

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – January 2018

Monday January 1, 2018



Malaysia: Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur

Rev Dr Hermen Shastri (**UPDATE**: described an attack on a church with an explosive device that injured 3 Christians)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/01/malaysia-church-attacks-highlight-growth-of-islamic-extremism/>



Egypt

Imad Gad (former Member of Parliament and political analyst, **UPDATE**: opinion column dropped from Al-Watan newspaper after he wrote "...In our country, where poverty, ignorance, disease and superstition are rampant, it is quite different [than Europe]. We have a vague constitution, confused about the relationship of religion to the state. At the same time, we have laws with ambiguous clauses that intentionally enter the subject in a maze and do not resolve the situation on specific issues. The church building law, which was issued a year ago to arrange the process of building and reforming churches, finds that the approval of the building or the reform 'after reference to the authorities concerned' and it is no secret that the concerned parties concerned the security authorities, The National Security Apparatus, which continues to work according to the principles laid down by the President of the Faithful and within which the Agency works with all its might to deepen the wounds of the Christians in the country and prevent the march towards building a state of citizenship")

Egypt: al-Omraneya, Giza

Fr Rafik Greich (Church spokesman; **UPDATE**: said "We can be attacked and this can happen at any time" after two Coptic brothers were shot dead in a liquor store while celebrating New Year's)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/A-bloody-New-Year-in-Egypt-as-two-Coptic-brothers-killed-42724.html>

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2018/01/01/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%89/> - with translation

Tuesday January 2, 2018



India: Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala state

Bishop Vincent Samuel (visited eight women including one nun who were hospitalized after being beaten by police during a protest over a cross demolition)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Kerala,-protests-against-a-demolished-cross:-eight-wounded,-including-a-nun-42728.html>



Turkey

Pastor Andrew Brunson (U.S. citizen, husband of Norine Brunson, detained as a 'national security risk' in **Izmir** on **October 7, 2016**, denied access to U.S. diplomats, attorneys, and fellow parishioners; ordered held on **December 9, 2016** on 'terrorism' allegations from a 'secret informant', attorney denied access to the allegations; as of **August 25, 2017** four new charges have been added by prosecutors including 'gathering state secrets for espionage, attempting to overthrow the Turkish parliament and government, and to change the constitutional order'; confirmed to be a hostage at a **September 28, 2017** press conference by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President explicitly called for the U.S. government to exchange him for Sufi cleric and U.S. resident Fethullah Gulen;
UPDATE: sent a letter to his wife and supporters: "I am deeply grateful to all who have prayed for me. This trial – time in prison – has stretched me far more than I ever would have imagined. I have been very weak, had many doubts, felt very alone. I know that God's grace is sustaining me, even when I do not feel that grace, and I know that the prayers of God's people are surrounding me and giving strength. One of my big fears has been that I will be forgotten in prison. Thank you for not forgetting! It is a great encouragement to know there are people praying for me – it reminds me that I am not alone, and that I need to stand firm, with my face pointed in God's direction always.

Thank you for standing with me in this most difficult time. Many blessings to you.
Andrew")

<http://meconcern.org/2018/01/02/turkey-imprisoned-us-pastor-grateful-for-prayers/>



Nigeria: Anchuna village, Kaduna state

Yohanna Kukah ('traditional ruler', brother of Bishop Matthew Hassah Kukah and Samuel Kukah, abducted from his home)

Samuel Kukah (described his brother's abduction)

Nigeria: Guma district, Benue state

Peter Zion (aged 31, father of two, government security task force member, cut across the face and torso by cutlass wielding Fulani Muslims, shot, hospitalized, said "They killed some of my colleagues and the neighbors that were there all died")

Nigeria: Lagos

Sr Roseline Isiocha (abducted in [Igouriakhi, Edo state](#) on [November 13, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: still in captivity)

Sr Aloysius Ajayi (abducted in [Igouriakhi, Edo state](#) on [November 13, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: still in captivity)

Sr Frances Udi (abducted in [Igouriakhi, Edo state](#) on [November 13, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: still in captivity)

Archbishop Alfred Martin (said at a press conference "Today is the 48th day that the [six] sisters have been in the hands of the kidnappers. It has been a big source of worry and concern knowing that they are women...It is disheartening that the security agencies have not been able to get the sisters out. We still do hope that the security agencies would do much more than is being done now to ensure that the sisters are released")

Nigeria: Gidan Kuran village, Kano state

Amina Isa (aged 40, mother of five, separated from her husband after he converted to Islam in 2012 to gain employment, arrested in [May 2017](#) along with her 21 year old daughter after they were accused by her husband of abduction after she enrolled her younger children in a Christian school, released on bail; **UPDATE**: daughters aged 6 and 15 were reported to have been abducted and pressured to convert, said "Because of their refusal to convert too, we have been threatened, beaten, and subjected to all forms of indignities by my husband and his Muslim collaborators...They've constantly been threatened, beaten, and harassed. In fact, at one time, [the oldest daughter, whose name is being withheld for security reasons,] had to take her younger siblings and go into hiding, but both have been traced and captured by the officials and are currently being held against their will in a location undisclosed to me...Right now, my daughters are in the custody of these Muslim officials and are being forced into Islam, while at the same time, we are being tried on

false charges. All this is to force us to recant. We can never stop being Christians, and we are confident that the God we serve can never abandon us in our trying moments")

Rev Ayuba Hassan (Christian Association of Nigeria, **UPDATE**: reported to have said "We've been able to accompany her [Amina Isa] to the court a number of times. We pray that she'll be able to get justice from the court")

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/archbishop-is-the-nigerian-government-looking-for-missing-nuns-98615>

<https://www.charismanews.com/world/69336-scores-of-christians-brutally-murdered-in-the-last-month>

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-mother-daughters-abused-for-refusing-to-convert-to-islam-after-father-becomes-muslim-for-job-212387/>

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/01/mother-daughter-in-nigeria-pressued-to-convert-to-islam-accused-of-kidnapping/>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/01/nigerias-new-year-begins-with-attacks-on-christians/>
<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/01/nigerias-new-year-begins-with-attacks-on-christians/>

Wednesday January 3, 2018



China

Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin (underground bishop in [Wenzhou](#); detained on [May 18, 2017](#);
UPDATE: released)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Msg.-Peter-Shao-Zhumin-of-Wenzhou-freed-after-7-months-42737.html>



Malaysia: Kota Bharu

Pastor Goo Siew Lai (church attacked, said "The suspects broke the third floor window")

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2018/01/07/objects-thrown-at-church-and-temple-in-kota-baru-believed-to-be-petrol-bombs/>



India: Javanga village, Chhattisgarh state

Asharam (husband, father of three, beaten by Hindu radicals in front of his home, hospitalized, unable to work due to the beating, in hiding with his family)

<http://www.persecution.org/2018/02/22/icc-provides-relief-assistance-persecuted-christian-india/>

Thursday January 4, 2018



India St Mary's Post Graduate College, Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh state

Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX (**UPDATE:** commented after 900 radical Hindu ABVP students attempted to invade a Catholic college and consecrate it to a Hindu deity: “The Madhya Pradesh police assured church authorities full police protection. The priests who manage the College, however feel that the situation is potentially very dangerous as over 900 activists were expected to gather in violation of police orders. There was already an aggression earlier on 30 December [2017] despite the presence of 20 policemen. We need to pray more...Calm has returned to the place now as only policemen on watch have remained in the area. We thank once again the Union Home Minister Rajnath Singhji and the Madhya Pradesh police force. And a big thank you for your prayers. The Fathers and Sisters and other personnel are in a state of shock. Do continue to pray for them”)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/63506-ASIA_INDIA_Hindu_radicals_attack_a_Catholic_college
<http://www.persecution.in/node/4514>



Central African Republic: Tokoyo

Fr Alain Blaise Bissialo (stabbed by apparent robbers in his home, hospitalized)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/63522-AFRICA_CENTRAL_AFRICA_A_priest_engaged_in_peace_attacked_in_Bangassou

Friday January 5, 2018



Nigeria: Tambo village, Girei local government area, Adamawa State

Lamech Jalo (described a 3 hour attack on his village by Fulani Muslims)

James Mathew (described how troops arrived then left because they are outgunned by the Fulani Muslims, then arrested Christian youths who were patrolling their family farms with bows and arrows, said "I don't know what is happening in this country. If the security forces could arrest Christian youths armed with bows and arrows, who came out to defend their fathers' lands, but leave the herdsmen, with sophisticated weapons, to move freely, then something is wrong somewhere")

Nigeria: Sambisa Forest, Borno state

Solomi Pugu (daughter of Pugu Yahi, abducted by Boko Haram from [Chibok, Borno state](#) on [April 14, 2014](#); **UPDATE**: reported to have escaped from captivity, rescued by the Nigerian military)

