

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – July 2017

Saturday July 1, 2017



Uzbekistan: Fergana

Police raided the homes of four Christians, books and magazines seized

Pastor Aleksei Beryalev

Boris Kuznetsov

Sergei Stanislavsky

Yevgeniya Fedina

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



Iran

A training session in "the region" allowed young Iranian Christians to meet

Marjan (alias, aged 23, said “I don’t know any other young Christian in my city...When my parents came to faith, I myself was still a very strict Muslim. When we went to house church meetings, I just sat and cried in the other room. Then one day, a girl my age came to me and helped me with all the questions I had. That was the start of my own journey towards Jesus”)

Kyana (alias, aged 17, said “I lost some of my friends when they found out I was a Christian. They stopped inviting me over because they thought I was different from them and shouldn’t belong to their group...Our new house church was supported by a more experienced fellowship. They were mentoring us. But one day there was a series of arrests and we lost contact with them. It didn’t only make me scared, it also made me question God. Why did he leave us on our own?”, added that she now meets in homes with small groups of Christians We have to keep our voices down so the neighbors don’t report us to the police”)

Aref (alias, aged 25, music teacher, said “It is a dream to one day make music and sing in a church building”)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/06/freeiran-movement-gathers-paris-young-iranians-talk-challenges-faith-presents/>



Mali

UPDATE: Al Qaeda released a video showing several abducted Christians

Beatrice Stockly (social worker, missionary, Swiss citizen, abducted in [Abaradjou, Timbuktu](#) on [January 8, 2016](#))

Sr Gloria Cecilia Narvaez Argoti (Colombian citizen, abducted in [Koutiala](#) on [February 7, 2017](#))

Dr Kenneth Elliot (aged 83, husband of Jocelyn Elliot, Australian citizen, missionary, abducted in [Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso](#) on [January 15, 2016](#))

http://www.fides.org/en/news/62560-AMERICA_COLOMBIA_Even_Sister_Gloria_Cecilia_in_the_video_released_by_Al_Qaeda_with_those_kidnapped_in_Mali#.WVpNIITyuM8

Sunday July 2, 2017



Egypt: Heliopolis

Girgis Bushra (aged 55, jeweler, **shot dead** in his home)

Egypt: Tala, Monufia province

Dr Albert Fekry (aged 67, **killed** in his clinic, throat slashed)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/07/four-copts-killed-aggressive-campaign-history-modern-egypt/>

Monday July 3, 2017



Iran

Hadi Askary (arrested without warrant by MOIS agents while fishing and picnicking with his wife in [Firuzkuh](#) on [August 26, 2016](#); sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment in [Tehran](#) on [June 11, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: began serving his sentence, appeal still pending)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3703>



Nigeria

Church leaders ask secondary school students to boycott new mandatory Arabic classes

Bishop David Oyedepo (claimed the new classes were an attempt to convert students to Islam)

Pastor Enoch Adeboye (said the government could not force students to study the language)

Pastor William Folorunso Kumuyi (**UPDATE**: said the government could not force students to study the language)

Rev Felix Omobude (said "We are aware of orchestrated plans to subtly use this policy as a means of forceful religious indoctrination and we maintain our stand against it")

<https://www.premier.org.uk/News/World/Nigerian-Christian-leaders-urge-students-to-boycott-Arabic-classes>



United States

former Pastor Craig Stellpflug (aged 56, denied a Twitter advertisement to promote his book defending traditional Christian marriage, Twitter wrote that the text "One Man One Woman is about God's original design for marriage carried from Adam and Eve in the garden through today" was 'hateful', said "My book is not hate! It highlights conservative Christian marriage values — therefore it is 'hate.' Have we stooped so low in our country that my freedom of speech is squelched because I promote my Christian beliefs?", Twitter was not reported as having returned his payment)

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/twitter-bans-ad-promotion-of-one-man-one-woman-marriage-book-calls-it-hate-193466/>

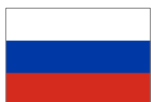
Tuesday July 4, 2017



Iran: Evin Prison, Tehran

Sevada Aghasar (arrested on [August 21, 2013](#) in the [Karaj](#) office of Masoud Mirzaei, called home to say he was in good health, charges unknown; as of [October 18, 2013](#) has reportedly been held in a solitary cell in [Evin Prison in Tehran](#); released from prison in [Tehran](#) on [March 2, 2014](#), never charged; reported on [May 1, 2015](#) to have been sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment for "action against national security through collusion and gathering", the gathering in question was a meeting where he met with Ebrahim Firouzi to say goodbye before the beginning of Firouzi's original prison term; **UPDATE:** began serving his 5 year prison term)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3695>

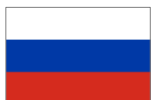


Russia: Shumerlya, Chuvash Republic

Avel Lukin (aged 18, conscientious objector, denied alternative civilian service by a [Chuvash Republic](#) military conscription office on [May 12, 2017](#), ordered to serve in the nuclear missile forces; **UPDATE:** appeal denied)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2297

Wednesday July 5, 2017



Russia: Novgorod

P V Kotlyarenko (fined US\$142 on [April 3, 2017](#) for illegal missionary activity for conversing with a street vendor about God; **UPDATE:** appeal denied)

T A Mandrichenko (fined US\$107 on [April 3, 2017](#) for illegal missionary activity for conversing with a street vendor about God; **UPDATE:** appeal denied)

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



Mexico: de Los Reyes, Mexico state

Fr Luis Lopez Villa (aged 71, bound and **stabbed to death** in his rectory)

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/mexican-priest-found-bound-stabbed-to-death-in-his-room-44449/>

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62589->

[AMERICA MEXICO Another priest brutally killed in his parish#.WV-RJoTyuM8](#)

Thursday July 6, 2017



Cuba: Guantanamo

Pastor Ramon Rigal (sentenced on [April 25, 2017](#) to one year at hard labor for removing his children from government schools to avoid anti-Christian teaching; **UPDATE**: sentence reduced to home arrest)

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



United States - West Virginia: Harpers Ferry

Pastor Rich Penkoski (reported that his automobile was vandalized, had received rape and death threats, homosexual pornography, and mailed feces after stating he opposed use of the rainbow flag emoji on his Facebook page, has had to change his telephone number)

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/pastor-receives-feces-mail-car-keyed-opposing-facebooks-rainbow-flag-emoji-191104/>

Friday July 7, 2017



China: Beijing

Xu Yonghai (**UPDATE**: home raided by police during a Bible study, 10 members questioned, police left after he called the national security office and complained)

China: Hohhot, Inner Mongolia

Zhang Kai (civil rights attorney, released on [December 29, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: reported to have been detained 12 times and held up to 48 hours without any formal action taken, police have occupied the apartment under his and installed CCTV cameras near his home, is often followed)

China: Xinxiang, Henan province

Pastor Zhang Shaojie (husband of Wang Fengrui; **UPDATE**: health in prison in decline, described as a "bag of bones" and as having dark discolorations under his eyes, when asked if he had been beaten replied "Do you need to be beaten to become like this?")

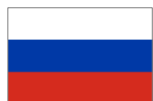
Zhang Cuijuan (aged 40, wife of Jia Limin, younger sister of Pastor Zhang Shaojie, released from prison on [May 31, 2015](#); **UPDATE**: visited her brother in prison, said "It's painful to see such a good person being persecuted. I don't know how long he can persist")

Zhang "Yunyun" Huixin aka Esther Zhang (daughter of Pastor Zhang Shaojie and Wang Fengrui, U.S. resident; **UPDATE**: said of her father "He's unable to see the sun during the day. He's deprived of sleep for 24 hours at a time. The prison gives him only one steamed bun a day and intentionally starves him. According to people who have been released from that prison, my father is barely alive, suffering both mentally and physically")

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/07/christian-human-rights-lawyer-summoned.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/07/police-break-into-bible-study-demand.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/07/family-fears-for-barely-alive-chinese.html>



Russia: Kemerovo

Pastor Olga Matyuzhova (fined on [November 27, 2016](#) for an unauthorized public sermon; appeal denied on [December 28, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: conviction overturned on appeal due to the statute of limitations but guilt upheld)

Russia: Prigorodny district, Sverdlovsk region

Anna Kosharnova (church in [Nizhny Tagil](#) fined US\$842 on [February 8, 2017](#); appeal denied on [April 6, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: second appeal denied)

