

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – August 2017

Tuesday August 1, 2017



Indonesia: Deyiai district, Papua

Bishop John Philip Saklil (**UPDATE**: called for accountability after police shot into a crowd, killing one and injuring seven including two children, said "With similar cases that occur continuously and those that are not resolved professionally, it only creates a bad impression that both the police and military are not the protector of the people but the protectors of immoral criminals")

Indonesia: East Nusa Tenggara province

Viktor Bungtilu Laiskodat (aged 52, member of parliament, accused of blasphemy after saying that Islamic political parties wanted to form a caliphate)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/papuan-bishop-calls-for-police-accountability-over-shooting/79942>

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/indonesian-muslims-accuse-christian-lawmaker-of-blasphemy/79988>



Philippines

Fr Teresito 'Chito' Suganob (aged 57, abducted by Islamic militants along with 13 parishioners in [Marawi, Mindanao](#) on [May 23, 2017](#), cathedral burned, 9 other Christians shot dead; **UPDATE**: still in captivity)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/filipino-priest-held-captive-in-marawi-turns-57/79888>



India: Ahodia

Sajan K George (**UPDATE**: reported on the detention of two unnamed Nepalese couples on forced conversion charges)

India: Jharkhand state

Shibu Thomas (founder of Persecution Relief, which has been reported as supporting at least five Christian families "whose bread-winners were killed just because of their Christian faith")

Bishop Jairag Mark (reported to favor state recognition of Islamic school certificates: "Often their degree certificates are not recognized by employers, both private and state, leading to a denial of job opportunities. This adds to the backwardness of the community")

India: Ranchi, Jharkhand

Cardinal Telesphore Toppo (**UPDATE**: criticized the state government for working to pass an anti-conversion law, said "Forced conversions do not exist. We are free people with a free will and a free conscience and intelligence. No one can force another to convert")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Two-Nepali-Christian-couples-detained-for-%E2%80%9Cforced-conversions%E2%80%9D-in-Bihar-41511.html>

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-state-lacks-support-to-families-of-sectarian-violence/79895>

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Jharkhand,-new-anti-conversion-law.-Card-Toppo:-There-are-no-forced-conversions-41440.html>



Iran: Evin prison, Tehran

Maryam Naghash-Zargaran aka Nasim (aged 39, began serving four years imprisonment on **July 15, 2013**; **UPDATE**: released from prison, sentence completed, during her release was accused before the prison court of abusing prison medical staff, family concerned another prosecution will be started against her)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/08/iranian-christian-maryam-naghash-zargaran-released-four-years-prison/>

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3655>



Egypt: Sahil Salim village, Assiut province

Helmy Demian (witness to his brothers' **2013** murder; **UPDATE**: reported to have been a victim of attempted murder by associates of his brothers' killer)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1950&A=31679>



Russia: Novosibirsk

Archpriest Alexander Novopashin (described vandalism of a statue of Tsar Nicholas II's son Alexei at his cathedral)

<http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/105513.htm>



Greece: Mt Athos

Archimandrite Gregory Zumis (reported to have criticized the government for failing to repeal a 2012 law which imposed property taxes on monastic properties, wrote "We live on the Holy Mountain. Some of the monasteries on this sacred land have inherited fertile plains, but others—arid and barren mountain slopes. Thus, some of the monasteries [thank God!] can provide for themselves, but others struggle to survive, relying on people's charity")

<http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/105510.htm>



United Kingdom

Bishop Mark Davies (**UPDATE:** reported to have commented in [Lourdes, France](#) on the government's new anti-extremism policies and public polling that showed one out of three Britons thought Christianity was extremist: "There is a destructive extremism we ought to fear, one which seeks not only to deconstruct marriage and the family, but the very identity of the human person, which calls for medical experimentation with no reference to ethical boundaries, that decrees the unborn may live only to terms fixed by man, and demands legal protections be removed from the sick and the aged. It is such extremism which surely threatens the foundations of society...It is even possible that the very faith in Christ on which our nation was built might become a focus of the Government's counter-extremism agenda")

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/08/01/bishop-of-shrewsbury-christians-could-be-victims-of-new-anti-extremism-strategy/>



United States – Wisconsin: Madison

Amy Lawson (photographer, in 2016 posted on her web site that she could not photograph same sex weddings; **UPDATE**: court ruled that anti-discrimination laws did not apply to her because she had no storefront and because artistic expression was protected speech)

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/wisconsin-cant-force-christian-photographer-to-work-gay-weddings-court-announces-194122/>

Wednesday August 2, 2017



China: Wenzhou, Zhejiang province

Pastor Huang Yizi (aged 43, **UPDATE**: called to a police station for interrogation, released that night, later wrote "Thank God. Thank you all for praying for me. After being kept by the government by all sorts of excuses, I finally gained temporary freedom at 9 p.m. yesterday. Although the government claims that the [bail] enforcement measures have been removed, the case itself is not finished. I know who is in charge of the future. Our hearts will always be at peace, because Jesus resides there. God bless this era and the pastors and the lawyers who are suffering for the name of God. Thank you for your likes and comments in Moments ["Moments" is a feature of the Chinese social media platform WeChat that allows users to access updates from their friends]. Although I cannot reply to them all, I read every comment carefully. There is only one thing I want to say: thank you all. I wouldn't be so safe without your prayers, your attention, and your reposts of my message in your Moments and group chats. I am deeply moved. Your actions ensured my safety. It is so nice to have you. God bless you all")

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/08/police-interrogate-zhejiang-pastor-lift.html>