<http://www.persecution.org/2018/01/05/chibok-girl-rescued-from-sambisa-forest/>
<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/nigerian-air-force-complicit-in-massacre-of-christian-villagers-says-amnesty/>

Saturday January 6, 2018



India

UPDATE: Two Christians who were arrested in 2009 for the murder of Hindu leader Laxamananda Saraswati returned to prison after having been granted a two week Christmas parole, the other five were not granted parole

Gornath Chalanseth (returned to prison)

Bijay Kumar Sanseth (returned to prison)

Durjo Sunamajhi (not granted parole)

Bhaskar Sunamajhi (not granted parole)

Budhadeb Nayak (not granted parole)

Munda Badamajhi (not granted parole)

Sanatan Badamajhi (not granted parole)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/01/india-kandhamal-christians-back-in-jail-after-temporary-christmas-release/>



Iran: Tehran

Shamiram Isavi (wife of Pastor Victor Beth Tarmez, mother of Ram-eil, bodily searched during the [December 26, 2014](#) police raid on her home; **UPDATE**: sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment on national security charges, appeal underway)

<http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6755>



Nigeria

Sr Veronica Ajayi EHJ (aspirant, abducted in [Igouriakhi, Edo state](#) on [November 13, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: released)

Nigeria: Channel One settlement, Tswarev district, Logo local government area

Fulani Muslims attacked several villages

Evangelist Kwaghkighir Ukende

Iana Kpenger (**killed**)

Mnenge Ayaibo (**killed**)

Nigeria: Toradi village, Logo local government area

Verinumbe Jam (**killed**)

Pinega Mbavuur (**killed**)

Nigeria: Tse-Kimbir village, Logo local government area

Kwaghve Baaki (aged 70, **killed**)

Terhemmen Kwaghve (**killed**)

Suushater Kwaghve (aged 7, **killed**)

Ioryue Tsehembra (**killed**)

Zahemen Tsavkuleve (**killed**)

Ahemba Shaku (**killed**)

Cephas Hough (said “The herdsmen went from house to house, shooting sporadically and killing six Christians”)

Nigeria: Logo local government area

Mlahaga (**killed**)

Terhile Tyozho (**killed**)

Joseph Anawa (reported on the killings)

Richard Nyajo (LGA chairman, said that the casualty figure is higher than reported as many women and children are missing and unaccounted for: “Thousands of people have been displaced. Corpses of those killed have been evacuated to morgues in hospitals in Katsina Ala and Gboko. We are still taking records of the victims”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/01/muslim-fulani-herdsmen-launch-large-scale-attacks-benue-state-nigeria/>

Sunday January 7, 2018

Nativity [Christmas] – Eastern Calendar



Malaysia: Kota Bharu

Pastor Goo Siew Lai (**UPDATE**: described an attack on his church with a Molotov cocktail in the second attack against this month.)

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2018/01/07/objects-thrown-at-church-and-temple-in-kota-baru-believed-to-be-petrol-bombs/>



Pakistan: Quetta, Balochistan

Aleeza Ashraf (aged 18 months, daughter of Ashraf Masih and Shamim Bibi, injured with shrapnel in her abdomen and left foot during the [December 17, 2017 Quetta, Balochistan church attack](#); **UPDATE**: developed multiple gangrene infections, left foot amputated, transferred to a hospital in Karachi, in danger of death)

Shamim Bibi (mother of Aleeza Ashra and Rimla Ashraf, injured with shrapnel in the abdomen during the [December 17, 2017 Quetta, Balochistan church attack](#), hospitalized; **UPDATE**: still hospitalized, unable to travel to care for Aleeza Ashraf, said "Aleeza is innocent, she has done no wrong. She does not have the ability to speak or to cause anyone any harm. At such a young and vulnerable age she has lost her right foot and has suffered pain that no child should have to go through. Aleza was born healthy and in a loving family and we will support her whatever condition she ends up in. However at the moment unless she survives through this terrible time we may not see her alive for much longer. Please pray for her and ask our great God to save her life")

Rimla Ashraf (aged 18, sister of Aleeza Ashraf, travelled to Karachi with her sister to care for her in the hospital)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/Quetta-Church-bomb-survivor-of-one-year-needs-urgent-care-to-save-life>

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/aleeza-arrives-safely-at-agma-khan-hospital-and-begins-treatment>



Kenya: Ijara

Esther Boniface (teacher, said “This is the second Sunday we are remaining indoors and worshipping from our homes. The churches are closed and nobody is allowed to gather in any public place. The tension is even too high for non-locals who live in rented houses. These houses have been a target for al-Shabaab because most of the non-locals who have come here to work are Christians...Many schools have also closed down with others merging and having police officers guarding day and night to make sure that nobody plants improved explosive devices [IEDs] in the school compound or inside classes”)

Pastor John (alias, said “Christians are a minority group here and the head of security has warned us of meeting in churches. There are escalating fears that the Somali terror group is planning to attack churches in Ijara, after the recent raiding of police stations. We have been avoiding our church premise for two weeks now for fear of being attacked and this is a big discouragement to us”)

<http://www.persecution.org/2018/01/11/fear-and-tension-in-garissa-remain-after-al-shabaab-attack/>



Tanzania: Zanzibar Town

Pastor Charles Madama (church building demolished by a bulldozer sent by the local government, personal items including musical instruments destroyed, said “It came to us as a big surprise when the bulldozer pulled down the church building without prior notice, and we lost everything. This is a calculated move here in Zanzibar of total disregard and disrespect to Christianity. It has been extremely difficult for us as a church to assemble for worship...We lack money to appeal our case in court. But we know that church cases in Zanzibar have been thrown out, and we are very sure that even if we go to court, it will be dragged for many years, and in the end we might not get justice...At the moment it is a very difficult time for the church leadership in keeping the church members intact. We do request prayers at this trying moment, so that God may give us a place to worship. We are like orphaned children”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/02/church-building-demolished-zanzibar-tanzania/>



Nigeria

UPDATE: Five nuns abducted in Igouriakhi, Edo state on November 13, 2017 were freed

Sr Roseline Isiocha EHJ (released)

Sr Aloysius Ajayi EHJ (released)

Sr Frances Udi EHJ (released)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/63528-AFRICA_NIGERIA_Kidnapped_religious_sisters_released

Monday January 8, 2018



Ukraine: Monastery of the Kiev Caves

Metropolitan Pavel Lebed (monastery abbot, monastery disrupted by 30 nationalists with fireworks, met with the nationalists at the gate, joined by seminarians who sang Christmas songs, the nationalists left, later said "The young men came in balaclavas and masks, with video cameras and political posters, in order to provoke disorder and fights, hoping for a violent response. But I came out to them and they apparently didn't expect this, supposing that the monks are scared by their aggressive actions. I came up to them and invited them to come to church and pray on that holy Christmas day. Of course they refused, although several of them were taken aback")

<http://orthochristian.com/109872.html>



Nigeria: Karu, Nasarawa state

Nabila Umar Sanda (aged 19, convert from Islam, university student, arrested for her conversion, whereabouts unknown)

Simput Dafup (aged 33, son of Lydia, arrested for helping Nabila Umar Sanda leave Islam, whereabouts unknown)

Jeremiah Datim (church leader, helped Nabila Umar Sanda after her conversion, said "Knowing the sensitive nature of conversion from Islam to Christianity...there is a working

understanding, or protocol, that where such issues or situations arise”, after following the protocol DSSS detectives “stormed my house, assaulted my wife, daughter and eight-month-old baby, and took Nabila away”)

Lydia (mother of Simput Dafup, later said: “The men who stormed my son’s premises, heavily armed, in five Hilux vehicles, blocked everywhere and assaulted even passers-by. It has become so worrisome for me to let you know about this, because, as I speak with you now, I don’t know where my son is. Nobody has contacted me or any member of the family as to his whereabouts...I however know as a fact that some of the people that were found in the premises of his house, and who were also assaulted and brutalized along with my son, were taken to the Plateau State Command of the DSS in Jos. But these people said they did not see my son there. The DSS men who whisked my son away put a mask on him and the others they took with him...As a mother and a widow, I am worried about the safety of my son”)

Nigeria: Sokoto

Bishop Matthew Hassah Kukah (**UPDATE**: decried in a homily the “cries of shrill Islamization across the land...These cries arise when those in power use religious affiliation and blatant nepotism as means of access to power”)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/nigerian-bishop-condemns-cries-of-shrill-islamization-26987>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/01/nigerian-student-arrested-converting-islam-christianity/>