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

Saturday July 8, 2017



Pakistan: Ara Basti, Bhawalpur

Three Christian sewer workers **died from toxic fumes, had been denied protective equipment and training**

Saleem Masih (aged 50)

Danish Masih (aged 20)

Nadeem Masih (aged 18)

<http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/three-christian-sewage-workers-killed-by-toxic-fumes-whilst-working-without-ppe>



United Kingdom: London

Charlie Gard (aged 11 months, son of Chris Gard and Connie Yates, terminally ill, hospitalized, denied access to experimental treatment, denied access to clergy)

Rev Patrick Mahoney (U.S. citizen, denied access to pray over Charlie Gard by the hospital, said "First they said they would have to check. Then they said we couldn't go. Then they gave permission and then when we were going with his mother into the room, they denied us. And then we sent the news release out [regarding the hospital's actions]" after which the hospital finally granted permission)

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/hospital-wont-let-clergy-visit-charlie-gard-to-pray-for-him>

Sunday July 9, 2017



Turkey

Kuryakos Ergun (**UPDATE**: reported to have said after the appeal against the government's seizure of 2 monasteries and 20 churches was denied "Our churches and monasteries are

what root Syrians in these lands: our existence relies on them. While the country should be protecting this heritage, we instead see our culture is at risk")

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/07/09/turkeys-assyrians-fear-annihilation-after-government-seizes-church-properties.html>

Monday July 10, 2017



India: Goa

Archbishop Filipe Neri Ferrao (**UPDATE:** condemned the desecration of 40 crosses and several graves in a cemetery with heavy machinery, appealed to people of "all faiths to refrain from taking any retaliatory action or fanning the flame of religious hatred")

Mario Britto (said "If the police are really serious about unraveling the mystery of the desecration, they ought to start investigating the [government] ministers' links with fundamentalists organizations")

Sajan K George (**UPDATE:** commented on the cemetery desecration "In June, the All India Hindu Convention met in Goa. The result was desecration and insecurity for the minority. During the meeting, Sadhvi Saraswati, president of Sanatan Dharma Prachar Seva Summit, said those who eat cow should be hanged in public, and said 'I ask Hindus to take up arms to defend our cow, our mother'")

India: Dindori district, Madhya Pradesh state

Fr Leo D'Souza (aged 56, school principal, arrested on child abuse charges involving an eighth grade student who had been accepted at the school only 10 days earlier, no preliminary police investigation was performed prior to the arrest)

Bishop Gerald Almeida (**UPDATE:** said that Hindu radicals have created trouble for Christians: "Such hatred could be one reason for this heinous charge")

Richard James (**UPDATE:** said "police are hand in glove with the right-wing Hindu activists...[they] have been unleashing a reign of terror against minority groups, especially Christians")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/crosses-vandalized-graves-desecrated-in-go/79748>

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-priest-arrested-for-child-abuse/79736>

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Crosses-broken-and-cemetery-desecrated-in-Goa-due-to-religious-hatred,-Mgr-Neri-Ferrao-says-41301.html>



Kazakhstan: Uighur district

Pastor Marat Tlegenov (fined US\$680 for performing an outdoor baptism)

Pastor Hae Taik Kim (Canadian citizen, fined US\$680 for attending an outdoor baptism, ordered deported)

Myungsoon Bae (South Korean citizen, fined US\$340 for attending an outdoor baptism, banned from activities for 3 months)

Byung Jin Ahn (South Korean citizen, fined US\$340 for attending an outdoor baptism, banned from activities for 3 months)

Samantha Sun Yu Leist (U.S. citizen, fined US\$340 for attending an outdoor baptism, banned from activities for 3 months)

Sung Chun Park (U.S. citizen, fined US\$340 for attending an outdoor baptism, banned from activities for 3 months)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2303



Egypt: Ezbet al-Nakhl area, Cairo

Nadra Jaber (reported to have been **killed** in her home, Christian books torn apart, police refused to investigate)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1934&A=31405>

Tuesday July 11, 2017



China: Ezhou, Hubei province

Pastor Zhang (said “the government officials threw firecrackers at the [Christian] brothers and sisters who attended the [outdoor] gathering. A sister was hurt”)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/08/hubei-christians-attacked-with.html>



India: Dindori district, Madhya Pradesh state

Fr Leo D'Souza (aged 56, school principal, arrested on [July 10, 2017](#) on child abuse charges involving an eighth grade student who had been accepted at the school only 10 days earlier, no preliminary police investigation was performed prior to the arrest; **UPDATE:** released)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-priest-charged-with-molesting-student-bishop-cries-harassment/80169>



Niger

Jeffery Woodke (aged 56, missionary, U.S. citizen, husband of Els Woodke, abducted in [Arcata](#) on [October 14, 2016](#) by armed men who forced him to strip to his underwear, guard and housekeeper killed; **UPDATE:** whereabouts unknown but believed to have been moved to Mali)

Els Woodke (wife of Jeffery Woodke, released a video that noted her husband's absence on the [July 1, 2017](#) al-Qaeda video of captives in Mali, asked for information about him)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/07/us-hostages-wife-asks-his-african-captors-to-contact-her/>

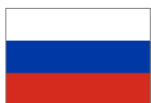
Wednesday July 12, 2017



Yemen

Fr Tom Uzhunnalil SDB (aged 58, Indian citizen, abducted when armed men attacked a nursing home in Aden on [March 4, 2016](#), killing 16 employees and residents including 4 nuns; **UPDATE:** confirmed to be still alive)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/07/church-relieved-as-yemen-confirms-kidnapped-indian-priest-is-alive/>



Russia: Chelyabinsk

Dmitry Taranenko (issued a warning for not displaying the church's full legal name on a sign outside a private home used for a worship service)

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



Greece: Kalavryta

Metropolitan Ambrose Lenis (aged 79, **UPDATE**: wrote on his blog “While we are silent as fish, everything is vanishing and dying. We are persecuting Christ! The Greeks are being de-Christianized!...The people from the ruling SYRIZA party are aiming to overthrow all that is sacred, Christian, and national. They are seeking to uproot the Orthodox and national self-consciousness of the Greeks. Day by day, Greece is gradually changing its face and character...The voice of the Church is not heard today; the walls are falling one by one without resistance”)

<http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/105352.htm>

http://mkka.blogspot.ru/2017/07/blog-post_12.html - with translation

Thursday July 13, 2017



China: Suqian, Jiangsu province

Fr Wang Qingwen (reported to have sent a letter to the local Communist Party secretary protesting the closure of a church youth summer camp)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/state-security-bans-chinese-parishes-children-program/79749>



United Kingdom: Nottingham

Andrew Frost (charged in [March 2017](#) with harassment of a homosexual couple when street preaching; **UPDATE**: reported to have been acquitted)

Rory Green (reported to have testified that the couple had harassed Andrew Frost)

<http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/mike-overd/another-street-preacher-cleared-of-all-charges>

Friday July 14, 2017



Pakistan: Dinga town, Gujrat District, Punjab Province

Shahzad Masih (aged 17, son of Hina Shafaqat, hospital janitor, abducted and taken to a madrassa [Islamic school] for questioning after a blasphemy allegation had been made against him, arrested, whereabouts unknown)

Shafaqat Masih (builder, husband of Hina Shafaqat , father of Shahzad Masih, in hiding after his son was arrested on blasphemy charges, said "We left the city same evening the clerics captured him. I switched off my phone fearing they will trace my family...We are poor people and I am out of work now. The clerics did not listen to our please, they will kill my son")

Hina Shafaqat (mother of Shahzad Masih)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/07/islamists-pakistan-accuse-christian-minor-blaspheming-islams-prophet/>

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistani-catholic-family-flees-following-blasphemy-allegation/79776>



Tajikistan: Khujand

Pastor Bakhrom Kholmatov (aged 42, husband, father of three, arrested on [April 10, 2017](#) by the NSC secret police on charges of 'extremism'; **UPDATE**: reported to have been sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment for 'singing extremist songs in church and so inciting religious hatred', friends and family threatened with arrest if they disclose details of the trial)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2298



Egypt

Most churches have cancelled summer programs due to government reports of security threats

Rev Andrea Zaki (**UPDATE**: said "[security] agencies have informed us about the discovery of attack plans")