Kazakhstan

Fr Vladimir Vorontsov (arrested at a Christian youth summer camp on charges of extremism, smuggling of religious literature, and illegal detention of minors)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Orthodox-priest-put-on-trial-for-praying-with-children-at-a-summer-camp-in-the-mountains-41538.html>



Syria: Aleppo

Archbishop Jean Clement Jeanbart (**UPDATE**: said in St Louis, Missouri, USA “Dear friends, I am determined now, more than ever – and like I have never done before – to apply myself and to act in order to restore the Christian prestige of our ancestral city, Aleppo, pearl of the East and the West, cradle of the civilizations and Christianity, the birthplace of cultures. I am determined more than ever to stand by our young people in that devastated place to help them rebuild what was destroyed and recover what was lost”)

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/aleppos-melkite-archbishop-looks-to-rebuild-city-from-the-ashes-89864/>



Russia: Lipetsk

Vladimir Boyev (fined US\$505 on [June 29, 2017](#) for not displaying the church's full legal name on the sign outside the church, the building has been purchased only days before the inspection; **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

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



United Kingdom

Rev Barry Trayhorn (prison gardener at [HMP Littlehey, Cambridgeshire](#), volunteer prison chaplain, resigned on [November 4, 2014](#) from his gardening position after being harassed following a [May 2014](#) homily; lost his claim for discrimination and constructive dismissal on [March 10, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: appeal denied, wrote "Prisoners need to hear God's word just as much as anyone else. If people come to a Christian chapel service, we cannot hold back the gospel truth that God forgives those who repent. In no way did my speaking from 1 Corinthians 6 intend to bully or mistreat anyone. I shared the Gospel with them because I am motivated by the love of Christ to tell them that they can find forgiveness. I told the prisoners I am the worst sinner I know...Christianity is under attack in this nation. I cannot help but wonder if other faiths would be given the same treatment")

Andrea Minichiello Williams (**UPDATE**: wrote "To say that quoting a verse from the Bible can be offensive, could have serious implications on the freedom of prison ministers to share the good news of the gospel. It should not be for the state to decide which parts of the

Bible can and cannot be quoted during preaching, nor to dictate that verses that some may find unpalatable should be interpreted to fit with current social norms")

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/prison-worker-banned-from-chapel-services-for-citing-bible-on-homosexuality-loses-appeal-194625/>



Venezuela

Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino (**UPDATE**: condemned the shooting of demonstrators who opposed the government's attempt to nullify the constitution via a fraudulent election of a 'Constituent Assembly', said "In the name of God, stop the repression!...there are citizens who were murdered and wounded by Venezuelan military personnel and, presumably, by armed forces that act illegally and criminally. This is totally intolerable and cries out to heaven")

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/venezuelan-cardinal-warns-president-maduro-over-deaths-of-protestors-44679/>

Thursday August 3, 2017



Mexico

Fr Jose Miguel Angel Machorro Alcala (aged 55, stabbed three times in the neck and torso while finishing Mass on [May 15, 2017](#) at the [Mexico City](#) cathedral altar, hospitalized in serious condition; **UPDATE**: **died**)

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/08/03/priest-attacked-while-celebrating-mass-in-mexico-cathedral-dies-in-hospital/>

Friday August 4, 2017



India

Over 100 Christians signed *An Open Letter to the Heads of all Churches and other Christian Leaders* concerning Hindu nationalism "We, as Indian Christians, are concerned at the steady shift we see in our country from a pluralist, secular, democracy to a Hindu Rashtra [the supremacist Land of the Hindus]. What used to be fringe, has now become mainstream. There is a systematic design to undermine the Constitution. Official machinery often seems working in tandem with the 'vigilantes'. Street lynching, victims charged as accused, stage-managed trials, all on the basis of one's religious and caste identities. Media seems mute, silent in self-censorship, coerced by the state, or leashed by its corporate ownership...In unison with members of all faiths, ideologies, we should marshal India's tremendous spiritual resources in consolidating peace, resolving conflicts and infusing a sense of values in the body politic"

A C Michael (former Delhi Minorities Commission member; **UPDATE:** signatory, said that while the letter was sent to church leaders it was meant as a call to every Christian to unite for justice)

Fr Ajaya Kumar Singh (director of the Odisha Forum for Social Action [OROSA]; **UPDATE:** signatory, said that the letter was meant to encourage Christians to better coordinate their responses to persecution)

Fr Cedric Prakash SJ (**UPDATE:** signatory)

Fr Denzil Fernandes SJ (Executive Director of the Indian Social Institute; **UPDATE:** signatory)

Fr Dominic Emmanuel (**UPDATE:** signatory)

Franklin Caesar (**UPDATE:** signatory)

Jenis Francis (attorney; **UPDATE:** signatory)

Dr John Dayal (**UPDATE:** signatory)

Michael Williams (President, United Christian Forum, **UPDATE:** signatory)

P B M Basaiawmoit (National Council of Churches; **UPDATE:** signatory)

Pramod Singh (attorney, president of the Christian Lawyers Association; **UPDATE:** signatory)

Shibu Thomas (founder of Persecution Relief; **UPDATE:** signatory)

Rev Vijayesh Lal (Religious Liberty Commission national director; **UPDATE:** signatory)

<http://todaysmartyrs.org/pdf/Documents/2017-08-04%20An%20Open%20Letter%20to%20the%20Heads%20of%20all%20Churches%20and%20other%20Christian%20Leaders.pdf>

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/christian-leaders-call-on-community-to-resist-attacks/79955>