Tuesday January 9, 2018



China: Linfen, Shanxi province

Yang Rongli (sister of Pastor Yang Xuan, arrested on [September 24, 2009](#) while guarding her church construction site, later sentenced to 7 years' imprisonment and fined US\$4,392; released from prison in [2016](#), placed under police surveillance; **UPDATE**: said "the police surrounded the Golden Lampstand Church. Patrol wagons guarded the church. Workers smashed the church’s glass. At this point, excavators are digging into the church, but we are not allowed to enter or watch. The village head and the police from the local police station warned all the believers against entering the church. Now, we really have no idea what is going to happen”, the church was then demolished in a controlled explosion)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/01/bomb-destroys-persecuted-church.html>

[http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Linfen:-Christians-in-tears-watching-destruction-of-their-church-\(video\)-42807.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Linfen:-Christians-in-tears-watching-destruction-of-their-church-(video)-42807.html)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/chinese-officials-demolish-yet-another-church-in-shanxi/81225>



Egypt: Biba, Beni Suef

Adly Younan Riad (aged 48, jeweler, **shot dead** in his car in front of his home, jewelry taken)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=2062&A=33550>

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2018/01/14/coptic-jeweler-killed-in-beni-sweif/>

Wednesday January 10, 2018



India

Sajan K George (Global Council of Indian Christians president, **UPDATE**: objected to an RSS paramilitary leader's condemnation of Christianity as responsible for environmental destruction because it has no "reverence for nature", said "The GCIC considers as irresponsible Gurumurthy's comments against Christianity, which is instead deeply committed to giving voice and caring for God's creation")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Hindu-radical-accuses-Christianity-of-destroying-the-environment-42794.html>

India: Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh state

Three Nepali Christians were arrested on charges of insulting religious beliefs

Indra Bahadur Tamad

Shukra Rai

Mekh Bahadur

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Three-Nepali-Christians-arrested-in-Uttar-Pradesh-for-spreading-Christianity-42816.html>



Nigeria: Yola, Adamawa state

Bishop Stephen Dami Mamza (aged 49, Christian Association of Nigeria [CAN]; **UPDATE**: said in a press conference "It is on record that less than one week ago, no fewer than 20 innocent Christian farmers were killed in separate attacks in and around Tambo. Luru

village in particular saw its worst days when herdsmen wielding sophisticated firearms stormed the area, killing 15 people. Within the period under review, not less than 10 churches were burnt down, and in some instances, worshippers were killed...the secretary to the Adamawa state government has propounded a new firearms narrative which seeks to justify the use of firearms by Fulani in the country. This is dangerous and reprehensible, as the law of the country does not allow any civilian the possession of illegal firearms, whether herdsmen or farmers. CAN wishes to state in unequivocal terms that violent elements are easily emboldened and fueled to terror killings by such reckless and unguarded utterances...On the basis of these, we stand to believe that the ongoing carnage is an attempt to discourage Christianity and to silence Christians from free religious practice. We make bold to reject this attempt and ask the government to stop the unfortunate development. Extremism seems to have taken persecution to a new dimension, with armed herdsmen burning down churches, especially the recent attacks two days ago in Sagal community in Maiha, where four of our churches were burnt to ashes and properties destroyed”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/03/pastor-christians-slain-herdsmen-revenge-attacks-northeast-nigeria/>

Thursday January 11, 2018



Pakistan

Christian leaders responded to the abduction, rape, and murder of 7 year old Zainab and to police inaction following her abduction

Bishop Joseph Arshad (**UPDATE:** said the church "condemns the rape and murder of Zainab, a seven-year-old girl...the prevalent mindset cannot be beaten by academic education alone. People should be re-educated about human dignity")

Fr Morris Jalal (**UPDATE:** wrote "the cancer of pedophilia is spreading fast, it is not a new phenomenon. Media has only focused on this evil recently. Easy availability of porn on internet has further aided such mindset. Children attending private tuition of Quran in neighborhood are soft targets. Suffocation in society has created psychos")

Rojar Noor Alam (Caritas program director, said "people in Pakistan are shocked and grieved. Every parent can see their child in the eyes of this child, whose innocence was violated, beyond redemption. Ignoring abuses in madrassas helps produce deranged rapists...I hope one day to see all madrassas in Pakistan transformed into happiness centers, with libraries for children, where dancing, painting, and music are taught. We should let children know that the True God lives here and that God is but unconditional love and happiness”)

Michelle Chaudhry (president of the Cecil & Iris Chaudhry Foundation; **UPDATE**: said she was "beyond horrified...[we must] ensure the safety and protection of our children...accountability is essential, those responsible must be punished in order to prevent such incidents from recurring...We at The CICF stand for a terror-free society, where every child is safe and protected, where childhood is allowed to evolve into progressive adulthood")

Christian leaders reacted to the [January 4, 2018](#) placement of their country on a religious persecution watch list by the U.S. government

Bishop Leo Paul (said "I am not sure if this measure by the U.S. would actually help Pakistani minorities, or if it could create more problems for them")

Nadeem Anthony (attorney, said "Religious minorities of Pakistan are 'with' their country. If Pakistan puts its best and sincere efforts to change this, then we can get our name off this list. The only issue is sincere effort. If we want it, then this would happen. We have seen more than 100 houses of Christians set on fire on a mere accusation, and not a single person is convicted. If that would remain the same, then how can we stop other countries accusing us of human rights violations?")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Pakistani-Church-condemns-the-'brutal'-rape-and-murder-of-a-7-year-old-girl-42802.html>

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/For-Pakistani-activists,-a-%E2%80%9CCrape-culture%E2%80%9D-places-no-value-in-children-42806.html>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/01/pakistans-place-us-watch-list-create-problems-minorities/>



Nigeria

Yohanna Kukah ('traditional ruler', brother of Bishop Matthew Hassah Kukah and Samuel Kukah, abducted from his home in [Anchuna village, Kaduna state](#) on [January 2, 2018](#); **UPDATE**: released)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/nigerian-bishop-condemns-cries-of-shrill-islamization-26987>



United Kingdom: HMP Brixton

Pastor Paul Song (South Korean national, prison chaplain, told by the senior Muslim chaplain that he could no longer use the Alpha course materials due to its "extremist" nature, banned from the prison without explanation in [August 2017](#), appealed the ban; falsely accused on [September 4, 2017](#) of having called an undisclosed prisoner a 'terrorist', told that his testimony would not be allowed in his appeal; **UPDATE**: informed that his ban

has been made permanent, said “I worked alongside the prisoners in harmony. When speaking with prisoners, staff members or anyone else, I would never make offensive comments. The Bible exhorts believers to ‘love thy neighbor as thyself’, and to ‘let thy light shine before men’; and so being intentionally offensive would violate these commandments...The whole reason I served at the prison was because of my desire to bring the good news of the gospel to people, regardless of their religion or background. I believe that it has the power to transform the lives of all who believe, and so I would never do anything which may cause an individual to not want to hear the Christian message...The prisoners who attended the Christian courses were of different religions, sexual orientations and ethnic backgrounds. Some of them were violent and held views which strongly opposed mine, yet I never made any judgmental or stereotypical comments to any of them. For 19 years, I served with an exemplary record. I worked alongside the prisoners and other staff members in harmony, recognizing our differences and praying that they would come to faith, but equally respecting their decisions and background. I would have had plenty of opportunities to make offensive comments should I have wanted to, and yet during this time, no complaints were ever made about me”)

Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chief Executive of Christian Concerns; **UPDATE:** later stated "To call this Christian who has served without a blemish for almost 20 years an extremist defies belief. Pastor Song's work with prisoners has been shut down for no good reason, denying prisoners of life-giving ministry. We are considering legal action against Brixton Prison which has acted unlawfully by removing Christian services from prisoners without fair process. We are seeking justice not just for Pastor Song but for the prisoners who want to see him...Christian ministry in prisons has a long history, and its presence is essential for the rehabilitation and transformation of lives. Paul's work has led to many prisoners in Brixton turning their lives around, and so it is shocking that prisoners who are desperate for a new way of life should now be prevented from seeing Paul")

<http://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/freedom/volunteer-chaplain%C2%A0excluded-from-prison-in-move-to-wipe-out-christian-domination>

Friday January 12, 2018



Eritrea

Fr Mussie Zerai (reported to have spoken in [Rome, Italy](#) on the government's enforcement of laws banning private medical and social work "Beyond the economic damage to individual religious confessions those who pay a high price is the population who no longer has serious and efficient structures to turn to. In Xorona, for example, they closed the only dispensary in operation that was run by Catholics. In Dekemhare and Mendefera, the authorities have banned the activity of Catholic medical centers by stating that they

were a duplication of state ones. In reality, public facilities do not work: they do not have medicines, they cannot operate because they do not have suitable equipment and often not even electricity")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63552->

