previously been criticized by homosexual activists for her Christian views)

### **United States - District of Columbia**

Russell Vought (nominee for Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, told by U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders during his confirmation hearing that he is 'really not someone who this country is supposed to be about' due to his traditional views on Christian salvation)

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/bernie-sanders-trump-appointee-christian-vought-187025/>

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-soccer-player-jaelene-hinkle-withdraws-from-friendlies-as-us-team-is-set-to-wear-gay-pride-jerseys-186852/>

<http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/448393/watch-bernie-sanders-unconstitutionally-impose-religious-test-public-office>

**Thursday June 8, 2017**



### **China: Shangqiu, Henan**

Pastor Zhang Di (arrested on [May 2, 2017](#) on false charges of attacking a village representative and a police station during questioning; **UPDATE**: officially arrested)

Lu Yuexia (church vice director, arrested following a church demolition on [May 5, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: officially arrested)

Huang Xiangju (arrested following a church demolition on [May 5, 2017](#); officially arrested)

Zhao Wenjing (arrested following a church demolition on [May 5, 2017](#); officially arrested)

Guo Chungai (arrested following a church demolition on [May 5, 2017](#); officially arrested)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/06/5-christians-officially-arrested-after.html>



### **Pakistan: Islamabad**

Dr Julius Salik (former member of parliament; **UPDATE**: protested the treatment of Muslims in Kashmir and Myanmar [aka Burma])

### **Pakistan: Rao Khan Wala, Kasur**

Mehwish Shaukat (aged 8, victim of an attempted rape by a Muslim neighbor while her parents and older siblings were at work)

Shaukat Masih (aged about 46, father of Sharoon, Haroon, Mehwish, Samson, and Kajal, brick kiln bonded laborer)

Nasreen Bibi (aged about 45, mother of Sharoon, Haroon, Mehwish, Samson, and Kajal, brick kiln bonded laborer)

Sharoon Shaukat (aged 18, brother of Mehwish Shaukat, brick kiln bonded laborer)

Haroon Shaukat (aged 13, brother of Mehwish Shaukat, brick kiln bonded laborer)

Samson Shaukat (aged 7, brother of Mehwish Shaukat, witnessed the attempted rape of his sister)

Kajal Shaukat (aged 4, sister of Mehwish Shaukat, witnessed the attempted rape of her sister)

<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6492>

<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6510>



### **United States - Georgia**

Sarah Harmening (aged 17, **killed in a bus accident** while in route to missionary work in Botswana)



<http://www.christianpost.com/news/teenager-heading-to-botswana-mission-trip-killed-in-church-bus-crash-in-georgia-39-injured-187200/>

**Friday June 9, 2017**



**China: Guiyang, Guizhou province**

Pastor Su Tianfu (**UPDATE**: reported on a court hearing his church called to dispute a US\$1 million fine, church members and attorneys were barred from attending the hearing, said “The religious affairs bureau did not strive to protect our legal rights throughout the process. The hearing process was an avoidance system”)

**China: Wumeng, Inner Mongolia autonomous region**

Bishop John Liu Shigong (aged 89, **died of liver cancer**, had been sent to a labor camp during the Cultural Revolution)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/chinese-bishop-dies-but-vatican-appointed-successor-not-yet-ordained/79487>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/06/court-sabotages-house-church-hearing.html>



**India: Gujarat state**

Fr Cedric Prakash SJ (**UPDATE**: reported to have protested the use of a public school textbook which labelled Jesus 'a demon': "The fact that Jesus is denigrated in school books says a lot about those in charge of shaping the minds, character and future of children. This also reflects the mind-set of those who govern us, those in power who with their acolytes appear bent on destroying what is deemed sacrosanct in the Constitution of India...there are fewer scruples in denigrating and even exterminating minorities, Dalits and Tribals...[this is a] brutal plan to promote fascist ideologies", he demanded removal of the books and “that the perpetrators be prosecuted according to the law and that the government apologize to the Christian community”)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Gujarat-textbook-describe-Jesus-as-a-%E2%80%9Cdemon%E2%80%9D-40977.html>