<http://www.ecumenicalnews.com/article/indian-christians-alarmed-at-violence-against-religious-minorities/60396.htm>



Nigeria: near Jere village

Rev Jen Tivkaa Moses (church national education director, abducted by Fulani tribesmen, US\$275,000 ransom demanded)

Yohanna Maina (driver, shot in the thigh, abducted and released, hospitalized, said “I am glad I survived this ordeal, and I pray that Rev Moses comes out alive. I am saying this as, while the gunmen led us into the bush, Rev Moses was praying very loud, and they disliked this so they were beating and threatening to kill him...Rev Moses is a man of prayer and strong faith, and I am convinced that God will see him through this terrible ordeal”)

Rev Yunusa S Nmadu (**UPDATE:** confirmed the abduction)

<http://www.pulse.ng/gist/alleged-fulani-herdsmen-kidnap-ecwa-education-director-id7108738.html>

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/fulani-herdsmen-kidnap-pastor-plateau-state-central-nigeria/>

Saturday August 5, 2017



Brazil: Maceio

Archbishop Antonio Muniz (robbed at gunpoint while leaving his residence to say Mass)

Deacon Inaldo Pitta (witnessed the robbery)

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/08/09/brazilian-archbishop-robbed-at-gunpoint/>

Sunday August 6, 2017



Vietnam: Trung Dong, Nam Dinh province

Sr Doan Thi Chuyen (described the fire which destroyed her church and the lack of firefighter response)

Fr Joseph Nguyen Van Toanh (said the church fire may have been caused by an electrical short)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/historic-church-in-vietnam-destroyed-by-fire/79947>



Iraq: Doura district, Bagdad

Shushan (elderly woman, reported to have been beaten and robbed during a home invasion)

<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/6b4c8943-04e0-4d30-abc4-7ad6fec3b6d9>



Nigeria: Ozubulu, Anambra state

Chukwuma Emeka (described a church attack by gunmen which killed 12 and wounded dozens

"When the chaos subsided I went inside, I saw my fellow church members dead in a pool of their own blood and many others were screaming in pain")

Uche Nonosob (parishioner, reported that more than 15 were killed by two gunmen)

<http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2017/08/06/530902/Nigeria-mass-shooting-church-Ozubulu-Boko-Haram>

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/08/07/gunman-kills-11-in-attack-on-church-in-nigeria/>

Monday August 7, 2017



China: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Deacon Zhang Xiuhong (church board chairwoman, detained in [late July 2015](#), church bank accounts totaling US\$15,660 frozen; formally arrested on [September 1, 2015](#) on 'illegal business operations' charges; sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment on [January 23, 2017](#), later reduced to 3 years on appeal; **UPDATE**: reported to have been released, said her faith had become stronger and that she had shared her faith with many prisoners)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/08/false-accused-christian-emerges-from.html>



India: Leingangching, Manipur state

Rita Haorei (**died of natural causes**, denied burial by village Baptists for having become a Catholic)

Fr Vialo Francis (said that five families in Rita Haorei's village have suffered discrimination for having changed from Baptist to Catholic)

Rev Raja Peter Chiru (said "The basis of the problem comes from a slogan — one village, one denomination — that some tribal groups follow. I do not approve of it. It is a condemnable slogan")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/christians-protest-baptist-catholic-row-in-india/80042>

Tuesday August 8, 2017



India: Mohanpur, Roorkee District, Uttarakhand state

Pastor Amar Stephen (convert, beaten after RSS paramilitary members invaded a worship service, said "They barged inside the house church and questioned, 'What is your business here?' I told them we were praying. They said, 'You are not praying, you are converting people.' I said, 'No, no. We are not converting. We are praying to the Lord, we are worshipping Him. Is taking the name of the Lord itself conversion?' ...I was dragged to the police station held by the hands by the RSS activists. They took out a procession to a distance of about half a kilometer with an intent to shame. They shouted, 'Look, look here is the man who follows Jesus Christ. God who could not save Himself, how can He save the world? How can He save you?'")

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



Syria: Raqqa

Christians escaped from ISIL control

Matay (aged 22, Syriac Military Council member, said "We got a Christian family out yesterday... This is our goal in the campaign to liberate Raqqa")

Alexi Chamoun (Syriac Military Council member, said "ISIL are using civilians as human shields inside the city")

Sawsan Karabidian (aged 45, relative of Alexey, escaped with six others in her family, was able to take only her rosary and her two pet parrots, said "I didn't want to leave, but there was so much bombardment around us that we fled...When Raqqa was bombed, we would

gather together to pray to the Lord so things would be calm. We have lived through the hardest moments these last three days because of the fierce bombing. I was terrified for my husband and my family...When ISIL entered they burned the churches, all the prayer books, the angels, the statue of the Virgin Mary and of Jesus the Messiah...They forced us to wear the headscarf and allowed us to reveal our faces to distinguish us from Muslims. We had to hide our faces to avoid insults")

Alexey (aged 50, relative of Sawsan Karapetyan, said "We used to celebrate our holidays in secret, spending them at home in fear," said Alexey, 50. "We would light a bit of incense just to feel that it was a religious holiday. We all left Raqqa and all of our things stayed behind. It's a painful feeling. We tried to stay but we couldn't take it anymore")

Karadij Karadjian (aged 50, said "I can't describe the feeling when we saw the Christian fighters welcoming us...We were forced to pay tribute by hand and we were humiliated and insulted, what a homeland that makes you pay an additional tax because you are different...ISIL blew up all of the churches, which devastated us. I haven't prayed inside a church since 2013. If we rebuild them, we will pray again in Raqqa")