[AFRICA ERITREA Clinics and schools closed the regime prohibits Christian social activities](#)



Syria: Damascus

Archbishop Samir Nassar (**UPDATE:** bedroom reported to have been destroyed by a mortar shell, had just left the room prior to the impact, wrote in an email “Thank you Lord for this new beginning. My life belongs to you”)

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2018/01/12/syrian-archbishop-avoids-death-by-seconds-after-bomb-lands-on-bed/>



Chile: Santiago

Four churches were attacked with explosive devices, one was defused by police

Fr Fernando Ibanez (said young people shouted obscenities at his church hours before the attack, added “I heard the dog bark, and from my window I saw the flame. I woke up and told the parish priest, Father Cristian. The neighbors were screaming, shouting at us, and all I could do is bring the hose out and begin to put the fire down”)

<https://cruxnow.com/global-church/2018/01/12/bomb-threats-issued-pope-francis-ahead-chile-visit/>

Saturday January 13, 2018



Pakistan: Karachi

Aleeza Ashraf (aged 18 months, daughter of Ashraf Masih and Shamim Bibi, injured with shrapnel in her abdomen and left foot during the [December 17, 2017 Quetta, Balochistan church attack](#); as of [January 7, 2018](#) had developed multiple gangrene infections, left foot

amputated, transferred to a hospital in Karachi, in danger of death; **UPDATE:** received several surgeries to remove infected tissue including a colostomy, condition now stable)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/child-survivor-of-quetta-church-bomb-attack-aleeza-is-in-a-more-stable-position-but-requires-prosthe>



Kenya: Marsabit

Fr Ibrahim Racho (reported on an attack on a cathedral after the arrest of a prominent Muslim "When they [the rioters] were dispersed from there [the first target] they went to the Catholic Church, forced their way in after beating up the watchman and completely destroying the gate. Once inside the compound they started breaking windows using stones. Fortunately, they did not gain entry into the Cathedral")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63607->
[AFRICA KENYA The proto Cathedral of Marsabit attacked](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63607-)



Egypt: Souq al-Khamis area, El-Arish, Sinai

Bassem Shehata Haraz (aged 27, brother of Usama, **shot dead** after he admitted he was a Christian)

Usama (brother of Bassem Shehata Haraz, witnessed his brother's murder)

Archbishop Michael Antoun (reported on the death of Bassem Shehata Haraz)

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2018/01/14/%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%B7%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9/> - with translation

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2018/01/14/%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%B7%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D8%B1%D8%A4%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D9%8A%D8%AF/> - with translation

Sunday January 14, 2018



China: Ningxia region

Lou Siping (church service interrupted by a raid by multiple government agencies, told the officials “The Constitution gives citizens religious freedom. Our behavior does not go against the Constitution”)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/01/church-raided-ordered-to-relocate-by.html>



India: Namli, Ratlam, district, Madhya Pradesh state

Fr Maria Stephen (**UPDATE:** reported to have responded to Hindu nationalists allegations that a Catholic school suspended 20 students for citing a patriotic slogan: “The charge is totally baseless and false. The school has not rusticated [suspended] anyone”, added that the students were corrected for mocking a national song, the school has sought police protection)

<http://mattersindia.com/2018/01/catholic-school-seeks-police-protection-in-mp/>



Pakistan: Kotwaris

Saira (aged 13, daughter of Shamim Bibi and Afzal Masih, cousin of Komal, farm laborer, submitted to rape after her attacker threatened to kill her cousin)

Komal (aged 12, cousin of Saira, farm laborer, tied up by a Muslim coworker, threatened with death and rape, managed to partly free herself and scream for help, assisted in rescuing her cousin from rape)

Afzal Masih (husband of Shamim Bibi, father of Saria, rescued his daughter from rape and her cousin Komal)

Shamim Bibi (wife of Afzal Masih, mother of Saria, said "I can't bear this disgusting attack on my daughter. This evil man Aamir has destroyed her life she is left broken and in despair and it will take a long time for her to recover. The audacity of this man to rape my daughter while she was at work even though he was identifiable is disturbing. Both Komal and Saira believe if he was not caught in the act he would have raped them both, killed them and buried them in the fields. The man is sheer evil and we wonder whether he did the same to any other girls. I hope he is punished with the full severity of the law and never released to hurt any other victims again")

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-domestic-servant-of-13-raped-while-younger-cousin-was-tied-to-a-bed>

Tuesday January 16, 2018



China: Lincang, Yunnan province

Several Christians were reported to have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms for alleged involvement in the Three Grades of Servants cult

Ju Dianhong (sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment, had said to the court during the trial “I am a Protestant Christian believer, and I believe in Jesus. None of my evangelism has contravened any of the principles in the Bible, and my beliefs do not constitute an evil cult. I never preached about the Day of Judgement, and all of my books are available in the Three Self Patriotic Association [government-backed church bookstore]. All I ever wanted to do was resolve conflict and do good deeds”)

Liang Qin (sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment)

Yang Shunxiang (sentenced to between 4 and 8 years' imprisonment)

Zhang Hongyan (sentenced to between 4 and 8 years' imprisonment)

Zhang Shaocai (sentenced to between 4 and 8 years' imprisonment)

Zi Huimei (sentenced to between 4 and 8 years' imprisonment)

Tu Yan (sister of Tu Kui, **UPDATE**: still awaiting trial)

Su Min (still awaiting trial)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/01/yunnan-christians-receive-lengthy.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/01/radio-free-asia-china-jails-six.html>



India: Sehal village, Jammu and Kashmir

Seema Devi (convert, wife of Rinku Kumar, **died of natural causes**)

Rinku Kumar (convert, husband of Seema Devi, arrested on false allegations of murdering his wife)

Pastor Ankur Nirula (church destroyed by more than 300 RSS paramilitary members when the parents Seema Devi discovered he had prayed over her for her recovery from her illness and alleged her death was the result of her conversion)

Pastor Jaggar Singh (husband, father, polio survivor, church destroyed by more than 300 RSS paramilitary)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/indian-pastor-rescued-from-burning-church-describes-ongoing-fear-of-christians-in-jammu-kashmir>

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Hindu-radicals-burn-Christian-church-and-shops-in-Jammu-and-Kashmir--42900.htm>

<http://www.persecution.in/node/4524>

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/hindus-attack-christians-in-india-over-forced-conversion/81301>



Eritrea

Shiden (aged 35, alias, convert, brother of John, reported to have been arrested and imprisoned for 13 years, tortured, forced to live in a shipping container, released, currently requires mental health services)

John (alias, convert, older brother of Shiben, reported to have said: “I was so proud of him for not denying his faith through all of those years. But I could not believe the terrible suffering he had been put through...Since his release we have slowly seen him change in front of our eyes. He has fallen into deep depression and there are times when he is completely irrational. We have to watch him all the time, even at night, to make sure that he does not harm himself. It is very upsetting...I dream of the day that Shiden will be healed and find hope again”)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/01/eritrea-mental-health-challenges-for-christian-man-freed-after-13-years-in-prison/>



United Kingdom: Camberley, Surrey

Events: Two street preachers were questioned by police on [December 9, 2017](#); questioned by the police again on [December 30, 2017](#) with legal counsel present; **UPDATE: case closed**

David Barker

Stephen Wan

<http://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/freedom/two-street-preachers-questioned-over-hate-speech-have-all-charges-dropped>

Wednesday January 17, 2018



China: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Pastor Su Tianfu (issued an administrative penalty on [May 19, 2017](#) for failure to pay a fine of over 7 million yuan [one million dollars]; reported on a [June 9, 2017](#) court hearing his church called to dispute a US\$1 million fine; administrative review application accepted on [August 24, 2017](#), said “The so-called illegal income is ridiculous. We don’t have the so-called illegal income. The church was banned. The church’s money was depleted [by the government]. How can we possibly take out 7 million yuan [US\$1m]? Why impose the church’s expenses on us? We don’t own the donation money. It is absurd. The accusations and excuses do not hold up. We all know that it is religious persecution”; **UPDATE:** appeal reported to have been denied)

Pastor Li Guozhi aka Yang Hua (husband of Wang Hongwu, detained on [December 9, 2015](#) for ‘illegally holding state secrets’; sentenced on [January 5, 2017](#) to two and a half years imprisonment; **UPDATE:** still imprisoned, fine appeal reported to have been denied)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/01/pastors-fined-millions-for-collecting.html>