Fr Bolous Halim (**UPDATE:** said "Due to security concerns raised among churches' officials against any gatherings of Copts in Egypt, the churches affiliated to the Coptic Orthodox Church consulted the main church to coordinate with the Interior Ministry to undertake any action")

Rev Mohsen Naeem (cancelled a church trip to a tourist resort, said "Join in prayer for the security and stability of our country")

Pastor Saeed Awad (has refrained from organizing church trips to religious sites for the past three years, said "We [in Ismailia] are on the front lines. We are the first city ISIL would come to")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Threat-of-attacks-forces-Evangelical-and-Coptic-Churches-to-shut-down-activities-41285.html>

<http://www.aina.org/news/20170713141353.htm>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/07/terrorist-threat-forces-egyptian-christians-to-cancel-summer-activities/>

Saturday July 15, 2017



China

Xu Zhiyong (aged 44, attorney, new father, sentenced to 4 years' imprisonment in [Beijing](#) on [January 19, 2014](#), said '...I believe in the power of faith, and in the power of the truth, compassion and beauty that exists in the depths of the human soul...'; **UPDATE:** released from prison)

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/china-releases-christian-human-rights-activist-prison-xu-zhiyong-192088/>



India: Goa

Francis Pereira (aged 54, taxi driver, arrested for the recent wave of cross and cemetery desecrations)

Fr Savio Fernandes (said he doubted that someone of Francis Pereira's age could have by himself caused all of the cross and cemetery damage)

India: Salem Tabri, Punjab state

Pastor Sultan Masih (aged 47, husband of Sarbjit, father of Anoop, Ali Shah and Hanok, brother of Raj Kamal Masih, **shot dead** by two assailants on motorcycles outside his church, had no known enemies, police initially refused to perform a full investigation)

Sarbjit (widow of Pastor Sultan Masih)

Ali Shah (aged 26, son of Pastor Sultan Masih)

Hanok (aged 18, daughter of Pastor Sultan Masih)

Anoop Masih (son of Pastor Sultan Masih, discovered his body)

Pastor Vishnu Dev (**UPDATE**: said after the murder of Pastor Sultan Masih “He and his family are serving Christ for decades and they are at peace with everyone. But four days before he was shot, I met him, and he told me, “Please pray for us, as we continue standing for Christ, many enemies are standing up against us. Please pray for us”)

Raj Kamal Masih (brother of Pastor Sultan Masih, said “Anoop Masih heard the noise of shooting and came out of his room on the first floor. Seeing his dad lying on the road, he screamed and alerted everyone in the church building...My brother was a peace loving man. We don't have any enmity towards anyone. Since over two decades my brother is serving Christ”)

Pastor Balwinder Kumar (said that Pastor Sultan Masih may have been targeted for a public celebration of the church's 25th anniversary “RSS [paramilitary] activists arrived there and started accusing the pastor of forced conversions. They came to him to quarrel twice after the event, too. The feud was not so very serious that he had to be killed like this. The RSS activists accused him that, ‘You Christians get paid for converting people. How much do you pay the converted?’ They were stiff and were not listening when Pastor Masih tried to explain it is not true”)

Pastor Paul Tamizharasan (said “Pastor Sultan Masih was my neighbor and my friend" after his assassination, added "The state of Punjab is very safe in India for Christians. There are Sikhs living here – they are also a religious minority in India. We are also a minority, but never before have we had any threats. But unfortunately this has happened and we are all shocked about how this is possible”)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/pastor-shot-dead-outside-church-in-india>

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/07/pastor-punjab-state-india-shot-dead/>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/07/india-christians-shock-pastor-shot-dead-safe-punjab/>

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Catholic-arrested-in-connection-with-smashed-crosses-in-Goa,-but-some-see-a-cover-up-41309.html>



Egypt: Alexandria

Mina Zakhary (church security guard, stabbed while at the church, hospitalized)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1943&A=31561>

Sunday July 16, 2017



China: Hangzhou, Zhejiang province

Senior Pastor Joseph Gu Yuese (husband of Zhou Lian Mei, removed on [January 22, 2016](#) from his position as leader of the government sanctioned Three Self Patriotic Movement church; reported on [February 3, 2016](#) to have been arrested on embezzlement and corruption charges, sent to a black jail, had written that his church had been experiencing “unprecedented, chilling trials. Everyone must equally rely on the Lord’s grace to confront [this trial] and triumph over it”; released on [March 31, 2016](#), placed under travel and meeting restrictions; re-apprehended in [December 2016](#); **UPDATE**: fired his attorney, wrote “the last thing I want is to get you involved because of me. I do not want you to lose your freedom for me. Therefore, you do not need to defend me in Hangzhou. I am very grateful for what you have done for me”)

China: Jiangmen, Guangdong province

Tang Lili (summoned to the police station to 'drink tea', interrogated, apparently released, home raided the following day without warrant, items seized)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/07/christian-official-fires-lawyer-raising.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/07/christian-leader-interrogated-church.html>



Eritrea: Asmara

Patriarch Abune Antonios (disappeared in [2007](#); as of [May 27, 2017](#) has passed 10 years' in house arrest; **UPDATE**: allowed to attend a public Divine Liturgy at the cathedral, returned to house arrest)

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/32999>

<http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/patriarch-abune-antonios-of-eritrea-detained-again/>

<http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/eritrean-synod-organises-a-sham-reconciliation/>



Venezuela: Catia, outside Caracas

Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino (**UPDATE**: mediated the safe exit of a crowd that had taken refuge in a church after armed civilian supporters of the government had fired on them, killing one)

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/shots-fired-at-people-voting-outside-church-in-venezuela-24718/>

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62654->

[AMERICA VENEZUELA Cardinal Urosa Savino after the attack in the parish eno ugh violence against the people#.WW4NdoTyuM8](#)

Monday July 17, 2017



Vietnam: Quang Binh province

Fr Truong Van Thuc (led about 1,000 Catholics in protest over the government's year long delay in disbursing compensation for an environmental disaster which had already been paid by the polluting corporation)

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/catholic-villagers-in-vietnam-protest-lack-of-compensation-for-formosa-disaster-07032017144316.html>



Iran: Rajaei-Shahr prison, Karaj, Alborz province

Ebrahim Firouzi (convert, aged 32, welder, reported on [May 1, 2015](#) to have been sentenced to five additional years' imprisonment for "action against national security through collusion and gathering", the gathering in question was a meeting where he met with friends to say goodbye before the beginning of his original prison term; **UPDATE**: had begun another hunger strike, wrote "Following the mistreatment of new Christian believers and converts by the judicial authorities, refusing Christian prisoners access to Christian literature, and issuing unjust and hefty verdicts and sentences against new Christian believers and converts to the point that in the recent months tens of Christians have been sentenced to long years of imprisonment, I hereby announce going on hunger strike, commencing on 17 July 2017, for a period of 10 days, in support of the rights of fellow Christians")

<http://www.meconcern.org/2017/07/21/iranian-christian-on-hunger-strike/>



Greece

Haroon Maqbool (father of two, Pakistani refugee, arrived on Lesbos in August 2016, along with other Christians was threatened by Muslims, all did not complete registration due to fear and left the refugee camp; **UPDATE**: reported to be homeless on the Greek mainland, denied UN refugee status due to having left the Lesbos refugee camp)

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/christians-barred-asylum-leaving-refugee-camp-harassment-muslim-migrants-192257/>



Congo, Democratic Republic: Bunyuka, North-Kivu province

Fr Pierre Akilimali (abducted by persons unknown)

Fr Charles Kipasa (abducted by persons unknown)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62655->
[AFRICA DR CONGO Two priests kidnapped The Bishops condemnation Hurting them means harming the community they serve#.WW4N5oTyuM8](#)



Nigeria: Maiduguri, Borno state

Fr Gideon Obasogie (**UPDATE**: said following recent suicide bombings "Boko Haram is an enemy of humanity and does not hesitate to kill faithful Muslims. Its tactics is to commit atrocities against innocent civilians in order to maximize the terrorist impact on the population...Over the last few months, Boko Haram attacked crowded places of Maiduguri and its suburbs, such as markets and hospitals. The jihadist group attacks civilians also because the latter have organized self-defense militias to try to limit their assaults...Unfortunately, some politicians are involved in the phenomenon of Boko Haram. If there were no political interests, Boko Haram would no longer be a problem")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62650->
[AFRICA NIGERIA Boko Haram attacks a mosque It is an enemy of humanity says the Social Communications Director of the Diocese of Maiduguri#.WWzAVoTyuM8](#)