## **Egypt: Alexandria**

Fr Henri Boulad, SJ (aged 85, director of the Jesuit Cultural Center; **UPDATE:** said "One can say that 'Arabs' are naturally violent. But the same could be said of the Barbarians who conquered Europe in the past. These invaders have been progressively 'civilized' by the Christian faith to become what they are now. In my opinion, the religious element plays an essential role in shaping a society. The fact that Christian 'Arabs' are different than Muslim Arabs is a proof of the strong connection between religion and society...All attempts to reform Islam by liberal open-minded Muslims have tragically failed so far and I doubt that a 'reformed Islam' will still remain 'Islam'. Here are six unsuccessful attempts to reform Islam in the last two centuries [listed them in the article]...On such ethical issues [with secular societies], and others, the Church should ally with Muslims to fight against whatever demeans and degrades the human being. This is fertile ground for understanding between the two religions. It can also pave the way for us to denounce anything which is morally unacceptable in Islamic teaching")

<http://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/jesuit-scholar-seeking-to-defend-islam-at-all-costs-is-betraying-the-truth>



## **Iraq: Erbil, Kurdistan**

Christina Khidr Ebada (aged 5, abducted on [August 22, 2014](#) from her mother's lap by ISIL militants in [Qaraqosh](#); a Christian woman named Rana in a [September 2014](#) phone conversation after her capture by ISIL said that she had cared for Christina, said Christina was later given to a Muslim family to be raised as a Muslim; still missing as of [September 9, 2016](#), a photograph of her appeared on Facebook before the internet was cut from [Mosul](#); **UPDATE:** recovered in good health by Iraqi government forces during fighting in the Mosul area, returned to her parents, had lost the ability to speak Assyrian, has been "overwhelmed" by the welcome received at the refugee camp where her parents live)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/06/abducted-christina-finally-reunited-parents/>



## **Mexico: Tijuana**

Fr Juan Antonio Zambrano Garcia (stabbed twice, hospitalized)

[http://www.fides.org/en/news/62450-AMERICA\\_MEXICO\\_Violence\\_increases\\_against\\_priests#.WUFFY-vyuM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62450-AMERICA_MEXICO_Violence_increases_against_priests#.WUFFY-vyuM8)

**Sunday June 11, 2017**



**Ireland: Horeswood, County Wexford**

Bishop Denis Brennan (said "There is a lot of concern in church circles these days about the future. This is understandable given the volume of criticism and negativity directed at the church over recent times...In these Pentecost days we need to cast off our fears too, we are not the first generation of Christians to worry and wonder about the future. In every age people have written the obituary of the church and our age is no exception")

**Ireland: Drogheda**

Bishop Leo O'Reilly (reported to have spoken of "hostility to the church that is now a settled part of our society's culture. People from abroad are often astonished at the antipathy to the church displayed in our country...It is not physical persecution but it is no less real for that. It is more subtle. It takes the form of gradual exclusion of church people or activities from the public space. There is denigration of religious beliefs, practices and institutions on radio, television and on social and other media. There is often a focus on bad news about the church to the almost total exclusion of any good news")

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/06/12/irish-church-facing-persecution-and-hostility-bishops-warn/>

**Monday June 12, 2017**



**Papua New Guinea: Rabaul**

Doug Tennent (New Zealand citizen, missionary, attorney, diocesan administrator, expelled from the country)

Archbishop Francesco Panfilo SDB (said "Doug Tennent received a decree of expulsion on the grounds that he was 'involved in sensitive issues concerning land owners'. We know the meaning of these words: they refer to the native peoples in the area of West Pomio, in the territory of our archdiocese. In 2012 a group of land owners in that area stipulated an agreement with a Malay multinational, the Rimbunan Hijau, which grants land for the exploitation of timber and the production of palm oil. But the contract was not sufficiently examined. As the years passed the natives witnessed progressive deforesting and serious environmental devastation. Therefore, rightly concerned, they demanded fairer conditions and guarantees of protection for the area, and asked for my direct involvement in the matter, as Archbishop and a Catholic representative. We examined the

question and, thanks also to the competent assistance of Mr. Tennent, we started the process of requesting a re-negotiation of the contract...The land rental agreement is clearly unfair towards the owners of the land, the rent conceded for the land is inadequate and what is more the multinational company for the past two years has been in arrears, coercive means were used to obtain the signatures of the land owners and consent for the area conceded; the local people were not properly informed...The event has caused clamor and indignation in politics and in the media. Our request to the government is to immediately recall Tennent, whose assistance is important for the administration of our local Church. We hope the Foreign Ministry will intervene and reconsider the decision taken. We wait and hope. We are ready even to go to Court”)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62462->