Egypt: El Dawwar village, Beheira province

Awad Zaki (aged 55, blacksmith, uncle of Sameh Mansour, accused of trying to assault the wife of a business client when he went to their home to collect a debt of US\$17, arrested, beaten, a ‘customary reconciliation meeting’ the following night ordered him to be expelled from the village and fined the remaining Christians US\$2,800)

Sameh Mansour (nephew of Awad Zaki, arrested despite his absence from the alleged crime scene, beaten, said “My uncle Awad is an old man and he could not do that. Mohammed Sobhi and his family live in a family house. How could my uncle attack a woman in a family home with her children? This doesn’t make sense... He is a married and very religious man and has worked for years without doing anything immoral”)

Medhat Gamil (reported on the arrest of Awad Zaki “They tried to hold him in one of the rooms, accusing him of trying to assault Mohammed’s wife, but Awad managed to escape”, said that Zaki’s arrest was followed by anti-Christian rioting “They threw stones and bricks, breaking the windows of three homes and destroying some of their contents. They destroyed a glass shop and book shop owned by Copts, and injured five Copts, including one woman. Some of them threw petrol bombs on roofs of houses, trying to set them on fire, but the owners put them out”)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/01/egypt-copt-thrown-village-fined-attack-denies/>



Malawi: Nguludi and Mwaiwathu

Fr Tony Mukomba (pulled from his automobile and **beaten by street bandits, died in the hospital**)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63597->

[AFRICA MALAWI A priest died due to his injuries in an assault by street bandits](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63597-)

Thursday January 18, 2018



Egypt

Karim Kamal (Copts for the Nation president, welcomed the government announcement that unlicensed churches would not be raided, said “The real problem lies in the ultra-conservative Islamists in some villages in rural and Upper Egyptian governorates, who fuel tensions over small unlicensed churches to pressure security officials into closing these churches to prevent sectarian strife”)

<https://barnabasfund.org/us/news/egyptian-christians-to-be-officially-allowed-to-meet-in-unlicensed-buildings>



Austria

Karl Schiefermaier (Protestant High Consistory member, criticized the government for asking Christian convert refugees difficult questions such as who was the first woman was ordained in Austria and how many sacraments Austrian Free Churches observe [the five branches do not agree] in hearings for asylum, said “This has now reached a stage which is most worrying. The Church and not the State must decide whether or not a baptism is legitimate”)

<https://barnabasfund.org/us/news/absurd-questions-to-prove-they-are-christian-in-austria-asylum-cases>



Bolivia

Pastor Miguel Machaca Monroy (criticized a new anti-organized crime law that would ban evangelization, said “Will they denounce us if we bring a group of people to a Christian camp? Will I no longer be able to preach the Gospel on the streets?”)

<https://barnabasfund.org/us/news/new-law-in-bolivia-threatens-preaching-and-witnessing>

Friday January 19, 2018



Syria: Qamishli

Aramean Saliba (aged 20, abducted by the Kurdish YPG militia for military service)

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/terrorists-use-abducted-syrian-christians-in-war-zone/>

Saturday January 20, 2018



India: Adayachery, Kanchipuram district, Tamil Nadu state

Pastor Gideon Periyaswamy (aged 43, **found dead in his church, had been hung from the rafters**, body showed signs of beating and torture, police ruled the death a suicide)

Indira (found the body of Pastor Gideon Periyaswamy)

Regina (found the body of Pastor Gideon Periyaswamy)

Pastor Immanuel Prabhakaran (said after the murder of Pastor Gideon Periyaswamy, said that “Not a single Sunday service in the past six months passed off peacefully without disturbance” from Hindu radicals)

Rev Joel Sekar (later said that Christians will continue public protests until the suspects are arrested)

Amos Paul (said police are reluctant to arrest the suspects because they fear a sectarian backlash "They say if the four are arrested, 10,000 will come out on the streets and there will be communal violence")

Rev Reuben (said "the local Hindus were not happy with the increase of the Christian faithful...I have no problems. If the Lord grants it to me, I will die a martyr for Christ, but his ministry will not end")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Tamil-Nadu,-Pentecostal-pastor-found-hanged.-He-had-received-threats-42889.html>

<http://www.persecution.in/node/4528>

<http://www.persecution.in/node/4526>

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/tamil-christians-suspect-foul-play-in-pastors-death/81331>



Iran: Tehran

Naser Navar Gol-Tapeh (aged 47, convert, arrested on [June 24, 2016](#); sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment on [June 22, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: transferred to Evin Prison)

<http://www.persecution.org/2018/02/13/christian-convert-transferred-iranian-prison-known-torture-factory/>



Uganda: in or near Kataka village, Tirinyi sub-county, Kibuku district

Munabi Abudallah (aged 37, convert, husband, father of four boys and three girls between the ages of 17 and 3, rejected by his family after his conversion, beaten by his father, in hiding)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/01/christian-convert-uganda-suffers-sudden-loss-father-wife-children/>



Turkey: Herbol village, Sirnak province

Petrus Karatay (reported to have been detained, reason unknown but possibly related to his attempt to preserve his village, which was one of three to survive the Assyrian genocide)

<http://www.aina.org/news/20180119205611.htm>

Sunday January 21, 2018



China: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Pastor Su Tianfu (issued an administrative penalty on [May 19, 2017](#) for failure to pay a fine of over 7 million yuan [one million dollars]; reported on [a June 9, 2017](#) court hearing his church called to dispute a US\$1 million fine; administrative review application accepted on [August 24, 2017](#); appeal reported on [January 17, 2018](#) to have been denied;

UPDATE: the government has begun to confiscate church property)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/01/guiyangs-largest-house-church-forcibly.html>



India: Singotam village, Nagar Kurnool district, Telangana state

Six elderly members of Gideons International were stopped by Hindu radicals who proceeded to burn their Bibles, a criminal complaint for outraging religious feelings was later filed against them

Richard Nixon (described the events that led up to the attack “Eight of us were travelling in two different cars. Before distributing the Bibles, we prayed together, and we had first asked the school administration that we will place the Bibles there, that the students may take them, but we were told to distribute them by ourselves. It was such a joy! The children came to us few at a time with their friends and received the Bibles happily...There was a Lakshmi Narsimha Swamy temple in that area called Kollapur, and a man came out from the temple and asked us if we can give him some copies of New Testament, and we gave some 20 copies to him. Each of us was carrying handful of Bibles and were walking on the road adjacent to the temple”, at least 10 radicals then appeared "We didn't want to argue with them and just kept calm. But they started badgering us with questions: ‘Who sent you here? Why are you distributing Bibles?’ They soon slipped into filthy language. We told them that we will move on from here, and requested let there be no fight...They started abusing us in extreme vulgar language. One of them sneaked into the car and picked up the copies of Bibles and threw them out. They started kicking the Bibles. They started tearing the Bibles savagely. They got the cartons we had not even opened yet from the boot of the car, threw them down and started kicking and stamping the copies. We tried to stop them, saying, ‘We will not distribute them here, but please don't tear the Bibles. It's the Holy Word of God,’ but they paid no heed. They also started videotaping")

K J Anandham (retired police sub-inspector, said “The Hindus harassed us and even threatened to beat my wife. We are all retired employees and senior citizens, they did not have courtesy for age. Their language was uncivilized and brutal”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/02/bible-burning-southern-india-shows-depth-hostility-toward-christians/>



Congo, Democratic Republic: Kinshasa

Fr Dieudonné Mukinayi (detained by police along with up to 11 other priests and 2 nuns during anti-government protests)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63609->
[AFRICA DR CONGO Violent repression of demonstrations at least 6 dead a dozen priests kidnapped](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63609-)



Canada: Toronto, Ontario

Archbishop Terrence Prendergast (wrote “This attestation excludes any Catholic parish or charity from funding for hiring a summer student. We cannot affirm that we support a [non-existent] right to abortion, which is what the euphemism ‘reproductive rights’ means. Further upsetting many is the prime minister’s confused personal comments regarding the logically impossible co-existence of his identity as a Roman Catholic and his support of abortion...Apparently, Canadians have the freedom to hold only the beliefs and opinions approved by the current government”)

Deacon Gilles Ouellette (said his diocese would not sign the attestation supporting abortion and transgenderism)

Neil McCarthy (diocesan communications director, wrote “We have essentially indicated to our parishes that the attestation cannot be checked off. We are in the process of gathering data to determine just how many parishes/groups are impacted within the Archdiocese of Toronto. Some groups may follow the paper copy example but the government has clearly stated they will not consider these to be completed applications. It is, however, a way to track those who cannot sign the attestation”)

<https://www.catholicregister.org/item/26693-dioceses-tell-catholics-not-to-sign-canada-summer-jobs-attestation>

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/bishops-denounce-canadian-govt-ban-on-funding-to-faith-groups-remains-unacc>