<http://www.aina.org/news/20170809234544.htm>

<http://www.aina.org/news/20170809124950.htm>



Ireland: Inchicore, Dublin

Niamh Ui Bhriain (Life Institute, commented on the pro-abortion group that trespassed in a church and draped a pro-abortion sweater on the altar for a pro-abortion advertisement "Everyone, including all decent people who have no faith themselves, knows you shouldn't mess with a place of worship whether its a church, a synagogue or a mosque or anywhere else. For some pro-abortion campaigners, their hatred for religion seems to be the primary reason they support abortion, even though pro-life people see this as a human rights issue. This shows, once again, their extreme intolerance towards anyone who dares to have a different opinion, and their desire to silence people of faith. Abortion campaigners have repeatedly called for the churches to be silenced on abortion, but reasonable people will agree that they have a right to make their position known...It's no surprise really that they know feel they can target altars in Catholic churches but this actually just reveals their intolerance and bigotry to the public")

<http://www.lifenews.com/2017/08/08/abortion-activists-desecrate-catholic-church-drape-sweater-with-pro-abortion-slogan-on-church-altar/>



Cuba: Guantanamo

Pastor Ramon Rigal (husband of Adya 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](#); told on [July 31, 2017](#) that he may no longer work as a church leader and that he will now work as a mosquito inspector; **UPDATE**: told he may work as a church leader but not leave his home)

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

Wednesday August 9, 2017



North Korea

Pastor Lim Hyeon-Soo (aged 62, Canadian citizen, disappeared after his [January 31, 2015](#) entry to the country; sentenced in [Pyongyang](#) on [December 16, 2015](#) to life imprisonment at hard labor; **UPDATE**: released for health reasons)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/08/north-korea-frees-canadian-pastor-on-sick-bail/>



Nigeria

Rev Jen Tivkaa Moses (husband, church national education director, abducted by Fulani tribesmen, US\$275,000 ransom demanded; **UPDATE**: released)

Rev Ishaku Yaro (announced the release on Facebook: “Praise God we arrived in Jos safely with our CE [Christian Education] Director at about 1 a.m. on the 9th August 2017. Special prayers took place at the ECWA GS house, and he was reunited with his wife. Please allow him to rest...Presently, he will be somewhere resting for at least 3 days before coming back home”)

Rev Dr Jeremiah Gado (wrote “Considering the short distance between the police checkpoint and the spot in which the pastor and other passengers were attacked by the kidnapers, one would have expected a swift response by the police to rescue them, but unfortunately they were helplessly abandoned in the hands of the kidnapers. This scenario, like many others as have been attested to by many residents along Abuja-Kaduna road, lends credence to the possible collaboration of some bad egg police and other security personnel in the increasing crime of kidnapping and armed robbery along that highway, or how do you explain the fact that for all the period our pastor was in the hands of the kidnapers, they neither changed position nor mobile number, and yet the security agents

were not able to apprehend or track them...Very recently, one of our pastors who had just regained his freedom was held hostage for 5 days by some daredevil young Fulani kidnapers who seized him along Jere-Bwari road, just 200 meters away from a major police checkpoint on the curve bridge after shooting the driver of the vehicle in which he was travelling. We therefore use this opportunity to call on the federal government to do the needful in strengthening security of lives and property in the country, especially in the country's highways, through which many Nigerians ply in search of their daily bread...The Evangelical Church Winning All is seriously worried about the growing spate of insecurity and criminality in Nigeria which appears to have overwhelmed the government and its security agencies, as nowhere, either in home, marketplaces, workplaces, worship places and our highways, are now safe. Like many other Nigerians, members of the ECWA are suffering the brunt of insecurity on our highways, which have been taken over by armed robbers and kidnapers who kill, maim, torture, rape, steal and extort outrageous ransoms from their helpless poor victims while security agents look away. The federal government should do more to closely monitor the activities of security personnel on the highways and fish out bad eggs among them who metamorphose into criminals on the roads")

Rev Yunusa S Nmadu (**UPDATE:** co-signed the statement by Rev Dr Jeremiah Gado)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/kidnapped-pastor-nigeria-released-five-days-captivity/>



Spain

Archbishop Francisco Javier Martínez (criminal complaint filed after he spoke against gender theory in a [February 2017](#) homily “There is a pathology behind that. There is a short-sightedness and lack of intelligence...We are equal in dignity but we are not interchangeable”); **UPDATE:** complaint reportedly dismissed due to lack of evidence of criminal intent)

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/08/09/spanish-prosecutor-dismisses-hate-crime-complaint-against-archbishop/>

Thursday August 10, 2017



China: Hong Kong

Howard Lam Tsz-kin (politician, abducted by two men, beaten, had 10 crosses stapled into his thighs, asked "Why don't you love your country and religion?" which is a version of a government slogan regarding state control of churches, released)

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/hong-kong-protestant-tortured-for-showing-concern-for-liu-xia/79987>



India: New Delhi

Christians again protested the government's 1950 order that removed legal protections for Christian [and Muslim] untouchables

Dr John Dayal (**UPDATE:** said "This law is the biggest violator of religious freedom because it denies 150 million or more low caste individuals the right to choose their faith. They have to be Hindus or they have to be of a faith which deemed to be Hindu, like Buddhism of Sikhism...In effect, the 1950 Presidential Order has acted as a powerful anti-conversion law because the law has punitive consequences for anyone to change from Hinduism to Christianity or Islam. It effectively denies Hindus of low caste origin the freedom of faith which is the birth right of every Indian citizen")