[OCEANIA PAPUA NEW GUINEA Lay missionary expelled transversal warning f or the local Church#.WUKXHuvyuM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62462-OCEANIA_PAPUA_NEW_GUINEA_Lay_missionary_expelled_transversal_warning_f_or_the_local_Church#.WUKXHuvyuM8)



#### **China: Jiangmen, Guangdong province**

Ruan Haonan (husband of Luo Caiyan, detained, accused of cult activity)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/06/christians-pressured-into-confessing.html>



#### **India: Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh state**

Ameya Jaal (aged 45, vacation Bible school volunteer, arrested on [May 21, 2017](#) on forced conversion charges; **UPDATE**: denied bail)

Alkesh Ganava (aged 27, vacation Bible school volunteer, arrested on [May 21, 2017](#) on forced conversion charges; **UPDATE**: denied bail)

Pandu Singh Vasuniya (aged 31, vacation Bible school volunteer, arrested on [May 21, 2017](#) on forced conversion charges; **UPDATE**: denied bail)

Nitin Mandod (aged 23, vacation Bible school volunteer, arrested on [May 21, 2017](#) on forced conversion charges; **UPDATE**: denied bail)

Lalu Babore (aged 28, vacation Bible school volunteer, arrested on [May 21, 2017](#) on forced conversion charges; **UPDATE**: denied bail)

Vijay Meda (aged 17, vacation Bible school volunteer, arrested on [May 21, 2017](#) on forced conversion charges; **UPDATE**: denied bail)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/06/christians-taking-children-camp-india-charged-kidnapping-forced-conversion/>



## **United States**

### **The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency detained 199 Iraqi nationals for deportation, including many Christians**

Pastor Jalil Dawood (said "We can't say these people went through genocide and send them back to be victimized again! We hope and pray that the issue gets resolved. America should never deport Christians to Iraq because they will be in trouble in Iraq as over a million left Iraq since 2003, and this will cause great hardship to their loved ones here [also bringing] harm to them physically, mentally, and spiritually if they [are] ever sent back. I understand that some might not have done their paperwork properly or [have] passed their datelines. But deportation is [an] extreme measure toward peaceful people that just want to survive and do well in this society [and] love America as their new home")

Bishop Francis Y Kalabat (wrote "The Church does not oppose justice, all hardened criminals that are a danger to society should be picked up. Many who were picked up are not hardened criminals but for the last decades have been great citizens [sic]. The genocide bill that was just passed by Congress last week to protect Christians goes against this very thing")

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/immigration-arrests-stun-detroits-chaldean-catholics-30294/>

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/christians-cry-out-trump-chaldean-iraq-deport-188067/>

**Tuesday June 13, 2017**



## **Philippines: Barangay village, near Marawi, Mindanao**

### **Christian construction workers were reported to have escaped from Islamic militants**

Jennifer Velazques (thanked the local Muslim police:"If not for them, we would all be dead by now")

Gerald Docallos (said "We ran about two kilometers. We saw lots of bodies on the street. I didn't look at them because I was running")

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-06-13/marawi-survivors-tell-of-escaping-from-islamic-state-philippines/8614414>

<http://www.benarnews.org/english/news/philippine/marawi-police-06132017153621.html>



### **Vietnam: Song Ngoc parish, Quynh Luu district, Nghe An province**

Fr Anthony Nguyen Van Dinh (complained to the government along with 10 other priests of attacks by youth gangs on Christians "We see that the attacks have been carried out in an orchestrated manner and the police know well what is occurring but are ignoring what is going on")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/catholic-community-in-vietnam-terrorized-by-gangs-of-youth/79519>



### **India: Satna, Madhya Pradesh state**

Sr Bina Joseph (arrested while traveling on a train with four girls, all were held for 12 hours except the legal minor who was held until her parents arrived)