Monday January 22, 2018



Pakistan: Abbottabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province

A local government reportedly ended a two-week ban on church services due to alleged security risks

Pastor Christopher Shakar (wrote "All churches have got verbal permission to reopen and worship according to their religious faith and beliefs. We are expecting to get a written order soon...We are grateful to everyone for being with us when we were facing difficulties to worship our Lord. God has proven once again he is always with us")

Basharat Khokher (activist, **UPDATE:** said "On one hand, the government wants to pay billions of rupees to Muslim clerics, while on the other hand it is shutting down Christian worship places")

Fr Arshad Nayer (said that a government failure to reopen the churches "would give a bad message to minorities...Local mosques do not need a No Objection Certificate from provincial governments, and the same policy should be adopted for churches as well...Instead of providing security for the said churches, the administration has found it convenient to shut them down")

Rev Sadiq Masih (said "We received the closure notice after New Year's service. We shall soon legalize our status. God's work cannot stop")

Pakistan: Korangi, Karachi

Shehzad Mansha Masih (sanitation worker, **overcome by gas while working in a sewer, died in the hospital**, had been denied safety equipment as had his rescuers)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/-Six-churches-reopen-in-Abbottabad,-Osama-bin-Laden%E2%80%99s-city-42893.html>

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63610->

[ASIA PAKISTAN Yet another Christian victim among sewer laborers](#)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistan-reopens-churches-after-outcry/81313>



Congo, Democratic Republic: Bingo

Fr Robert Masinda (abducted by soldiers)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63626->

[AFRICA DR CONGO Fr Robert Masinda is still a prisoner but we know he is a live](#)



Cameroon

Cardinal Christian Wiyghan Tumi (aged 88, condemned military action in which a village was burned to the ground and several killed including a 96 year old woman)

<https://www.journalducameroun.com/en/cardinal-tumi-condemns-military-violence-anglophone-regions/>



Canada: Vancouver, British Columbia

Archbishop J Michael Miller (said “The government is exceeding its authority in trying to compel groups and individuals to endorse a position [on abortion and transgenderism] that they ethically oppose, and one which has no bearing whatsoever on the job for which they are seeking funding. The Trudeau government needs to rethink this overly politicized approach to the Summer Jobs Program and revise its application so that it judges the matter on its merits and not something on which there is widespread disagreement in the public”)

<https://www.catholicregister.org/item/26693-dioceses-tell-catholics-not-to-sign-canada-summer-jobs-attestation>

Tuesday January 23, 2018



Philippines

Church leaders criticized an effort in Congress to amend the Constitution to protect only 'responsible' freedom of speech

Philippines: Caceres

Archbishop Rolando Tria Tirona (said the proposal is from a "frightened and insecure government [that is] not worthy to lead the people to truth, justice, and to total good", added that the government's revocation of an online news site's license "smacks of a reign of terror, an arrogant, and high-handed warning to media practitioners that do not kowtow to the administration...Catholic media must always side with freedom, which is the sure way to human enrichment")

Philippines: Pasig

Bishop Mylo Vergara (said "[Have] courage not to compromise the freedom of telling the truth despite pressure from those in power", also complained that the media is being paid "to frame news and even distort truth")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-plan-to-limit-press-freedom-draws-flak/81311>



Vietnam: Quynh Ngoc, Nghe An province

Fr Nguyen Dinh Thuc (ordered to not serve Mass by the local government)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mass-declared-illegal-in-Ngh%E1%BB%87-An-under-a-new-law-that-hinders-religious-activities-42957.html>



Thailand: Bangkok

Zahid Younis (Pakistani refugee, one of 9 adults and 13 children detained on immigration violations, said "We were caught unawares and our children are frightened. They have been asking me if we will be sent back to Pakistan and killed, the nature of the attack on my children and me in Pakistan is still affecting them. I have told them for now we will be kept safe in the IDC a place that frightens us all, we have heard of its insalubrious nature and brutality. Even then it seems like paradise when we think of the dangers in Pakistan a nation we once called home")

Annya Farzan (aged 6, child of Farzan Joseph, detained)

Sara Farzan (aged 10, child of Farzan Joseph, detained)

Sayras Farzan (aged 12, child of Farzan Joseph, detained)

Acriah (aged 8, child of Shoukat Mashih, detained)

Aran Joy (aged 6, child of Shoukat Mashih, detained)

Shahriaz (aged 9, child of Masih, detained)

Zohaid (aged 7, child of Masih, detained)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/3-children-arrested-during-brutal-Thai-asylum-raids-despite-Thai-President-as>

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/children-rescued-from-idc-by-bpca-volunteer>



Kenya: Nairobi

Fred Awuor (secondary school principal, injured when Muslim students slashed Christian students after they refused the invitation to Islam, at least 35 were injured including some Muslims when the Christians tried to defend themselves)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/01/christian-students-knifed-beaten-high-school-clash-kenya/>



Israel: Dimona

Albert Knoester (Messianic congregation elder, husband of Esther Knoester, meeting center shut by authorities on [May 4, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: questioned by rabbis during a confrontational meeting in his home, said of another event "As I told you before, some windows were broken and some damage was done to our house. And because we bent down at the right moment we were not hit by stones thrown at us. But apart from this damage there was also psychological trauma to one of the families in Dimona. Due to the demonstrations and also because their house was damaged by stones. But also through bullying etc., their two young daughters were traumatized by what had happened and they needed psychological help")

Esther Knoester (wife of Albert Knoester, questioned by rabbis during a confrontational meeting in her home)

<http://kehilanews.com/2018/01/23/center-run-by-believers-under-attack-again-in-dimona/>



Ethiopia: Arba Minch

Temesgen Mitiku Mezemir (aged 24, charged with 'causing outrage to religious peace and feeling' after a debate with other Christians over a replica of the Ark of the Covenant, attacked and beaten along with fellow parishioners outside the courthouse)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/ethiopian-evangelical-sent-prison-insulting-orthodox-church/>



Congo, Democratic Republic: Kinshasa

Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya (**UPDATE**: spoke after demonstrations calling for the president to step down were attacked “We were dispersed by tear gas, stun grenades and live bullets. We have again seen deaths, injuries, priests being arrested, and the theft of citizens’ property...Christians were prevented from praying. Others were prevented from leaving by ... police and military who were armed as if they had been on a battlefield...How can you kill men, women, children, youths and old people all chanting religious songs, carrying bibles, rosaries and crucifixes? Are we now living in an open prison?”)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/congolese-cardinal-denounces-violent-crackdown-on-protesters-36113>

Wednesday January 24, 2018



India: Singotam village, Nagar Kurnool district, Telangana state

K J Anandham (retired police sub-inspector, diabetic [as is his wife], as members of the Gideons International were stopped on **January 21, 2018** by Hindu radicals who proceeded to burn their Bibles, a criminal complaint for outraging religious feelings was later filed against them, **UPDATE**: called to the police station along with his wife, held all day, said “Because of the complaint...the police joined hands with Hindu extremists and are after us...We were exhausted, without food and water. On the day of attack, we discussed the matter and decided to pray and forgive the assailants, and to not file any case against them”)

Navneet Chhabra, executive director of Gideons International in India, later said “There have been testimonies where people who have themselves burned the Bibles have invited Christ into their lives,” he added. “There are instances where people have picked up torn papers of Bible from garbage, and their lives were transformed. Whoever has done this act of burning the Bibles, we will pray for them that the Lord wipe away the hatred from their hearts. We belong to the same country and share as much patriotism as they do, then why this animosity? We don’t retaliate, we don’t hold any animosity, and we forgive them. We love them”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/02/bible-burning-southern-india-shows-depth-hostility-toward-christians/>



Pakistan: Karachi

Archbishop Joseph Coutts (**UPDATE**: reported to have sent a letter to the priests of his diocese asking for aid to be sent to the victims of the [December 17, 2017](#) church bombing in [Quetta](#) "The loss is beyond our imagination. Looking at the number of deaths and injured and the damage to the church's property, it is difficult to compensate, especially those who lost their loved ones...I came to know that many of the injured are still in trouble and in pain due to the lack of facilities in state-run hospitals. It is saddening and I know it is expensive to get treatment on your own in private hospitals", has already sent 300,000 rupees [US\$2,709] to the victims)

Pakistan: Quetta

Rev Saimon Bashir Masih (**UPDATE**: reported to have said "We are going through a tough time. The injured people are in much trouble and many have been moved to other private hospitals in Quetta, Karachi and Multan for better treatment...One of our choir members is still under treatment after her intestines were damaged. The bags they are using to help her digestion cost around 1,500 rupees [US\$14] and have to be changed daily. Another choir member's daily expenses are 4,000 rupees [US\$36] due to a leg fracture")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/archbishop-urges-help-for-pakistan-attack-victims/81326>