Fr Savarimuthu Shankar (**UPDATE:** said "It's a discrimination based on one's religion and it's unconstitutional. The State has denied and deprived Christians of their rights and privileges enshrined in the constitution")

Arun (aged 19, son of Ratnam, Mudugula caste member, denied an engineering scholarship)

Ratnam (father of Arun, Mudugula caste member, said "We dreamed of my son doing a dignified job and thought our fate of doing menial job is over forever. But, my son did not get the admission to study engineering as we cannot afford to pay without the help of the government. We are denied this help because we follow the Christian faith")

Naresh (alias, government employee, said "Sometimes I have to participate [in] customs and rituals to prove that I am a Hindu to protect my job. I do not know how long I need to live this double life")

India: Muzzafarnagar, Uttar Pradesh state

Pastor Amar Stephen (convert, beaten after RSS paramilitary members invaded a worship service in [Mohanpur, Roorkee District, Uttarakhand state](#) on [August 8, 2017](#), said "They barged inside the house church and questioned, 'What is your business here?' I told them we were praying. They said, 'You are not praying, you are converting people.' I said, 'No, no. We are not converting. We are praying to the Lord, we are worshiping Him. Is taking the name of the Lord itself conversion?'...I was dragged to the police station held by the hands by the RSS activists. They took out a procession to a distance of about half a kilometer with an intent to shame. They shouted, 'Look, look here is the man who follows Jesus Christ. God who could not save Himself, how can He save the world? How can He save you?"; **UPDATE:** beaten at his home, said "Some attackers were holding both my

hands so I couldn't move, while others in the mob beat me. At that time, I did not feel the pain of a single blow. I was praying to the Lord, 'Lord please forgive them. Please begin your work in the hearts of these people''")

<http://www.persecution.org/2017/08/10/low-caste-christians-mark-67-years-of-discrimination-and-injustice-under-indias-scheduled-caste-system/>

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



Kazakhstan: Merke, Jambyl region

Fr Vladimir Vorontsov (arrested on [August 2, 2017](#) at a Christian youth summer camp on charges of extremism, smuggling of religious literature, and illegal detention of minors;

UPDATE: subjected to an administrative trial with other priests as witnesses, said "The conversation was tense...[Department chief] Omarov treated us as guilty subordinates. The Religious Affairs administration did nothing to resolve this situation, to reconcile")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Orthodox-priest-put-on-trial-for-praying-with-children-at-a-summer-camp-in-the-mountains-41538.html>



Egypt: Abul-Darag monastery, Ain al-Sukhna, Suez region

Fr Sharobim (reported on the destruction of the 4th century monastery for a tourist resort)

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/08/10/fourth-century-abul-darag-monastery-destroyed-by-antiquities-officials/>



Central African Republic

Bishop Juan Jose Aguirre Munos MCCJ (Spanish citizen; **UPDATE:** wrote "The massacre in Central Africa Republic in Gambo, a village 70 km from Bangassou, was even mentioned yesterday by the Holy Father...Several tens of people were shot dead in Gambo on 4 and 5 August. It all began when Anti Balaka militia attacked Gambo, which for the past four years has been in the hands of so called ex-Seleka [Muslim militia]. More recently the Seleka increased attacks on the local people, women in particular, many abducted from their homes in front of their husbands and later raped. On 4 August Anti Balaka entered Gambo to oust the Seleka. From what I have been told as soon as the Anti Balaka arrived, troops of the MINUSCA UN Mission there immediately opened fire. Reportedly the Anti Balaka then opened fire on the UN military who in turn in an exaggerated reaction, fired

wildly hitting civilians as well. The Anti Balaka were forced to take cover in the forest, while the Seleka, back in Gambo finding a Red Cross Team in the hospital holding a meeting, preceded to slit the throats of all present, men women and children...So the massacre, by the Seleka, was triggered by the reaction out of all proportion of the MINUSCA UN troops who when attacked usually do have a violent reaction. They are trigger-happy. I know of a young seminarian and his father killed by stray bullets coming from MINUSCA mission soldiers. This is all deeply saddening...Then I ask myself why, once Gambo had been saved from the Anti Balaka, did the UN MINUSCA leave the people in the hands of the Seleka? These so called Peace Keeping Troops whose job is to disarm all the factions in the country, did forcefully disarm the Anti Balaka but not the Seleka who appear more heavily armed than ever. Here is a sense of complicity which we fail to understand”)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/62776-AFRICA_CENTRAL_AFRICAN_REPUBLIC_Massacre_in_Bangassou_denounced_by_the_Pope_local_Bishop_condemns_trigger_happy_UN_troops#.WYxy1WGOM8



United Kingdom

Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chief Executive of Christian Concerns; **UPDATE:** wrote "...The State is interfering with the gospel. It is mandating that the gospel be shrunk down to fit society's sensibilities. The judgment [against Rev Barry Trayhorn] implies that the Bible legitimizes hate and mistreatment – but in reality, it offers salvation and transformation to men who have committed horrific crimes. How long will the true Church stay silent in our land? What case is required to wake us up? How many more cases? Will the true Church wake up when I am arrested? Probably not. The bishops of the Church of England are in no danger of being arrested. Will the true Church wake up when a 'hate crime' is reported against a small, faithful evangelical church? Possibly not. How about a large one? Or a larger church network? Can we not see, in this case and others, that this country no longer honors God, and is banning His Word!...")