Archbishop Leo Cornelio (**UPDATE:** said he "strongly condemns the harassment of radical elements professing their loyalty and political alliance with the ruling party [BJP]. All this is absolutely wrong and goes against the freedom of every Indian citizen...[Sr Bina Joseph] was traveling on a public transport vehicle, when she became was the victim of harassment, intimidation, and humiliation by the police. The behavior of the agents is to be condemned")

[http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Madhya-Pradesh,-a-sister-arrested-\(and-released\)-for-'forced-conversions'-41015.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Madhya-Pradesh,-a-sister-arrested-(and-released)-for-'forced-conversions'-41015.html)



### **Iran: Evin Prison, Tehran**

Maryam Naghash-Zargaran aka Nasim (aged 39, has had heart surgery, has continued to endure significant medical problems in prison; **UPDATE:** reported to have been beaten by another inmate within the last week, foot injured; denied medical treatment)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3550>



### **Nigeria: Okitipupa, Ondo state**

Elisah Akinsulere (described the results of recent Fulani attacks “The recession has forced many people to go back to farms as advised by the government but now we cannot even enjoy our produce again because of the wreckage caused by cattle. We are appealing to the Federal Government and our lawmakers to do something tangible to address this security breach and threat to farmers on their land”)

<https://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2017/06/13/can-tells-fg-control-movement-fulani-headsmen/>

**Wednesday June 14, 2017**



**China: Huaibei, Anhui province**

Wang Hong (wife of Pastor Chen Shixin [who has been detained since [April 12, 2017](#)], home searched by over 10 DSPS agents with a search warrant, computer and documents related to the church's land dispute seized)

Gu (said that the DSPS agents wanted to seize religious books but decided to not do so because no RAB agents were present)

**China: Jiaozhou, Shandong province**

Pastor Zhan Gang (described how his 100 year old church building was attacked by a construction crew, fence demolished, several parishioners were injured, local religious affairs bureau [RAB] denied the injuries occurred)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/06/christians-injured-as-officials.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/06/authorities-ransack-home-of-arbitrarily.html>



**United Kingdom**

Tim Farron (Member of Parliament, under attack for refusing on [April 19, 2017](#) to agree that homosexual behavior was not a sin and for saying "We are all sinners"; **UPDATE:** resigned as leader of the Liberal Democrats, wrote: "...From the very first day of my leadership, I have faced questions about my Christian faith. I've tried to answer with grace and patience. Sometimes my answers could have been wiser. At the start of this election, I found myself under scrutiny again - asked about matters to do with my faith. I felt guilty that this focus was distracting attention from our campaign, obscuring our message. Journalists have every right to ask what they see fit. The consequences of the focus on my faith is that I have found myself torn between living as a faithful Christian and serving as a political leader. A better, wiser person than me may have been able to

deal with this more successfully, to have remained faithful to Christ while leading a political party in the current environment. To be a political leader - especially of a progressive, liberal party in 2017 - and to live as a committed Christian, to hold faithfully to the Bible's teaching, has felt impossible for me. I'm a liberal to my finger tips, and that liberalism means that I am passionate about defending the rights and liberties of people who believe different things to me. There are Christians in politics who take the view that they should impose the tenets of faith on society, but I have not taken that approach because I disagree with it - it's not liberal and it is counterproductive when it comes to advancing the gospel. Even so, I seem to be the subject of suspicion because of what I believe and who my faith is in. In which case we are kidding ourselves if we think we yet live in a tolerant, liberal society...")

Cardinal Vincent Nichols (**UPDATE:** said he was “sorry to read Mr Farron’s statement and I recognize the hurt it expresses. Undoubtedly he has been given a hard time”)

Lord David Alton (human rights advocate; **UPDATE:** wrote “It is ironic that a Party, which I joined as a teenager, because of its belief in conscience, human rights and free speech, has morphed into something so narrow and intolerant...that its leader has been forced to choose between his Faith and his Party”)

Canon Pat Browne (chaplain to Parliament, said he was “very saddened by the resignation of Mr Farron and alarmed if it is true that there is no place in Parliament for a committed Christian. It’s a judgement on the way we do politics in this country”)

Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chief Executive of Christian Concerns; **UPDATE:** wrote "Tim Farron's story demonstrates that even those who accept the liberal political agenda wholeheartedly become targets who are unfairly hounded and bullied. He was forced to answer questions on the morality of 'gay sex' and abortion. During the election campaign he had to choose whether to surrender his conscience and forfeit his soul to the intolerant, marauding elite. Even though he capitulated, this did not stop the hunt. Today he felt he could no longer lead, and had no option but to resign. Tim Farron's treatment demonstrates that Christians are simply not tolerated by the illiberal elite in positions of influence. This, alongside the widespread reaction to the DUP's [a Northern Ireland political party's] views on abortion and same-sex unions, is further evidence of this anti-Christian morality. The vilification of the DUP for its opposition to abortion and same-sex unions and castigation of Tim Farron is shocking and upsetting. If we continue in this crusade of 'totaltolerance', we will enter a harsh and conformist world where Christianity will be 'no platformed' and eventually squeezed out of every sphere of public life. The elite determines what are toxic unacceptable views. Unless you approve of their 'new morality' you are punished. At first comes the loss of privilege, a political position, a place at university, then the detriment: the refusal of a grant and ultimately criminal sanction. The history of our nation proves that when Christianity was firmly at the heart of public life there was freedom, prosperity and beauty. The hard atheism that currently dominates our political discourse is cruel and doesn't tolerate dissent. Tim Farron is another in a long line of casualties. It is time to fight back before it is too late")

Fr Alexander Lucie-Smith (wrote "...Religious belief plays a critical, integrating and stimulating role in forming political ideas. If religious people are to be excluded from politics, then politics will be the poorer. Remember what they used to say about the Labour party: it



owed more to Methodism than Marxism, the Liberal party was also deeply informed by Nonconformity. Are these sources of inspiration now to be closed off forever?")

[https://www.reddit.com/r/ukpolitics/comments/6h95e5/tim\\_farrons\\_resignation\\_letter/](https://www.reddit.com/r/ukpolitics/comments/6h95e5/tim_farrons_resignation_letter/)

<http://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/06/15/tim-farron-was-given-a-hard-time-for-being-christian-says-cardinal/>

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2017/06/15/tim-farrons-resignation-spells-dark-times-ahead-for-christians-in-politics/>

<http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/same-sex-marriage/tim-farrons-resignation-shows-totaltolerance-of-illiberal-elite>



### **Chile: Santiago**

Auxiliary Bishop Fernando Ramos (reported to have said in response to a proposed abortion law which would limit most conscientious objection “The door is being opened for the State to rob citizens of their freedom to make decisions to protect life...all health structures, hospitals, universities and private clinics whose purpose or institutional orientation is for a clear choice for the protection and defense of human life, always and in every circumstance, could be forced to betray their institutional characteristics and agree to perform abortions as a legal health service...We reject a State which robs us of our freedom”)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62456->

[AMERICA CHILE We reject a State which robs us of our freedom Bishop Ramos on the subject of abortion law#.WUFD7uvyuM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62456-AMERICA_CHILE_We_reject_a_State_which_robs_us_of_our_freedom_Bishop_Ramos_on_the_subject_of_abortion_law#.WUFD7uvyuM8)

**Thursday June 15, 2017**



### **China: Jiangmen, Guangdong province**

Luo Caiyan (wife of Ruan Haonan, pregnant, detained along with her sister, Bibles seized, released after signing an admission of cult activity)

Pastor Li (wife detained, released after signing an admission of cult activity)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/06/christians-pressured-into-confessing.html>



**India: Satna, Madhya Pradesh state**

Sr Bina Joseph (arrested on [June 13, 2017](#) while traveling on a train with four girls, all were held for 12 hours except the legal minor who was held until her parents arrived; **UPDATE:** charged with abduction of the girls, police said an arrest could come at the end of the investigation)

Archbishop Leo Cornelio (**UPDATE:** said the charge against Sr Bina Joseph was a "totally a false case")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/freed-indian-nun-slapped-with-abduction-charges/79524>



**Pakistan: Lahore**

Ashfaq Masih (bicycle repairman, accused of blasphemy by a Muslim customer after he protested the customer's refusal to pay his bill, arrested)

<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6509>



**Egypt**

Nermin Mamdouh (sister of Emad Mamdouh, reported to have disappeared while on her way to church, brother was killed a year earlier while in military service fighting terrorists in the Sinai)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1917&A=31092>