Syria: Damascus

Christine (aged 15, student, wounded in a mortar attack, leg amputated)

Rita (aged 15, student, **killed**)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Caritas-Syria:-Christian-blood-on-Damascus,-churches-attacked-and-faithful-killed-42924.html>



Nigeria: Plateau state

At least 75 Christians have been killed in the past month

Jerry Datim (described a series of Fulani Muslim attacks "It was about 12 noon, when some Fulani men laid and ambush around Rafiki, a place well close to the 3rd Army Division Cantonment. They killed three people, before moving on to another village, Jebbu Bassa, where they also killed three people. They also burned down a lot of properties...Political leaders in the state have failed to protect the people from the Fulani attackers because they fear that President Muhammadu Buhari may move against any politician that goes against the Fulani, who are Buhari's kinsmen")

Nigeria: Zanwra village, Jebu-Miango, Plateau state

James Nengwe (aged 60, father, church elder, **shot dead** by Fulani Muslims while a few hundred meters from the military camp to which he was fleeing)

Rev Biri Gado Sunday (described the attack following the funeral of a parishioner murdered the day before “After the burial, when I was in the room, one of my members came and said, ‘Kai, Reverend, see these Fulani.’ So as I came out and went and stood in that place, watching at them down there. In fact, they were in groups. But our people here did not know of their gathering. It was around 2:00 p.m. They started [gathering] around 2 p.m...Then, later on, they started exchanging gunshots, Fulanis and the youth. When it was around 4 – 5 p.m., it got worse. It was getting scary so I had to leave...At about 5:20 p.m., I saw the Fulani chasing these youth in my direction. I even called the youth Chairman, telling him that we need security people. If [we do not receive help], our church may be burned down. He tried to get to the security, but there was no response [from the military checkpoint a mile away or the base five miles away]...approximately 17 houses were burned down, with at least 12 belonging to members, although there could easily be more. [They also] killed three people, a bus driver and two others [who] were just passing, and are not residents of the community...See those ashes, they are my books!”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/02/muslim-herdsmen-terrorists-kill-eight-christians-central-nigeria-sources-say/>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/nigeria-75-killed-in-renewed-fulani-attacks-on-christian-community-in-plateau/>



Niger: Niamey

Rev Samaila Labo (church and home destroyed in the **January 17, 2015** rioting; **UPDATE:** church rebuilt, reported to have said “The Lord has torn up what is old and has given us something new. Those who destroyed our buildings may have been expecting to silence the voice of Christians, but they have failed. Perhaps by doing so, they wanted to send a strong signal to the Church, that Christians are not wanted”)

Pastor Sabo Batchiri (reported to have said “The Niger of today is no longer tolerant. It has become a country where everyone speaks only of religion. Despair has created hatred in the hearts and drives many to find refuge in religion. These people who preach hate are more dangerous than terrorists. Because terrorism is only an epiphenomenon, the fruit of what has been sown in people’s hearts...It’s sad to notice that three years after the attacks, none of the victims has received any compensation from the government. Though we’ve forgiven, and we as an organization rejected the government’s paltry offer of funds, the right of individuals to receive compensation from the government remains intact...Those victims have lost all their savings and belongings. Personally I’ve lost my church and my house, including my pastoral library containing more than 800 books...If nothing is done, these victims will keep for a long time the trauma of this situation. Still, the victims are filled with a deep sense of injustice, with some saying if some mosques were attacked, or if these victims were Muslims, the treatment would certainly have been different...As it’s

written in the Bible, ‘God has risen beauty from ashes’. It’s a great encouragement for the people of God that the majority of the destroyed churches have been rebuilt. New buildings, more beautiful and more visible, have been erected for the glory of God...These sad events also confirm that Jesus is the Lord and nothing could prevent us from serving him. Our faith has been reinforced. It has also showed that the church is not limited to the buildings, but it’s formed by all of us, the people of God”)

Jacques Kagninde (Esprit Bible College, church destroyed in the [January 17, 2015](#) rioting; **UPDATE:** said “Those who preach hate are well known. The media that broadcasts this speech are also known, but no action is taken to stop them. We are afraid because we are a minority without any defense, and anything can happen to us at any time. Our eyes are turned to God”)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/01/27834/>



Venezuela

Archbishop Diego Rafael Padron Sanchez (**UPDATE:** condemned the government decision to postpone the next presidential election by 7 months, said “In any country in the world, democracy operates with clarity, with transparency. Instead, [this] is a midnight ambush...as a Venezuelan, it is my opinion that moving up the date for elections has no legal basis. [The National Constituent Assembly] is very discredited because it is fraudulent in its origin and how it is run”)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/venezuelan-archbishop-decries-plan-to-change-election-date-30429>

Thursday January 25, 2018



China: Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

Makin (convert from Islam along with his mother, reported to have said: "I woke up in the morning and found out that our village was not the place it used to be. We knew that others in our village would never come over to our house like before...He [my brother] told everyone in the mosque that I betrayed our own people. People started being cruel to us, threw rocks at our windows, our other relatives yelled at us...Sometimes we do feel lonely, and we wonder if we are the only ones that are facing such challenges. We look at our empty house during the festival, while our neighbors have a houseful of guests, and

we can hear them laugh. My mother was happiest when she would chat with my aunts and other female relatives. I haven't seen her laugh like that for a long time")

<https://www.charismanews.com/world/69307-what-happens-when-chinese-muslims-reject-allah-and-embrace-christ>



Thailand: Bangkok

Asloob George (aged 47, husband of Ulfat Rani, father of Shahid, Shawn, and Edward, Pakistani refugee, fled Pakistan on [April 17, 2014](#) following blasphemy allegations against one son; detained on immigration violations in [2015](#); sent to the hospital in [December 2017](#), illness not diagnosed, was not expected to survive but was returned to detention; **UPDATE:** returned to the hospital, bail again denied)

Ulfat Rani (aged 48, wife of Asloob George)

Shahid (aged 27, son of Asloob George)

Shawn (aged 12, son of Asloob George)

Edward (aged 14, son of Asloob George)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/a-beleagured-christian-family-fleeing-persecution-are-calling-for-release-of-their-father-on-promise>



Congo, Democratic Republic: North Kivu

Fr Robert Masinda (abducted by soldiers in [Bingo](#) on [January 22, 2018](#); **UPDATE:** freed)

Msgr Laurent Sondirya (reported on the abduction and release of Fr Robert Masinda)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63632->

[AFRICA DR CONGO Fr Robert Masinda is free says the Vicar General of Butembo Beni to Fides](#)



Nigeria: Zanwra village, Jebu-Miango, Plateau state

Patience Moses (aged 30, said three Christians “the driver, the conductor, and one other Christian” were killed in an attack on a minibus, said "Soldiers who were trying to repel the attackers ran out of bullets, and so the attackers succeeded in burning down houses”)

Danlami (killed in an attack on a minibus)

Emmanuel Audu (killed in an attack on a minibus)

Rev. Sunday Gado Biri (aged 54, home destroyed by arson along with 50 others, church partially burned, 8 Christians killed, said "A critical look at these attacks has revealed that it is not only the herdsmen who are attacking Christian communities, as there are terrorists collaborating with them to carry out these attacks...It is unfortunate that the soldiers brought here are not taking decisive actions against the herdsmen. When the herdsmen were burning down houses, the soldiers could not stop them")

Dauda Babuje (home destroyed)

Jonathan Davou (home destroyed)

John Huyep (home destroyed)

Danladi Sunday (home destroyed)

Sunday Ragwa (home destroyed)

Yakubu A A (home destroyed)

Morris Ragwa (home destroyed)

Joro Sunday (home destroyed)

Adamu Hunye (home destroyed)

Timothy Audu (home destroyed)

Audu Hunye (home destroyed)

David Saku (home destroyed)

Luka Adamu (home destroyed)

Infor Aji (home destroyed)

Demi Sunday (home destroyed)

Damjuma Gah (home destroyed)

Maley (home destroyed)

Monday (home destroyed)

Joshua Audu (home destroyed)

Saku Leh (home destroyed)

Musa Akwa (home destroyed)

Paseh (home destroyed)

Audu (home destroyed)

Shehu Audu (home destroyed)

Danlami Gyah (home destroyed)

Monday Njwe (home destroyed)

Friday Monday (home destroyed)

Igya Danlami (home destroyed)

Monday Gyah (home destroyed)

Uwah Audu (home destroyed)

Gbah Gyah (home destroyed)

Kuku Gbah (home destroyed)

Adeh Njweh (home destroyed)