<http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/freedom-of-speech/a-judicial-warning-shot-that-should-put-the-fear-of-god-into-us-andre>

Friday August 11, 2017



Egypt: Awqaf

Dr Naguib Gibrael (attorney for the Coptic Church, head of the Egyptian Federation for Human Rights; **UPDATE**: reported to have filed a complaint against a mosque for effectively preventing Christian girls from attending a nearby school)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1958&A=31817>

Saturday August 12, 2017



China: Wenzhou, Zhejiang province

Two churches associated with missionaries Li Xinheng and Meng Lisi [who were abducted in Pakistan by ISIL and later killed] have been investigated by the government

Uncle Z (detained for several days, released, not allowed to leave the city)

Brother W (detained for several days, released, not allowed to leave the city)

G (said that most parishioners were unaware of the missionary's connections with the churches, but have now begun ecumenical "unity gatherings" for mutual support despite theological differences)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/08/exclusive-christian-divulges.html>



India: Jharkhand state

Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX (**UPDATE**: condemned a "shameful" state government television advertisement that attacked Christian missionaries: "We would like to know what the prime minister, who repeats 'with all, for the growth of all' as his slogan thinks of this blatant misuse of power by a chief minister [governor]")

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-ad-against-missionaries-irks-christians-civil-leaders/80006>



Pakistan: Jhamkay Tehsil Wazeer Abad village, Gujranwala district

Asif Stephen (aged 16, son of Stephen Masih, brother of Mujahid, Kajul and Irum, trash collector, accused of a late July Quran desecration, arrested, taken from the police state by a mob and beaten, re-arrested by police reinforcements)

Stephen Masih (father of Asif Stephen)

Mujahid Stephen (sibling of Asif Stephen)

Kajul Stephen (sibling of Asif Stephen)

Irum Stephen (sibling of Asif Stephen)

Aneeqa Maria Akhtar (**UPDATE**: attorney for Asif Stephen)

Shahid Anthony (**UPDATE**: investigator)

Napoleon Qayyum (**UPDATE**: human rights advocate)

Asif Yaqoob (investigator)

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/christian-teen-aged-boy-arrested-on-blasphemy/>
<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6593>



France: Puy-du-Fou

Cardinal Robert Sarah (Ghanaian national, spoke at a Mass for the dedication of an historic park that commemorated the 1793 Vendean revolt "Your work is necessary! For our times seem to have been numbed! As we face the dictatorship of relativism, as we face a new thought terrorism that once again seeks to rip God from the hearts of children, we need to rediscover the freshness of mind, the joyful and fervent simplicity of these saints and these martyrs...Who shall stand up today for God? Who shall dare to confront the modern persecutors of the Church? Who shall have the courage to arise, armed only with the rosary and the Sacred Heart, to face the columns of death of our times, as are relativism, indifferentism and the contempt of God?...We are living in a world marked by the dictatorship of money, of benefits, of riches. The joy of gratuitous giving is everywhere despised and trampled...Even now, perhaps more than ever, the ideologues of the revolution want to annihilate the natural place for gift of self, of joyful generosity and of love! I am speaking of the family! Gender ideology, the contempt of fruitfulness and of fidelity are the new slogans of this revolution. Families have become the new Vendées to exterminate. Their disappearance is being methodically planned... They are ready to attack Africa with new infernal columns in order to pressure on families and to force on them sterilization, abortion and contraception. Africa, like the Vendée, will resist!")

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/08/16/cardinal-sarah-the-new-revolutionaries-are-trying-to-destroy-the-christian-family/>

<http://todaysmartyrs.org/pdf/Documents/2017-08-13%20Homily%20by%20Cardinal%20Robert%20Sarah.pdf>

Sunday August 13, 2017



China: Taiyuan

Bishop Emeritus Sylvester Li Jiantang (aged 93, **died of natural causes**, had been imprisoned in a labor camp from 1966 to 1980)

China: Yulin, Shaanxi province

Gao Zhisheng (aged 53, human rights attorney; **UPDATE**: disappeared)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Two-elderly-Chinese-bishops-die:-Mgr-Li-Jiantang-of-Taiyuan-and-Mgr-Xie-Tingzhe-of-Urumqi-41526.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/08/human-rights-lawyer-gao-zhisheng.html>



Pakistan: Kot Lakhpat jail, Lahore

Indrayas Ghulam (aged 38, husband of Shabana, father of Shumir, Youaab, and Angel, arrested following the **March 15, 2015** church suicide bombings and riot, refused to convert to Islam in exchange for his release; **UPDATE**: **beaten to death in prison**)

Shabana (aged 36, widow of Indrayas Ghulam)

Shumir (aged 12, daughter of Indrayas Ghulam)

Youaab (aged 10, son of Indrayas Ghulam)

Angel (aged 6, daughter of Indrayas Ghulam)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/independence-day-celebration-marred-by-death-of-christian-prisoner>

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/innocent-christian-died-behind-bars/>



Vatican City

Pope Francis aka Jorge Mario Bergoglio SJ (**UPDATE**: implicitly attacked on Twitter by former European Union President Herman van Rompuy who wrote "The time of 'Rome has spoken, the matter is settled' is long past" after it became known that van Rompuy sat on the board of directors of Belgian Catholic-owned hospitals for the mentally ill which voted to implement euthanasia and after the Pope ordered the clerical board members to rescind the vote or publicly distance themselves from it)

<http://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/08/15/former-eu-president-criticises-pope-francis-over-euthanasia-ban/>