Tuesday July 18, 2017



China: Hong Kong

Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-Kium SDB (aged 85, **UPDATE:** wrote after the High Court invalidated the election of four pro-democracy lawmakers for rewording their oath of office: "How can this ridiculous thing happen in Hong Kong? Why didn't the public come out to make a stronger objection?...The behavior of the government makes people lose confidence in judicial independence")

Lina Chan (diocesan official, said "More than 100,000 votes have been invalidated. The government is using the judicial system to disqualify lawmakers to fulfill its political purpose. The election is being trampled on")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/disqualification-of-hong-kong-lawmakers-riles-cardinal-zen/79816>



India: Thyagaraja Nagar, Sirkali area, Nagapattinam district, Tamil Nadu state

A father-son pastoral team was attacked outside their church by five men belonging to the Hindu Makkal Katchi, a branch of the RSS paramilitary organization

Pastor Daniel Jebraj (aged 28, son of Pastor Muniyandi Elangoan Jebraj, attacked, suffered bruises and cuts, said "I told them this is not the right place for drinking and smoking activities. I was not aware they were waiting for me. They pulled out the weapons and attacked me. They were spewing very dangerous words – I can't say such words, they are highly derogatory and foul. My father came out running, and he too was beaten", added that an 18 year old Muslim named Mhamadhu Abdullah Barish ran to their aid but was later arrested: "The police falsely framed the boy to prevent exposing the case as Hindu extremist violence on Christians. Abdullah has no relation to this case. He heard our screams and came and tried to take us to the hospital. He did not beat us")

Pastor Muniyandi Elangoan Jebraj (aged 61, father of Pastor Daniel Jebraj, attacked, suffered a brain injury, hospitalized

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/police-disingenuous-hindu-extremist-assault-pastors-tamil-nadu-india-sources-say/>



United States - West Virginia: Harpers Ferry

Pastor Rich Penkoski (as of [July 6, 2017](#) has had his automobile vandalized, received rape and death threats, homosexual pornography, and mailed feces after stating he opposed use of the rainbow flag emoji on his Facebook account, has had to change his telephone number; **UPDATE**: family has moved out of their home due to death threats)

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/pastor-forced-move-receiving-threats-opposing-facebooks-rainbow-flag-emoji-193075/>

Wednesday July 19, 2017



China: Hong Kong

Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-Kium SDB (aged 85, wrote on [July 18, 2017](#) after the High Court invalidated the election of four pro-democracy lawmakers for rewording their oath of office: "How can this ridiculous thing happen in Hong Kong? Why didn't the public come out to make a stronger objection?...The behavior of the government makes people lose confidence in judicial independence"; **UPDATE**: state media has been ordered to no longer refer to him as "bishop emeritus" but rather as "former bishop")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/thin-skinned-chinese-censors-downgrade-zens-status/79859>



India: Karnal district, Haryana state

Pastor Sanjay (arrested for his involvement in an alleged November 9, 2014 desecration of Hindu idols despite the facts that he was not present and did not know Pastor Bajinder, who was arrested on that date)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/indian-pastors-call-for-prayers-to-exonerate-them-from-false-blasphemy-charge>



Pakistan: Kamalpur, Faisalabad district

Javed Masih (aged 32, bonded farm worker [i.e. slave], brother of Imran Masih, **died from a severe beating** inflicted by his 'owner' the day before when he became the suspect in a motorcycle theft)

Imran Masih (brother of Javed Masih, said "We want justice. We are poor and therefore the police refuse to listen to us and record the complaint. Large landowners are threatening serious consequences because we have opposed any compromise. All this is because we are Christians and poor")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Faisalabad,-a-Christian-enslaved-and-slaughtered-by-his-Muslim-master-41362.html>



Egypt

Joseph Reda Helmy (soldier, **beaten to death** at his army camp within six hours of his arrival most likely for having a tattoo of Mary the mother of Jesus on his arm)

Reda Helmy (father of Joseph Reda Helmy)

Youssef Zarif (cousin of Joseph Reda Helmy, received a call to retrieve his cousin's body hours after his cousin had arrived at his army camp, told by army officers that his cousin had died from an epileptic seizure, took the body to a doctor who documented an extensive beating)

Malak Youakim (cousin of Joseph Reda Helmy, said his cousin was killed for his faith)

Egypt: Cairo

Jamal Kamal Aweidah (aged over 40, arrested on fraud charges, **died in police custody** after having likely been tortured)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62680->

[AFRICA EGYPT A Copt dies while being detained in a police station Relatives a](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62680-)
[nd friends he was tortured to death#.WXH8soTyuM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62680-)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1945&A=31592>

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/07/soldier-beaten-death-christian-faith-relatives-say/>



United States – California: San Francisco

David Daleiden (aged 29; investigative journalist, home in Orange county and office raided on [April 5, 2016](#), video recordings seized; 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]; all counts dismissed in San Francisco on [June 21, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: found in contempt of court for having released

videos of abortionists publicly discussing abortion details, fined over \$137,000, judge has connections to Planned Parenthood but refused to recuse himself)

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/judge-orders-daleiden-to-pay-137k-to-abortion-group-for-violating-gag-order>

Thursday July 20, 2017



China: Jiangmen, Guangdong province

Pastor Li Wanhua (detained on [June 14, 2017](#), accused of cult activity; **UPDATE**: released on bail for one year, under travel restrictions)

Ruan Haonan (husband of Luo Caiyan, detained on [June 12, 2017](#), accused of cult activity; **UPDATE**: released on bail for one year, under travel restrictions)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/07/wrongly-charged-christians-released-on.html>



India: Imphal, Manipur state

Bishop Dominic Lumon (said after the Supreme Court ordered an investigation into extrajudicial killings by the police and military "We welcome the decision and hope the probe will be impartial, devoid of political goals, and bring justice to the victims")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-bishop-welcomes-extra-judicial-killings-probe/79798>



Tanzania: Chukwani, Zanzibar

Pastor Amos Lukanula (as of [June 22, 2015](#) has been forced to pay US\$100 in court costs each month to defend his church's land ownership; **UPDATE**: a court ruled that the church construction could not continue "Our church members have persistently worked alongside with me and are frustrated and weary, but we are always hopeful that God will still intervene. We cannot allow the Muslims to put up a mosque in place of the church")

Annah Philippo Barihuta (widow of Harun Gikaro Wanzo, mother of seven, impoverished, as of [June 22, 2015](#) has had to bear some of the legal costs for defending her husband's prior

ownership of the land; **UPDATE:** still resides on a portion of the land, risks eviction if the church loses its case)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/07/church-zanzibar-tanzania-shaken-court-supports-muslims-opposition-building/>



Russia: Oryol

Dennis Ole Christensen (Danish citizen, husband of Irina, arrested on [May 25, 2017](#) for 'continuing the activities of a banned extremist organization', ordered held for 2 months pending trial; **UPDATE:** detention extended to November 23, 2017)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2310



South Africa: Capetown

Archbishop Stephen Brislin (aged 60, said "The recommendation that new laws be introduced to enforce registration of pastors and ministers is overkill and a response that one would expect more from a totalitarian state than a constitutional democracy...We fully understand and share government's unhappiness with certain practices done in the name of religion, such as requiring adherents to drink petrol or eat grass. However, we believe that there is sufficient existing legislation that can be evoked to deal with most of these harmful practices")

[http://www.fides.org/en/news/62677-AFRICA SOUTH AFRICA The Bishops No to the registration of pastors and ministers of religion#.WXH MITyuM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62677-<u>AFRICA SOUTH AFRICA The Bishops No to the registration of pastors and ministers of religion#.WXH MITyuM8</u>)

Friday July 21, 2017



China: Hangzhou, Zhejiang province

Zhang (reported to have said "For a long time, teenagers and students have not been allowed to participate in religious activities. However, the Three-Self [official] Churches and [underground] house churches would usually hold summer camps during the summer

vacation. The government then emphasized...that even the Sunday schools would be closed down. The government's major intention is to shut down the Sunday schools...the government is trying to control ideology. During [Chinese Presidents] Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao's time, the government was tolerant toward preaching and missionary work. After Xi Jinping came into power, the government's grip on religion has strengthened")