**Canada: Camrose, Alberta**

Deanna Margel (Christian school official, ordered by the local government school board to not allow the use of 'offensive' Biblical passages in her school, said "We're talking about freedom of religion, but we're [also] talking about freedom of expression. We need every single word there to challenge us, to call us to greater understanding. It's just so important")

<https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2017/june/canadian-district-bans-christian-school-from-teaching-offensive-parts-of-bible-nbsp>

**Friday June 16, 2017**



**China: Wenzhou, Zhejiang province**

Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin (detained on [May 18, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: seen disembarking at the local airport under police escort, picked up his luggage, did not return home)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Wenzhou:-Mgr-Shao-back-in-his-diocese-under-police-escort-41049.html>

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mgr-Peter-Shao-Zhumin,-Wenzhou%E2%80%99s-bishop-not-recognised-by-the-government,-is-missing-again-41063.html>



**Nigeria: Abuja**

Rev Samson Olasupo Ayokunle (reported on [April 3, 2017](#) to have been scheduled for interrogation by the DSS over a Christian Association of Nigeria media campaign alleged to incite violence; **UPDATE**: led a CAN delegation to the presidential villa to protest the elimination of the Christian Religious Knowledge curriculum in favor of either Islamic Studies or French [despite a shortage of French teachers], said “We are here to point your attention to a time-bomb, obnoxious, divisive and ungodly secondary school curriculum that the Federal Ministry of Education is introducing into our schools and of which we had earlier complained to the presidency. Then, if I am not mistaking, it was suspended but has again been re-introduced without any review at all...This curriculum is the brain-child of Nigerian Educational Research Council, an agency of the Federal Ministry of Education. To us in CAN, its introduction is an ill-wind that blows nobody any good for so many reasons. A state has started implementing it already and Christians that are more on the receiving side of it are already crying foul because of its potential dangers now”)

<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/06/16/can-protests-replacement-of-christian-education-in-secondary-schools-with-islamic-studies/>



## United Kingdom: Edinburgh, Scotland

Anthony Horan (director of the Catholic Parliamentary Office, told a committee at the Scottish parliament of: “a number of young people who had experienced anti-Catholic prejudice in their school, most of it relating to the Church’s teaching on abortion and marriage. One student even dropped a subject to ‘avoid the harassment’...My overriding concern is the culture of fear that runs right through society and which makes people feel at best uncomfortable and at worst totally frightened to be open about their faith...A deeply worrying and disturbing 57 per cent of charges [of persecution] are as a result of anti-Catholic behavior. Compare this to the percentage of charges relating to Protestantism [27 per cent] and Islam [17 per cent] and we are left with an undoubted sectarian problem that needs to be addressed...There is an alarming level of intolerance being levelled at some young people simply because they are Catholic or because they hold a particular view that others may disagree with. This is not a culture of tolerance and respect. We have to be very mindful of the need to tackle anti-religious behavior and be wary of creating a hierarchy of rights in relation to the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010. We cannot allow some to trump others. It must be all or nothing”)

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/06/16/catholics-in-scotland-fear-being-open-about-their-faith-says-bishops-conference-official/>

**Tuesday June 20, 2017**



## Myanmar

Assistant Pastor Dom Dawng Nawng Latt (aged 65, disappeared on [December 24, 2016](#), had told media of the [December 3, 2016](#) bombing of the church in [Mongkoe township](#), last seen near a military base; as of [January 26, 2017](#) reportedly will be tried for 'illegal association'; **UPDATE**: health reportedly failing)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/06/pastor-jailed-burma-falls-ill/>



## India: Bongaigaon, Assam state

### **Cathedral vandalized, tabernacle broken**

Archbishop Emeritus Thomas Menampampil (**UPDATE**: said "The surrounding area is not inhabited by groups that could be called anti-Christian or anti-minority")

Sajan K George (**UPDATE**: said "I do not think we can call it a simple robbery. The frequency of anti-Christian hostility is increasing, causing communal tensions")

Allen Brooks (Assam Christian Forum spokesman, said "The incident has struck everyone. Christians in the state are under shock and are afraid")