United States – Illinois: Chicago

Emmanuel Fleming (aged 34, father of three boys under the age of 10, usher, **shot dead** on the church steps)

Michael Swift (aged 46, **shot dead** on the church steps)

Rev Reginald Bachus (said "They were on their way up the steps to the church, and two gentlemen ran up from Jackson [Boulevard] and basically unloaded on them. It's just hard for me to believe that something like this could happen on a Sunday morning. Two young men on their way to church. ... I think that's the hardest part for me to grasp")

Bruno Carter (parishioner, witnessed the shootings, said "The kids were partially in the door, and they heard the gunfire and their father [Emmanuel Fleming] was telling them to get in...It seems like the more people march and carry signs — and the more churches bind together to say 'Stop the violence' — the more they disregard it and just continue to kill")

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/father-gunned-down-on-steps-of-chicago-church-during-service-young-sons-witnessed-horror-195446/>

Monday August 14, 2017



Australia

Archbishop Denis J Hart (reported to have responded to a Royal Commission that recommended that the legal protection for the privacy of confession be removed: "Confession in the Catholic Church is a spiritual encounter with God through the priest. It is a fundamental part of the freedom of religion, and it is recognized in the Law of Australia and many other countries. It must remain so here in Australia")

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/08/14/australian-inquiry-priests-should-face-criminal-charges-for-not-reporting-abuse-heard-in-confession/>



China: Urumqi, Xinjiang

Bishop Paul Xie Tingzhe (aged 86, **died of natural causes**, had been imprisoned in a labor camp from 1961 to 1980)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Two-elderly-Chinese-bishops-die:-Mgr-Li-Jiantang-of-Taiyuan-and-Mgr-Xie-Tingzhe-of-Urumqi-41526.html>



Russia

Pastor Evgenij Peresvetov (reported to have been arrested with his wife and 9 year old son on abduction charges regarding his therapeutic community for treating addictions)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/'Extremism':-the-Russian-state-and-the-witch-hunt-against-Jehovah's-Witnesses-41520.html>



Nigeria: Barkin Ladi and Riyom local government areas, Plateau state

Choji Chuwang (reported on Fulani Muslim attacks, said “As we gleefully wallow in the false sense of peace on the Plateau, know it today that a deliberate economic terrorism and land-grabbing strategy is being launched on Christians of Riyom and Barkin Ladi on a daily basis with the sole aim of making them poor, weak and destitute in their own land”)

Jatau Gyang (reported on Fulani Muslim attacks)

Da Jelkyes (reported on Fulani Muslim attacks)

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

Tuesday August 15, 2017



Philippines

Fr Edwin A Gariguez (said "The killings of suspected drug users and pushers in Bulacan is an epitome of the aggressive campaign of the present government against illegal drugs, under the leadership of President Duterte. The strategy is to exterminate the suspects

before they are brought to a court of law. This case of killing of 32 suspects in separate operations in just one day is gruesome and utterly condemnable. The impunity of how the numerous killings can be committed or condoned by the police force is truly alarming")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/More-killings-take-place-in-anti-drug-operations-in-Manila.-Fr-Gariguez-notes-Duterte-encourages-executions-41554.html>



China: Hong Kong

Howard Lam Tsz-kin (politician, abducted by two men on [August 10, 2017](#), beaten, had 10 crosses stapled into his thighs, asked "Why don't you love your country and religion?" which is a version of a government slogan regarding state control of churches, released; **UPDATE**: arrested for making false statements to police)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Activist-'kidnapped'-and-'tortured-by-Chinese'-arrested:-the-police-doubt-his-version-41530.html>



India

Fr Cedric Prakash SJ (**UPDATE**: said on the 70th anniversary of independence "Thanks to the visionary leadership of Dr B Ambedkar, this was 'the idea of India': which like a beautiful tapestry would preserve, protect and promote pluralism and respect the rights and freedom of every citizen...The country today is a far cry from what is envisaged in the Constitution. The rulers today seem to have no qualms of conscience in destroying democratic values...minorities in India have never had it so bad!")

Dr John Dayal (**UPDATE**: said that Prime Minister Modi's Independence Day speech "left most people disappointed...His critics have come away convinced that he has no plan, or no inclination, to really stop and punish those responsible for the lynchings that have followed the ban on beef and cattle trade, on targeted violence against Muslims and Christians, and those who are eroding what we call the secular fabric of India")

Joseph Dias (**UPDATE**: said "Because of the delay in outright condemning violence by the far right fringe, not many would believe it even if the PM Modi is serious in the Independence Day message")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/For-Jesuit-activist,-India-is-still-ruled-by-tyrants-after-70-years-of-independence-41546.html>

<http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/7651/0/indian-pm-s-independence-day-address-leaves-christians-disappointed-as-targeted-attacks-continue->



Sudan: Omdurman

Rev Yahya Abdelrahim Nalu (husband, father of a one year old boy; **UPDATE**: evicted from his home by police, now living on the street)

Rev Sidik Abdalla Anglo (husband, father of two aged 8 and 10; **UPDATE**: evicted from his home by police, now living on the street)

<http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/police-sudan-evict-two-pastors-homes/>



Egypt: Minya

Bishop Makarios (**UPDATE**: released a statement regarding church closures "A full month has passed since the incident, during which we have exercised all attempts but we have not been successful. Using the same logic and justifications the [State] Security apparatus has prevented the Copts from practicing their [religious] rites in the village of Kedwan, Minya, claiming that it was because of objections of some opposing factions in the village, and that it was necessary to be considerate of their feelings. However, this means that there is no consideration for the feelings of the Copts, and those who do not ask for anything but to pray, as if the decision belonged to the opposing factions...We have more than fifteen places [of worship] closed on the order of the Security apparatus, despite the existence of formal requests that are imprisoned in the [desk] drawers. Also, there are seventy villages, farmsteads and hamlets without places for prayers...We are still waiting, and we will not despair")