Jonathan Ndeh (home destroyed)

Musa Njweh (home destroyed)

Ishon Njwe (home destroyed)

Yakubu Njweh (home destroyed)

Ishaya Barry (home destroyed)

Fidelis Barry (home destroyed)

Monday Ishaya (home destroyed)

Musa Dahro (home destroyed)

Christopher Musa (home destroyed)

Joshua Musa (home destroyed)

Guba Bitrus (home destroyed)

Friday Saku (home destroyed)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/02/muslim-herdsmen-terrorists-kill-eight-christians-central-nigeria-sources-say/>



United States - New Jersey: Highland Park

Harry Pangemanan (husband of Yana Pangemanan, Indonesian citizen, asylum seeker, has of [December 25, 2012](#) been facing deportation; **UPDATE**: took 'refuge' from immigration officials in a church)

Arthur Jemmy (aged 40+, husband of Silfia Tobing, Indonesian citizen, asylum seeker facing deportation to Indonesia; **UPDATE**: had taken 'refuge' from immigration officials in a church)

Yohannes Tasik (Indonesian citizen, asylum seeker facing deportation to Indonesia, had taken 'refuge' from immigration officials in a church)

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/fearing-deportation-indonesian-men-seek-sanctuary-church-n841921>

Friday January 26, 2018



Thailand: Bangkok

Seven Pakistani refugee children were detained on immigration violations on **January 23, 2018; UPDATE: reported to have been released**

Annya Farzan (aged 6, child of Farzan Joseph)

Sara Farzan (aged 10, child of Farzan Joseph)

Sayras Farzan (aged 12, child of Farzan Joseph)

Acriah (aged 8, child of Shoukat Mashih)

Aran Joy (aged 6, child of Shoukat Mashih)

Shahriaz (aged 9, child of Masih)

Zohaid (aged 7, child of Masih)

George Naz (**UPDATE**: assumed guarantorship for some of the children)

Maqsood Iqbal (**UPDATE**: assumed guarantorship for some of the children, said "It was hard to have to separate parents from their children there were so many tears and I felt myself being overwhelmed, but I agree with the parents the IDC [detention center] is no place for children they all end becoming so traumatized...I felt obligated to help and was awed by the trust the parents have for me, it is a great responsibility and I have sought God's guidance in prayer and He told me it was right to intervene and save these children from the mental trauma of incarceration...I ask that Christians pray for these children as we have no idea how long they will remain in our care, but we are aware that many of those in the IDC have been detained for over two years...We seek God in making away for these families to be reunited and for their safe asylum in a place a long way from Pakistan where these victims fled and hold such a real fear of return that they refuse to go back to their previous nightmarish lives")

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/children-rescued-from-idc-by-bpca-volunteer>

Saturday January 27, 2018



India: Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh state

Four priests have been charged with crimes for preventing Hindu extremists from bulldozing land owned by their hospital for 40 years, no arrests have been made

Fr Antony Nirappel (diocesan spokesman, accused, said "...soon we were informed that police have charged four of us with rioting and criminal intimidation...[It is] just another instance of harassment...We do not know how an owner has suddenly come to claim public [use] land...[we] only want a competent authority to certify its rightful owner")

Fr Anthony Pulickamandapam (hospital director, accused, said the hospital has ownership documents and receipts for "every inch of land we possess")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-police-charge-four-catholic-priests-with-rioting/81422>

Sunday January 28, 2018



Azerbaijan: Nizami district, Gyanja

Adalat Sariyev (aged 45, home raided by police during a worship service attended by 100 including 40 children, detained, schools of the children present were notified)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2350



Austria

Hassan Amer (alias, Iraqi refugee, asylum request reported to have been rejected, appeal underway, said "I'm not the only one whose asylum request was rejected by Austria. There are dozens like me, maybe more. I hope the reports are not accurate, and if it truly was, I'd hope these decisions are not taken into force")

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/01/iraq-refugees-asylum-seekers-europe.html#ixzz55WVINu00>

Monday January 29, 2018



China: Hong Kong

Ying Fuk-tsang (divinity school director, reported to have described ways in which Christians can oppose the new anti-religious regulations)

China: northern China

Paul (reported to have said that local government officials asked churches for feedback on the new voluminous regulations but few have studied them or responded "Everyone was just sleeping")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/christians-urged-to-defend-rights-in-china/81351>



Pakistan: Sahiwal village, Punjab province

Daim Masih (aged 6, son of Sheeba and Javid Masih, brother of Carol and Kowal, nephew of Samuel Masih, Grandson of Younas Masih, raped by a Muslim while on his way home from school, strangled, attack stopped by his uncle and grandfather, taken to the hospital)

Carol (aged 9, sister of Daim Masih, home from school with a fever)

Javid Masih (aged 42, laborer, father of Daim Masih, has rejected payment from the attacker's family in return for dropping charges)

Sheeba (aged 36, mother of Daim Masih, has rejected payment from the attacker's family in return for dropping charges, said: "I have not slept since I discovered the attack on Daim. I cannot imagine the horror he felt as he realized he was going to be attacked or when he knew there was nothing he could do to stop the attack...I want to meet Shan so I can ask him why he attacked my son in this way, I want to know what made him do such an evil act that will scar my poor boy forever and has rocked our family. I want him to know and understand the pain he has inflicted on Daim and all those who love him...Shan needs to be punished, he needs to understand what he has done is wrong, so that he never ever hurts anyone the way he has hurt my son and our family")

Samuel Masih (aged 32, uncle of Daim Masih, rescued him from his attacker)

Younas Masih (aged 62, grandfather of Daim Masih, rescued him from his attacker)

Bishop Abraham (called the police)

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/a-pakistani-christian-minor-boy-raped-by-a-muslim-adult/>
<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/7-year-old-boy-sodomized-by-muslim-youth-who-offered-to-show-newborn-calves>



United States – Kentucky: Bellarmine University, Louisville

Kristan Hawkins (Students for Life of America president, condemned the vandalism of a pro-life display on a Catholic college campus)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/report-vandals-on-catholic-campus-target-pro-life-community-37844>

Tuesday January 30, 2018



Australia: Canberra

Bishop Robert McGuckin (spoke before a parliamentary committee regarding an anti-foreign espionage bill that would criminalize activities of Catholics: “I want to be clear in rejecting the characterization of the Catholic Church found in the explanatory memorandum. It seems that every Catholic involved in advocacy may need to register and report. We don’t believe that is the intention of the bill...Catholics are followers of Jesus Christ, we are not agents of a foreign government”)

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2018/01/30/proposed-new-australian-law-could-label-priests-agents-of-the-vatican/>



China

Pastor Wang Yi (**UPDATE**: published a critique of the new government regulations on religion, wrote "These regulations go even further down the road of violating the constitution. It is an illegal law that opposes the freedom of religion and freedom of conscience of millions of citizens...These regulations as a whole are an infringement upon and negation of citizens’ religious freedom in the constitution. It turns its back on public law and international law’s common definition of 'religious freedom'...For house churches that have not entered the 'Three-Self Patriotic Movement organization', the new regulations register them in the Religious Affairs Bureau as 'temporary sites of religious activity'. This leaves some room, but is nevertheless unacceptable...These new regulations do not provide the slightest help in solving millions of religious citizens’ religious freedom and legal status. It does not solve the half-century long standoff between house churches and the official Three-Self system. We do not have the strength to bear either more deeply

entrenched 'People's Government at all levels' or greater church-state conflict...As the pastor of a house church, I intend to peacefully reject the legitimacy and execution of these regulations")

https://www.chinasource.org/blog/posts/why-christians-in-china-must-prepare-themselves-for-the-new-regulations-on-religious-affairs?utm_medium=feed&utm_source=feedpress.me&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+chinechurchvoices



Mali

Sr Gloria Cecilia Narvaez Argoti (Colombian citizen, abducted in [Koutiala](#) on [February 7, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: appeared in a recently recorded video, pleaded that Pope Francis assist with her release)

Bishop Jean Baptiste Tiama (**UPDATE**: said "We have seen the video and we are happy to know she is alive and this urges us to continue our prayers and efforts for her release...It comforted us to see that Sister Gloria appears in good condition and the fact that she referred to the Pope's trip to Chile and Peru makes us think that the video is recent. And this gives us much hope...next week, a year after the abduction of Sister Gloria, we will hold a prayer vigil. The entire diocesan community will go to the place of the abduction to pray and ask for the release of the religious")

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/reported-message-from-kidnapped-nun-calls-on-pope-for-help-45126>

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63664->

[AFRICA MALI A new video of the kidnapped Colombian nun An encouraging sign says the Bishop of Sikasso](#)

January 2018, date unknown

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