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/07/provinces-seek-to-eradicate-sunday.html>



Uzbekistan: Karshi

Police raided a June 18, 2017 worship service for 200 deaf Christians; UPDATE: the organizers were tried and convicted of unauthorized religious activity, the trial was televised

Viktor Toshpulatov (**UPDATE:** sentenced to 5 days' imprisonment, said "The whole trial was a show. Judge Khushvakhtov asked the Russian Orthodox priest whether Christians can practice their faith in Uzbekistan, and he answered 'Yes'. The priest told the Court that 'if a Church has official registration, then it can hold religious services without any problems'. After this the Judge turned to me and asked whether we asked any state organ for registration, and I answered, 'No'. He gave me a lecture on religious freedom in Uzbekistan and that we [Baptists] continually violate the Law. Meanwhile all the film crews were active, pointing their cameras everywhere")

Jahongir Shadmonov (fined US\$123)

Mikhail Balykbayev (**UPDATE:** sentenced to 5 days' imprisonment)

Munira Gaziyeva (**UPDATE:** fined US\$123)

Svetlana Andreychenko (**UPDATE:** fined US\$123)

Fr Vladimir Skornyakov (forced to attend the trial, said "It was not my desire to attend the trial. The Judge called me and told me I must participate. When I tried to resist the invitation, he put pressure on me, saying that if I do not come it will not be good for the Church. [At trial he] asked me if we have religious freedoms and, as a representative of Christians, what we must do. I cited Apostle Paul, saying that we need to obey the authorities, since all authority is from God. I then added that unless that obedience goes against our conscience and moral principles...I want you to know that I have nothing against the Baptists")

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



Iraq: Erbil, Kurdistan

Haitham Behnam (aged 34, reported to have said he will not return to his home in Mosul
“There’s no security, no protection for Christians back there. It’s better for us to stay here
and keep our mouths shut”)

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/no-security-no-protection-for-mosuls-christians-after-islamic-state/>



Syria: near Hassake

Basil Isaac (professor of agronomy, **shot dead** possibly by Kurdish PYO militants)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62698->

[ASIA SIRIA Christian professor killed in Hassake Syrian city controlled by Kurdi sh militias of the PYD#.WXX8b4TyuM8](#)



United Kingdom

Tim Dieppe (wrote that a Foreign Office report "urges reinterpretation of scripture and the imposition of LGBTI ideology on evangelical Christians in the Global South... What this report advocates is a kind of neo-colonialism which imposes an ideology on other countries, regarding their existing morality as backwards. Whist blaming colonialism for the legacy of Biblical morality, the report sees no irony in seeking to impose an LGBT agenda on Global South nations in a patronizing manner. This is also done by British embassies which are being used to 'marry' same sex couples in countries where same sex marriage is illegal. Over the last year, more than 200 same sex 'weddings' took place in British embassies and consulates in countries where same sex 'marriage' is illegal. Imposing an ideology on evangelical Christians in the Global South appears to be the stated aim of the Foreign Office according to this report. This works against freedom of religion and human rights more generally. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office should immediately disassociate itself from this report and make clear that it does not represent UK government policy. The government should be working to promote freedom of religion around the world, not undermining it")

<http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/freedom-of-speech/foreign-office-agency-says-biblical-morality-is-hateful>

Saturday July 22, 2017



India: Punjab state

Albert Dua (state minority commissioner, said of the [July 15, 2017](#) assassination of Pastor Sultan Masih "After the incident, anti-social elements have already threatened a pastor in Haibowal and a sister in Kila Mohalla. We cannot let our people die. The administration must ensure our security")

<http://www.christiandaily.com/article/indian-police-detains-41-after-christians-protest-over-ludhiana-pastors-murder/60831.htm>

Pakistan: Islamabad/Rawapindi

Shamim Masih (human rights activist, journalist; **UPDATE:** shot at while driving his automobile, escaped unharmed)

<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6566>



Iraq: Karamles

The first Christian family has been reported to have returned to their home town after the defeat of ISIL, had been refugees since August 2014

Labib Rammo (aged 55, husband of Nedal Yousif, father, said "The time of exile was difficult, without a home, with broken affections and ties, a part of the family distant. Our routines and customs were upset, all this has created difficulties and made us feel like foreigners in our land. We have cultivated a vegetable garden. We have found our home, we want to add a room, our young children are growing up and are now have marriages of their own...We have to feel that this is our land and this is the place to witness the Christian faith today more ever...We have lost homes and property, but our faith has remained")

Nedal Yousif (aged 46, wife of Labib Rammo, mother)

Taher (aged 24)

Maher (aged 23)

Myron (aged 22)

Marsen (aged 21)

Firas (aged 15)

Barbara (aged 14)

Merna Rammo (aged 4 months)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Karamles,-welcomes-home-first-Christian-family,-after-Isis:-Like-letting-go-of-a-heavy-weight.-41352.html>



Egypt

Tharwat Sameh (aged 19, arrested, disappeared)

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/body-19-year-old-egyptian-found-street-covered-torture-marks-2-days-after-his-arrest-386798145>

Sunday July 23, 2017



Pakistan

Nadeem (husband, father of five, bonded brick kiln worker [i.e., slave] for 10 years, reportedly has been sold twice, wife became ill but was forced to continue work, latest 'owner' wants the children to stop school and begin work at the kiln)

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/christian-brick-kiln-family-sold-twice-in-pakistan/>



Uzbekistan: Urganch, Khorezm region

Police raided a worship service in a private home, a children's Bible, sheet music, and cell phones seized, 20 adults and 7 children detained and taken by bus to the police station, women were strip searched down to their underwear

Ahmadjon Nazarov (husband of Yelena Nazarov, home raided)

Sharofat Allamova (aged 48; **UPDATE:** detained)

Yelena Nazarov (wife of Ahmadjon Nazarov, home raided)

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

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2329

Monday July 24, 2017



Laos

Cheu (aged 20 or more, alias, convert, reported to have said: “One day, my brother and uncle came to me and lied to me. They invited me to go to their house which I agreed to without hesitation. Little did I know that when we arrived at my uncle’s house, they would beat me and tie me up with a rope. They told me that I need to return to my old faith, they would continue to beat me. They bound me with a rope with my hands behind my back. My brother, an average-sized man but with a solid build, used the side of his palms to hit my neck and face over and over again. I was tied from seven in the morning until seven at night. After that, I prayed and prayed and told God to forgive them and myself. After praying, I lied to my brother and uncle and other people and told them that I would return to my old faith. So they untied me. After they took off my ties, I slept at my house. I went to my wife very early the next morning to pick her up since my in-law’s house is very far from my house. We hopped on a bus to escape and came here. Until now, my uncle and brother and my family still don’t know where I am, and I heard that they are looking for me. I also heard that the village chief, my brother and uncle said that if I come back to our home in our village, they would hit me over and over again until I die...Nothing can stop my belief now, and I will not go back to the Hmong culture of worship. I will continue believing in Jesus instead. I will sacrifice myself to God. I will follow however God wants me to do. I will follow”)

<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/stories/family-disowned-christ/>



Pakistan: Lahore

Saiba Masih (aged 3, daughter of Shafqat Masih and Catherine Bibi, sister of Altaf and Daud, raped in [Chishtian, Bahawalnagar district](#) on [December 17, 2016](#), hospitalized, underwent surgery; **UPDATE**: examinations show signs of mental trauma, a full assessment of the damage to her reproductive organs will have to wait until she reaches puberty)

Catherine Bibi (sanitation worker, under pressure by Muslim leaders after [December 17, 2016](#) to not pursue prosecution of her daughter's rapist; **UPDATE**: examined for cardiac and respiratory problems, said "My daughter does not deserve any of the pain she has suffered and will suffer for many years yet. Saiba was left bleeding and broken by an evil man whose violence has left her with deep emotional and physical scars for longevity. Doctors may struggle to heal my daughter but through God anything is possible and I believe he will heal Saiba one day. Please join me in praying for my daughter who will one day through her healing be a testament to the power of the living God")

Pakistan: Lahore

A suicide bombing at a vegetable market killed 26 including 9 policemen, 54 were injured

Ilyas Masih (aged 24, furniture repairman, husband of Samira, expectant father, **killed**)