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/08/15/a-statement-issued-by-the-coptic-orthodox-diocese-of-minya-egypt/>

Thursday August 17, 2017



Iraq: Basra

Archbishop Habib Jajou (reported to have said "There were many, many people under the control of ISIL and who have been brainwashed. We hope ISIL will be uprooted from Iraq, but we are afraid of a new ISIL. There are millions of illiterate, youth and children,

on the streets, begging, it's chaotic. There are two parts of the population - one of those is living according to the sixth, seventh, or fourteenth century, the mentality is very old")

<http://www.aina.org/news/20170817121542.htm>



Kenya: Maleli village, Witu, Lamu county

Al-Shabaab militants beheaded three men and burned another to death

Stephen Hizano Ponda (killed)

Charo Karisa Ngoa (killed)

Naphtali Katana Kadenge (killed)

Joseph Gasena Ngoa (killed)

Pastor Henry Divayo (said "One of the men killed this morning in Maleli, Naphtali Katana Kadenge, was a son to a family staying in this camp and he was a student at Lamu high school. During the vacation, he decided to go back to Maleli village to fend off wild animals that feed on farm crops. He was advised to be cautious, but when al-Shabaab stormed their house, he was found and killed")

Fr Cyprian Taah (said "One of our catechists, Stephen Nyati, lost his son in the attack and we are saddened as a church community and we strongly condemn the act. His son had gone back to the fields to check the progress of the farm when the militants pulled him out of the house and slaughtered him. We are asking the global community to remember us in prayer and if possible send us material help because the people in the camps need food, shelter, water, medicine, sanitary pads and soap")

<http://www.persecution.org/2017/08/21/militants-kill-four-men-in-eastern-kenya-for-their-christian-faith/>



United Kingdom: London

Ian Sleeper (restaurant owner, arrested on [June 23, 2017](#) for street preaching "Love Muslims, Hate Islam, Tell the Truth" in front of Southwark Cathedral, held for 13 hours, released on bail but not charged, told to not repeat his actions; **UPDATE**: reported to have been told that no charges would be brought against him)

<http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/freedom-of-speech/victory-for-street-preacher-arrested-for-sharing-love-for-muslims-and>



Spain: Barcelona

Julian Cadman (aged 7, Australian citizen, **killed** in a terror attack)

<http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2017/08/21/barcelona-terrorists-plotted-bomb-attack-on-sagrada-familia/>



Canada

Deacon Larry Worthen (said “I think that conscientious objection in Canada, unfortunately, hangs by a thread. There are many of us fighting for this right, but the concern is that in a society where killing a patient is seen to be a compassionate and merciful act, then those who refuse to do it are by definition uncompassionate and uncharitable. When you legalize euthanasia, and killing becomes moral, then that quickly becomes the norm, and those who deviate from that are seen to be outliers and unprofessional in their approach”)

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/in-ontario-legal-assisted-suicide-could-kill-conscientious-objection-49721/>

Friday August 18, 2017



India: Dabli Rathan village, Hanumangarh district, Rajasthan state

Pastor Harjot Sethi (husband of Arvinderjot Sethi, reported to have been beaten during a Gospel outreach meeting by Hindu radicals, said "I thought I would die these men came rushing at me as soon as I started speaking and I was hit on the head. I passed out temporarily which only excited the RSS [paramilitary] goons more I am told. The attackers started beating me more intensely whilst I was on the floor" , his mother said "My son was simply sharing God's message of hope through accepting Christ our Lord and Savior. The hooligans waited for him to start speaking and rushed to kill him. They were armed with weapons and were beating him hard and any others that tried to stop the violence. I was terrified and had to watch from afar unable to do anything. I feared for his life but God protected my son who survived the vicious attack despite being hit on his head with thick metal poles. I praise God for his mercy and protection")

Arvinderjot Sethi (wife of Pastor Harjot Sethi, reported to have been slapped around by Hindu radicals during the attack on her husband, escaped, ran to the police station)

India: Vithura, Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala state

Archbishop Soosa Paikam (decried the destruction of two crosses at a retreat center, said "[the government] has the responsibility of identifying the malignant forces behind the act")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Pastor-beaten-in-Rajasthan,-crosses-destroyed-in-Kerala-41575.html>

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/indian-pastor-and-team-beaten-by-rss-extremists-till-bleeding-during-outreach-in-rajasthan>

Sunday August 20, 2017



Egypt: al Furn village, Abu-Qurqas, Minya province

Fr Boutros Aziz (prevented by police from celebrating the Divine Liturgy after allegations were made that the village church lacked a permit, police then used force to disperse worshippers from the street when they began to chant the Kyrie ["Lord have mercy"], several were arrested)

Bishop Makarios (**UPDATE**: denounced the police actions)

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/08/20/minya-al-furn-copts-banned-from-worship/>
<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1965&A=31931>

August 2017, date unknown



Eritrea: Metkel Abiet

Fikadu Debesay (wife, mother of three, arrested along with her husband in [May 2017](#);
UPDATE: [died in a prison camp](#) in the week prior to [August 10, 2017](#), husband still detained)

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-mom-dies-while-imprisoned-for-her-evangelical-faith-in-eritrea-195461/>

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