### **India: Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh state**

Akash Gundia (aged 15, son of Hartesh Singh Gundia, put in juvenile detention on [May 21, 2017](#), said "I told the police I am a Christian by birth, and we are going to attend the VBS [Vacation Bible School], but they did not listen to me and took us to the police station. Children as young as 6 also were in police custody, but when their parents came, the police handed them over to the parents. I was produced in court a day later, and from there was sent to a juvenile detention home...I missed my home so much – I cried every day, and prayed and prayed"; **UPDATE**: released)

Hartesh Singh Gundia (father of Akash Gundia, said he attempted to recover custody of his son "But they refused to hand over my child to me. Later, I got to know from the police station that police had not intended to file the case, but that there was pressure from RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a Hindu paramilitary group] and Bajrang Dal [Hindu youth] activists, because of whom my child spent 25 days in judicial custody")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/For-Bishop-Menampampil,-vandalism-against-Catholic-cathedral-in-Assam-has-hurt-and-raised-concerns-among-Christians-41093.html>

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/06/christians-taking-children-camp-india-charged-kidnapping-forced-conversion/>



### **Pakistan: Rao Khan Wala, Kasur**

Mehwish Shaukat (aged 8, victim of an attempted rape on [June 8, 2017](#) by a Muslim neighbor while her parents and older siblings were at work)

Shaukat Masih (aged about 46, father of Sharoon, Haroon, Mehwish, Samson, and Kajal, brick kiln bonded laborer; **UPDATE**: beaten by his employer after he refused to sign a compromise document which would allow his daughter's attacker to go free)

Haroon Shaukat (aged 13, brother of Mehwish Shaukat, brick kiln bonded laborer; **UPDATE**: beaten and tortured by his employer, forced to confess he had raped the 3 year old daughter of another kiln employee, arrested, family told he would be tried alongside the attacker of their daughter)

<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6516>

**Wednesday June 21, 2017**



## **Philippines**

Jen-Jen (convert, student, reported to have been forced to pray in a mosque to graduate from school)

### **Philippines: Malagakit, Mindanao**

Cardinal Orlando Quevedo OMI (**UPDATE**: condemned the desecration of a chapel by Islamic militants, said the act was "wicked")

<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/stories/forced-pray-muslim-prayer-jen-jens-persecution-story/>

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/islamic-state-desecrates-catholic-chapel-in-mindanao/79576>



## **China: Wenzhou, Zhejiang province**

Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin (aged 54, detained on [May 18, 2017](#); seen disembarking at the local airport under police escort on [June 16, 2017](#), picked up his luggage, did not return home;

**UPDATE**: the German Ambassador wrote "I welcome China's declared intention to achieve progress with regard to the Catholic Church. However, despite progress in this direction, we also see setbacks in guaranteeing religious freedom. One case of growing concern is the treatment of Bishop Shao Zhumin by the authorities. Since autumn last year he seems to have been forced to move to unknown locations no less than four times and now seems to have been confined to his home since his return. His full freedom of movement should be restored")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/The-German-ambassador-asks-China-to-release-Msgr.-Shao-Zhumin-41079.html>



## **Pakistan: Quetta**

Juan Won-Seo (South Korean citizen, Urdu language school owner, reportedly will be expelled from the country for 'illegal preaching activities' after two of his Chinese Christian students [Lee Zingyang and Meng Lisi] were abducted by ISIL and killed before or during a government airstrike)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/06/pakistan-expels-south-korean-illegal-preaching-murder-chinese-missionaries/>



### **Lebanon: Aley**

Bishop Joseph Absi (aged 71, dual Syrian citizen, elected Patriarch of the Greek Melkite Catholic Church)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Bishop-Joseph-Absi-is-the-new-patriarch-of-the-Greek-Melkite-Church-41083.html>

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/06/22/syrian-bishop-elected-new-melkite-catholic-patriarch/>



### **United States – California: San Francisco**

Investigative journalists' office raided on [April 5, 2016](#), video recordings seized; the journalists were indicted on [March 28, 2017](#) on 15 felony counts for having secretly recorded Planned Parenthood officials negotiating the illegal sale of tissue harvested from aborted children, despite the fact that the state never prosecuted animal rights groups and NBC for doing the same with other subjects [and in the NBC case a civil case resulted in their exoneration under the law]; **UPDATE: 14 counts were dismissed, prosecutorial refileing allowed**