Saul Samuel (aged 11, son of Samuel Masih, **killed**)

Patras Masih (**killed**)

Iqbal Masih (**killed**)

Dildar Masih (aged 84, **killed**)

Badal Masih (aged 18, **killed**)

Samuel Masih (husband of Nargis, father of Saul Samuel)

Nargis (aged 54, mother of Samuel Masih, said "My heart aches for Sam, he sacrificed so much to support our family despite being so young. He displayed great love and selflessness that none of us deserved, now I can never repay him. He will always be remembered by all of us he was such a caring child he deserved so much more. I don't think I will ever stop crying he is such a great loss...The cruel men that have taken my son will be judged by God for their evil crime. They have taken so many lives because they believe a lie. While they will burn in hell my son will now share a place in heaven with his Father and Creator one day I will reunite with him")

Daniel John aka Jugnoo (aged 35, rickshaw driver, injured in his left arm, left leg, and back, suffers from post-traumatic stress, cannot work for two weeks, rickshaw damaged, said "I heard a loud bang suddenly everything went black. I must have woken up about an hour later and was surrounded by people in a panic. I knew this as all I could hear was screaming and shouting and people moaning from the pain they were suffering. Two paramedics helped me into an ambulance and gave me some water to drink as I was thirsty. Within a short space of time we reached Hameed Latif Hospital and I was injected with morphine for pain relief and a glucose drip was feeding me with energy. Whilst recovering in hospital I realized how fortunate I had been, if I travelled just 20m further I would be dead now. I believe God has a purpose for my life and hope I can fulfill it - I do not deserve His grace. So many innocent people were killed all I can remember is their dead bodies and the screaming of those who survived. I have been praying for all the survivors and the families who have lost loved ones may God give them all peace. I understand their pain")

Nadeem Masih (aged 26, brother of Ilyas Masih, furniture repairman, said "I was eating at home when the explosion occurred. I immediately realized my brother would have been in the impact zone. I rushed with other family members to be with Ilyas but on arrival all I could see was the lifeless body of my brother who had always been so full of life, ripped to pieces. I gripped his corpse trying to hold it together hoping it could somehow be revived and sat with him as I called other family members to tell them the news. When we got to the hospital Ilyas was declared dead on arrival. It was then that I really felt his loss, I realized I would never see his beautiful smile again and my heart felt so heavy. I still have not come to terms with the loss of my brother he was younger than me and my responsibility. I will grieve his loss every day")

Samira (aged 21, widow of Ilyas Masih, expectant mother, said "Ilyas and I had only known each other for 8 months but he was my life. I am very broken now and feel lost without me. He was my shield of protection and now I feel vulnerable. I am carrying his child and thank God for this blessing to provide a legacy for Ilyas who lost his life so young. My child is my focus right now I am worried about how I will be able to bring my child up without a father and seek prayers for this burden I am feeling")

Pastor John Feroze (said "Police have fenced off several kilometers from the point of the explosion. Among the delimited areas, is also the main entrance of the Bahar Colony [ghetto], where 50,000 Christians live. We are using alternative routes to get to our homes")

Roger Randhawa (church charity manager, said "Our city is a frequent target because it is literally called 'Heart of Pakistan'. Following the bishops' meeting, an immediate plan for victims will be formulated. We condemn this brutal act")

Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shah OFM (**UPDATE**: later said "We are living in the era of cruelty; there is a fire everywhere. The number of widows and orphans are increasing")

Asiya Nasir (legislator, later said "We just cannot hand over our country to these animals. It is time to give up religious or ethnic divisions")

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/lahore-ferozepur-road-bomb-attack-leaves-at-least-26-dead>

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/ilyas-masih-was-amongst-those-slain-by-terrible-attack-in-lahore-city/>

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Lahore,-Christian-neighborhood-sealed-off-following-Taliban-bomb-attack-41369.html>

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/mother-calls-for-prayers-for-restoration-of-reproductive-organs-of-three-year-old-rap-victim>



Egypt

Tharwat Sameh (aged 19, arrested on July 22, 2017, disappeared; **UPDATE**: found dead, had been "extensively" tortured)

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/body-19-year-old-egyptian-found-street-covered-torture-marks-2-days-after-his-arrest-386798145>



Central African Republic: Bangassou

Bishop Juan Jose Aguirre Munos MCCJ (**UPDATE**: reported "Half of the population of Bangassou has fled, taking refuge in the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo. The

clashes have been going on for days...Two thousand Muslims have been welcomed in the fenced area of the Cathedral defended by the Moroccan military of MINUSCA [UN Mission in Central Africa]. But the anti-Balaka [militants] are raging in Bangassou, hitting Muslims in all ways, trying to kill them, preventing them from supplying food, water, and wood for cooking. The clashes are continuous and cause deaths on one side and the other...Everything started on Friday July 21, when the anti-balaka kidnapped a young pregnant Muslim. In response to the kidnapping, some 15 extremist Muslim youth seized two Caritas humanitarian operators with their families, about thirty people. MINUSCA reacted by releasing these people. The group replied by attacking the Cathedral, which suffered material damage and wanted to set fire to it. Fortunately, they did not succeed...This morning two anti-balaka attempted to enter the refugee camp but were rejected by MINUSCA and one of them was killed...MINUSCA is trying to control the situation by sending patrols in the streets that shoot warnings, which cause panic among the population; Some people have died of heart attack, while others have been injured")

http://www.fides.org/en/news/62695-AFRICA_CENTRAL_AFRICA_The_Bishop_reports_Half_the_population_of_Bangassou_has_fled_The_Cathedral_has_been_attacked#.WXX9LoTyuM8

Tuesday July 25, 2017



India

Fr George Pattery SJ (Jesuit provincial superior, wrote: "There is a display of a majoritarian hegemony with a totalitarian outlook upheld by the RSS [paramilitary] agenda of ending diversity and establishing a Hindu Rashtra, a state with a monolithic culture...The infiltration by RSS sympathizers has communalized institutions of democracy like the judiciary with some judges of the Supreme Court, High Courts and other lower courts upholding Hindutva ideology...Much of Print and Electronic Media have become tools of Government propaganda...)

India: Nawabganj, Bareilly district, Uttar Pradesh state

Pastor Mahendra Pal (aged 45, arrested on forcible conversion charges, released, charges dropped)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Indian-Jesuit:-dismantling-the-myth-of-the-'Hindu-nation'-41378.html>

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/pastors-india-put-trust-god-amid-persecution/>



Mexico: Mexico City

Bishop Ramon Castro Castro (**UPDATE**: stated “The headquarters of the Mexican Bishops' Conference has been attacked with a three cylinder explosive device. I believe this reflects the situation in Mexico”, the bomb had been planted by a feminist group)

Aramando Cavazos (Bishops' Conference press officer, stated “today in the early hours of the morning, around 1:50 a.m., an unknown type of explosive device was placed at the main door of the CEM building”)

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/bomb-set-off-at-mexican-bishops-conference-headquarters-84235/>

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/07/27/feminists-claim-responsibility-for-mexico-bishops-bombing/>

Wednesday July 26, 2017



China: Guangzhou, Guangdong province

Pastor Ma Ke (**UPDATE**: summoned to the police station, told that if his congregation did not join the government sanctioned Three-Self Patriotic Church then it would be subjected to 'extensive' government monitoring, refused on theological grounds, said they knew they were already monitored)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/07/ultimatum-forces-choice-of-truth-or.html>



Philippines

Church leaders reported to have reacted to President Duterte's threat to bomb tribal schools

Aileen Villarosa (Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, said schools were already under attack "because of these accusations...What aggravates the situation is [Duterte's] statement that he takes responsibility for all the actions of state forces")

Nardy Sabino (Promotion of Church People's Response; **UPDATE**: said President Duterte's threat was "reckless and irresponsible...[he should] retract his statement")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/duterte-threat-to-bomb-tribal-schools-sparks-uproar/79850>



India: Caranzalem, Goa state

Sajan K George (**UPDATE**: spoke after another Christian cemetery was damaged while Francis Pereira [the alleged perpetrator] was in jail, said "Christians are easy targets. Pereira's arrest is just a smoke screen to divert attention from the deep suffering of Christians...since the Hindu Janajagruthi Summit [HJS] had its rally at the beginning of the year, minorities live in a climate of insecurity. More than 150 groups of saffron [Hindu nationalists] participated in that meeting, who outlined an action plan for [the creation] of a Hindu Rashtra [Hindu nation]"

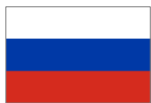
<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/More-destroyed-Crosses-in-Goa.-But-the-Catholic-'culprit'-is-already-in-prison-41386.html>



Egypt

Fr Makari Yunan (accused of contempt of Islam on or before [May 23, 2017](#) after he responded to an Islamic scholar who called Christianity corrupt by saying Islam was spread by the sword; **UPDATE**: reported to have been arrested, charged with contempt of Islam, spreading hatred, and inciting sedition)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1947&A=31606>



Russia: Brjansk region

Pastor Pavel Shpak (fined US\$167)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Russian-Baptist-Christians-targeted-in-latest-persecutions-42323.html>



Italy: Biella

Christians voiced opposition to the appearance of abortionist and Radical Party member Emma Bonino at a Catholic church to speak on immigration issues

Alberto Cerutti (entrepreneur, pro-life activist, attempted to interrupt her speech, said “I merely said out loud that, with her abortion choices, she is among those responsible for the population decline, at which point I was forcibly escorted out of the church...[her acceptance of immigrants was] absurd [because it was] from someone who does not accept our children”)

Dr Leandro Aletti (gynecologist, attempted to interrupt her speech, booed)

Giorgio Celsi (member of the pro-life group Ora et Labora, attempted to interrupt her speech, booed)

<http://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/famous-italian-pro-abortionist-speaks-in-church-catholics-ejected-silenced>

Thursday July 27, 2017



India

Rekha Bai (elderly woman, convert, widow, reported to have been fired from her job after she told her employer about her conversion, beaten, homeless, sheltered by another Christian, said "Now I wanted to live for Jesus Christ and live like a testimony. Nobody was there to care for me, no family member, no well-wisher, but now I have whole Christian community to care for me and worries about me more than I do. My own husband and my boss where I used to work never cared for me during my life time, but these unknown people with great love are helping me and caring for me, which really surprises me")

<http://www.persecution.org/2017/07/27/boycotted-widow-in-india-rebuilds-her-life/>



Iraq: Mosul

Archbishop Yohanna Petros Moshe (**UPDATE:** reported to have said that over 600 Christian families had returned home to the Mosul area: "Some have found work or started restaurants, shops and trade businesses. It takes a lot of courage to start from scratch again...We have to be able to live together. We are all sick of war. Wars have been fought in Iraq off and on since 1958")

<http://members4.boardhost.com/acnaus/msg/1501113370.html>

<http://www.aina.org/news/20170811204713.htm>



Colombia: Puerto Valdivia village, Antioquia province

Fr Diomer Eliver Chavarria Perez (**killed**)

Bishop Jorge Alberto Ossa Soto (issued a statement which called for the conversion of the killers of Fr Diomer Eliver Chavarria Perez "this son and brother...sacrificed in the exercise of his mission...at the service of evangelization")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/62724->

[AMERICA COLOMBIA Priest killed in Puerto Valdivia sacrificed in the exercise of his mission#.WXyTSYTyuM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62724-AMERICA_COLOMBIA_Priest_killed_in_Puerto_Valdivia_sacrificed_in_the_exercise_of_his_mission#.WXyTSYTyuM8)

Friday July 28, 2017



Vietnam

Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh (husband of Tran Thi Hong, on [July 31, 2012](#) an appellate court in [Gia Lai](#) upheld his sentence of 11 years for "undermining unity"; **UPDATE**: freed from prison, exiled to the United States with his wife and five children)

Tran Thi Hong (wife of Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh, **UPDATE**: exiled to the United States with her husband and five children)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnam-frees-kicks-out-ailing-lutheran-pastor-and-family/79874>



India: New Delhi

Rev Sandeep Kumar (reported to have said of current persecution "They want to create a kind of fear into the life of Christians that they should not follow the Christ...Surely this has not weakened us but it is strengthening us and helping us to how we need to get together in the Lord and grow in the Lord and pray for each other and lift up each other in prayer...this is motivating people to come closer to look to the Lord in prayer and to depend on the Lord – and the people are growing")

<https://www.onenewsnow.com/persecution/2017/07/28/oppresion-of-the-faithful-bringing-forth-fruit>



Kazakhstan: Zyryanovsk district

Yelena Tretyakova (church youth camp raided by police)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2313



Iran: Evin prison, Tehran

Amin Afshar Naderi (aged 29, convert, sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment on [June 11, 2017](#);
UPDATE: released on temporary bail of US\$80,000 after a 19 day hunger strike)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3646>



Russia: Moscow, St Petersburg, Mt Athos [Greece]

Russians protested the film *Mathilde*, which described an extramarital relationship between Tsar Nicholas II and a ballerina

Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev (**UPDATE:** called the film "vulgar")

Bishop Tikhon Shevkunov (said “Why do they make audiences believe in the historicity of these contrived heartbreaking scenes of a ‘love triangle’ in which Nicholas, both before and after marriage, is melodramatically torn between Mathilde and Alexandra?”)

Fr Evlogy (wrote in favor of the Duma banning the film: “We wholeheartedly support you and share your attitude to the project, which dishonors the memory of the holy Royal Martyrs...We cannot characterize this film other than as a mockery of the sensibilities of the faithful”)

Vladmir Legoyda (church spokesman, wrote against banning the film “I can understand what many do not like in the director’s idea... However, I consider the centralized collection of signatures in parishes of the diocese to ban the film to be a mistake”)

Andrei Kormukhin (member of the church youth group Forty Times Forty, led pickets at government agencies and movie studios which called for the film to be banned)

<http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/105489.htm>



Sweden

Aideen Strandsson (convert, refugee from Iran, reported to be scheduled for deportation back to Iran despite a high risk of imprisonment)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3639>



United Kingdom

Aisleen Hubert (aged 24, as of [October 27, 2014](#) had brought a private prosecution against 3 doctors implicated in illegal gender-selection abortions after Crown prosecutors refused to prosecute; Crown prosecutors announced on [March 13, 2015](#) that they would take over and then drop the prosecutions as 'not in the public interest', have refused to release her video recordings of the doctors agreeing to abort females, which is a crime under UK law; ordered on [January 17, 2017](#) to pay court costs totaling £36,000 - US\$44,555 by August 18, 2017; **UPDATE**: reported to have filed an appeal with the European Court of Human Rights in [Strasbourg, France](#), claimed that UK law clearly states that private prosecutions are to be paid for by the government unless found to be frivolous)

<http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/abortion/christian-legal-centre-files-new-case-to-the-european-court-of-human-rights>



United States – Alabama: Montgomery

Judge Shaunathan Bell (decision to not recuse himself in a child custody case involving a homosexual parent upheld by an appellate court, the court ruled that his previous rulings demonstrated he was unbiased)

United States – Pennsylvania: Bloomsberg

Victoria Miller (bridal shop co-owner, reported to have closed her shop due to death threats after a lesbian couple drove an hour to the shop to request a wedding dress they knew the owners would not want to sell because of their beliefs)

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-bridal-shop-closes-doors-to-public-after-receiving-threats-for-denying-lesbian-wedding-dress-193452/>

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/lesbian-mom-loses-effort-to-have-christian-judge-removed-from-divorce-case-193975/>

Saturday July 29, 2017



Sudan: Khartoum

Archbishop Ezekiel Kumir Kondo Kuku (**UPDATE**: installed as Primate of the Anglican Church)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/07/archbishop-of-canterbury-speaks-strongly-to-sudan-president-of-religious-freedom-for-christians/>



United Kingdom: Cardiff, Wales

A newly ordained priest and seminarians were denied entry to a pub because they were wearing clerical garb, a manager reversed the denial and paid for a round of drinks

Fr Peter McClaren (widower of Marie, newly ordained)

Deacon Nicholas Williams (seminarian)

Deacon Robert James (seminarian)

Elliot Hanson (seminarian)

Dale Cutlan (seminarian)

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/08/01/priests-told-to-leave-pub-because-staff-thought-they-were-a-stag-do/>

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/welsh-seminarians-mistaken-for-bachelor-party-nearly-kicked-out-of-pub-89124/>

Sunday July 30, 2017



Philippines

Church leaders were reported to have criticized President Duterte for his plan to abolish the Commission on Human Rights

Bishop Arturo Bastes (**UPDATE:** said "My God, Duterte is getting out of his mind!...his desire to abolish CHR is a sign that he has the dangerous tendency to be a dictator. Heavens forbid!")