David Daleiden (aged 28; **UPDATE:** all counts dismissed)

Sandra Merritt (aged 64; **UPDATE:** 14 counts dismissed, one count on invasion of privacy allowed to stand)

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/court-drops-charges-against-pro-life-investigators-who-exposed-planned-pare>

**Thursday June 22, 2017**



### **North Korea**

Pastor Lim Hyeon-Soo (aged 62, Canadian citizen, disappeared after his [January 31, 2015](#) entry to the country; confessed on [July 31, 2015](#) in Pyongyang to attempting to overthrow the state; sentenced in [Pyongyang](#) on [December 16, 2015](#) to life imprisonment at hard labor; **UPDATE:** still imprisoned)

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/family-of-canadian-pastor-imprisoned-in-north-korea-very-concerned-in-wake-of-americans-death-189098/>



## **United Kingdom**

Rev Gavin Ashenden (**UPDATE**: wrote following the resignation of Tim Farron as leader of the Liberal Democrat party "...Seeing ourselves primarily in terms of our sexual identity or erotic appetites seems to me a very poor and shallow reflection on our potential as human beings. Perhaps it's part of our consumerism? 'We are what we want' – and we want sex... it's a long way from Descartes' 'I think therefore I am'...There is another part of the narrative which doesn't make sense, if this is only about trying to make counter-cultural politicians accountable. There are 15 Muslim MPs and the Mayor of London is a Muslim. Islam is uncompromisingly against homosexuality. In fact ISIL goes so far as to post YouTube videos of homosexuals being executed by being thrown off tall buildings. Yet none of the Muslim MPs or the Mayor of London are being asked the questions that Tim Farron was hounded with...Tim Farron made a claim that should have shocked our society to the core. He said he could no longer lead a political party and be faithful to Christ...At this point I would have hoped that all open-minded, tolerant people would have protested on his behalf. I would have expected the Archbishop of Canterbury and all the bishops of the Church of England to have publicly backed his right to have a Christian conscience and maintain a public office...But there was silence. Except for Archbishop Welby. He went so far, in his defense of freedom of speech and Christian conscience, as to wonder if Farron's forced resignation "raised questions." Nazi Germany suppressed freedom of speech and specifically Christian beliefs. So did the Marxist Soviet Union. Whatever else we can discern about our society in its distaste for freedom of speech and conscience, we see it drawing steadily closer to the practice of the two most totalitarian states of modern times...")

<https://ashenden.org/2017/06/22/first-they-came-for-tim-farron-soon-theyll-come-for-you/>

**Friday June 23, 2017**



## **China: Haozhou, Anhui**

Lin Yongju (reported to have been prohibited from travelling to Hong Kong for a church conference)



Pastor Zhang "Bike" Mingxuan (**UPDATE**: said “[The public security bureau - DSPP] limits preachers, preventing them from going abroad. I am almost 70, but they are still controlling me, preventing me from travelling abroad. The Mainland Chinese government controls Christians both to maintain stability and out of the fear the Christians will unite”)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/06/pastor-forbidden-from-traveling-abroad.html>



### **India**

Fr Z Devasagayaraj (**UPDATE**: criticized the BJP party for nominating Dalit [untouchable] leader Ram Nath Kovind for President because he maintained that Islam and Christianity as alien religions and should not be protected by law)

Samuel Jaykumar (National Council of Churches in India; **UPDATE**: said "We hope and expect that the president upholds the constitutional and secular values")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/controversy-over-indias-presidential-nominee/79581>



### **United Kingdom: East Anglia**

Bishop Alan Hopes (called for the government to remove a cap on faith admissions to new schools: “All the cap achieved was to bar the Catholic Church from opening new schools. This is because it would result in Catholic schools turning away Catholic pupils on the grounds of their Catholicism, a feature which is prohibited by Canon Law”)

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/06/23/bishop-calls-on-government-to-keep-catholic-schools-promise/>

**June 2017, date unknown**

### **Today's Martyrs**

**2490 Black Rock Turnpike #455**

**Fairfield CT 06825-2400**

<http://todaysmartyrs.org/events/>

Permission is granted to copy, disseminate and forward this document without charge or fee, provided no changes are made and full attribution is made to Today's Martyrs