Bishop Emeritus Teodoro Bacani (said that the CHR was "created and protected" by the constitution and be abolished only by a constitutional amendment, called for prayer that Duterte would recover his "good sense")

<http://www.ecumenicalnews.com/article/dutertes-plan-to-scrap-philippine-rights-body-angers-some-catholic-bishops/60388.htm>



China: Tianjin

Maria Fan Junying (beaten by agents of a land developer during a [July 26, 2017](#) dispute over church property, hospitalized with a cerebral hemorrhage, fell into a coma; **UPDATE:** died)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/china-church-property-dispute-results-in-laywomans-death/80043>



Vietnam

Nguyen Van Dai (attorney, arrested on [December 16, 2015](#) at his Hanoi home on charges of 'propaganda against the state', computers, Christian and human rights materials seized; **UPDATE:** formally charged with 'carrying out activities with the purpose of overthrowing the Peoples' administration')

Vietnam: Thanh Hoa province

Rev Nguyen Trung Ton (abducted at the airport near [Ba Don, Quang Binh province](#) by undercover security men in [late February 2017](#), stripped, beaten, robbed; **UPDATE:** arrested, charged with 'carrying out activities with the purpose of overthrowing the Peoples' administration')

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnam-arrests-four-rights-activists-for-subversion/79887>
<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/christian-rights-activists-vietnam-charged-serious-crimes/>



India: Nawabganj, Bareilly district, Uttar Pradesh state

Pastor Mahendra Pal (aged 45, arrested on forcible conversion charges on [July 25, 2017](#), released, charges dropped; **UPDATE:** attacked by seven Vishwa Hindu Parishad extremists who also are employed by the village president, re-arrested, charges dropped, said “Police were under pressure by the RSS [paramilitary] and VHP activists in the village...The Lord spoke to me from Isaiah 41:10 – I am waiting on Him for the doors to open. Very recently, a Muslim brother also has come into faith. When we gathered to worship as church, it was being filled by at least 150 attendees, on non-Sundays too. Even the rich and the Hindus from upper castes came into light, hearing the gospel”)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/pastors-india-put-trust-god-amid-persecution/>



Kazakhstan: Oskemen

Tlek Zhumagazinov (**UPDATE:** excused from military service after the government reversed itself and accepted his status as a church minister)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2333



Venezuela

Bishop Jose Luis Azuaje Ayala (spoke on the results of the Constituent Assembly election that is intended by the government to impose a new constitution and the general situation: "On Sunday, 30 we could see with our eyes the small amount of participation of the people in the elections. In this way a direct, informal, but experiential audit was made. Before six o'clock in the afternoon, which was the official time of the closing of the tables, they sent to speak to one of the observers of the National Electoral Council to announce that there was an immense number of people remaining still in lines to vote, and the vote was extended for another hour. I looked at the school that is close to the diocesan see where there were several polling stations and it looked like a desert. They tried to make people believe that there were voters at that time. There's nothing more false. It was like the official announcement of fraud...before and during the electoral process for the Constituent Assembly, many people were coerced and threatened to attend to vote...There is large number of murders that, according to the national prosecution, number 121 deaths. Of these, 25 percent have been murdered by state security agencies and 40 percent by groups of armed civilians sympathetic to the regime. There are more than 1,500 wounded, with more than thousands of detainees, in little more than three months, give us a hellish picture that would make any person or institution worried about the lives of citizens at stake...[the economic collapse] is the result of dire governmental policies, of improvisation, of wanting to establish a socialism without humanist support, and in its

place generating a permanent conflict plagued by corruption and violence...Whenever this government has been at a disadvantage, it has asked to dialogue, but it is always the same script: dialogue is used to gain time and advance in the hegemonic project of totalitarianism and greater power of domination”)

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/venezuelan-bishop-confirms-fraudulence-of-national-elections-56646/>

Monday July 31, 2017



Pakistan

Sameera (aged 16, abducted)

<https://barnabasfund.org/news/Newsdesk-24-August-2017#pakistan>



Nigeria: Ekwulobia, Aguata local government area, Anambra state

Governor Willie Obiano (reported to have attended a Mass that was disrupted by supporters of Biafran independence)

<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/07/ipob-members-storm-church-protest-obiano/>



Cuba: Guantanamo

Pastor Ramon Rigal (sentenced on [April 25, 2017](#) to one year at hard labor for removing his children from government schools to avoid anti-Christian teaching; sentence reduced to home arrest on [July 6, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: told that he may no longer work as a church leader and that he will now work as a mosquito inspector)

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

July 2017, date unknown



China: Henan province

Ms Zhu (home raided by police, computer and religious items used in youth education seized, told she was brainwashing children)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/09/christian-academy-banned-for.html>



Iran: Shiraz

Suroush Saraie (released from prison on [November 10, 2015](#); rearrested, then released in [December 2015](#); **UPDATE**: detained)

<http://www.bosnewslife.com/37736-iran-threatens-to-expell-christian-children-from-schools>



Kenya: Pandanguo, Jima, and Poromoko villages

Al-Shabaab militants attacked several villages during [July 5-8, 2017](#) and killed seven Christians

Said Mbigu (husband of Agnes, **killed**)

Matei Mlatia (**killed**)

Peter Mburu (**killed**)

Teresio Munyi (husband of Naomi, **killed**)

Mwangangi Muneni (**killed**)

Katana Karisa Chai (**killed**)

Musyoka Maithya (**killed**)

Agnes Said (wife of Said Mbigu, said “I saw three men [with covered] faces drag my husband out of the compound and I knew they were the al-Shabaab and they would just kill him. We left the house and hid in the farm where were heard my husband crying for help. That’s the time they killed him. Early in the morning we found his dead body lying just about 200 meters away. It was a devastating scene”)

Naomi (wife of Teresio Munyi, said “I told [the militants] I did not know where he kept [his ID card, and they would have to] bring him back to find it. They left angrily. After about 15 minutes, I heard screams coming from our neighbor’s home and that’s when I learned that the village was under attack”)

Mbeyo Mutie (said “[I] heard Teresio Munyi crying for help and saying that he was being killed. We picked our two children and ran to the nearby bush. Later we heard commotion at our neighbor’s home where they also dragged him to the main road, tied his hands behind his back, and slit his throat”)

Mwende Mulwa (“...six men dressed in police uniform went by the homes telling people to remain indoors [after] 6:00 PM because there was a curfew...Little did we know that they were spies tricking us to remain indoors... We [including her husband and children] heard screams rending the night and escaped into the nearby bush. The disorder went on for about four hours and then calmness was restored”)

Pastor Henry Divayo (said "The attackers have been targeting Christians living in Lamu County, especially farmers in the interior areas where small-scale agriculture thrives. [They] were asking the villagers to produce their identification cards and if you were found to be a Christian you would be shot or slaughtered. Victims have been evacuated to camps where food and security is provided by government and the Kenya Red Cross. We are hosting more than 200 people in our church and we expect the number to increase as more families are evacuated from Boni Forest")

<http://www.persecution.org/2017/07/24/al-shabaab-militants-kill-seven-christian-men-in-eastern-kenya/>

<http://www.persecution.org/2017/08/29/the-horrors-of-a-night-visit-from-al-shabaab/>



United Kingdom: York

Andrea Minichiello Williams (**UPDATE:** booed at the [July 7-11, 2017 Church of England General Synod](#) when she asked the delegates and bishops to consider the Bible in their deliberations on gender issues)

Rev Gavin Ashenden (**UPDATE:** said of the [July 7-11, 2017 Church of England General Synod](#) “One of the saddest moments was when our doughtiest public campaigner, Andrea Minichiello Williams, who is the director of Christian Concern, she stood up and invited people to consider the demands of Scripture. She wasn't listened to in respectful silence. She was booed. Well, when you have the Synod of the Church of England booing somebody who has an extraordinary reputation for standing up for the Gospel in the public space, who was inviting the Synod to consider the claims of Scripture, when someone like that was booed, you know that things have gone too far, there's been a sea change”)

https://youtu.be/ttHFDXH_BQE?t=245

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