

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – February 2018

Thursday February 1, 2018



India: Surat, Gujarat state

Samuel Thomas Mathura (interrupted by a heckler when addressing a Christian convention, a mob then rushed in and forced everyone to leave, roughed up a few attendees, threw chairs, and burnt Bibles and other literature, the convention was cancelled)

<http://www.persecution.in/node/4535>



Pakistan: Balochistan province

Samuel Piyara (**UPDATE:** announced that the provincial government will issue weapons licenses to all 41 churches and will conduct training to church volunteers under the Civil Defense Directorate, said "This will further enable a special force of volunteers to assist local police when services are held. We will form a committee to monitor these developments and settle the problems of those affected")

Rev Saimon Bashir Masih (**UPDATE:** has continued to minister to victims of the December 17, 2017 Quetta church attack, said "We are literally running after patients in different hospitals. People, not buildings, are our priority at present. [Victims and families] are not satisfied with the treatment at government hospitals. At least four patients sustained injuries to their groins and require urgent surgery. One 30-year-old woman suffered amnesia due to a traumatic head injury...I have received calls from an embassy in Islamabad about a Christian lawmaker who is collecting funds in our name. However I haven't recommended or authorized anyone to do this. Such acts of corruption in the name of those who are suffering is despicable")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/churches-in-pakistan-province-to-get-weapon-licenses/81400>



Iraq: Mosul

Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP (aged 72, wrote from [Oxford, United Kingdom](#) concerning the experiences of nuns who have returned to Mosul: “They are seen as prey, particularly by young Muslims from south of Iraq who have never seen a woman not wearing a hijab. Their assumption is that the sisters are immoral [despite their habits]”, added that their neighbors tell them that by 2050 Christianity will be gone and Islam will rule the world)

<http://illinoistimes.com/article-19634-what%E2%80%99s-next-for-iraq-christians-.html>



Ethiopia: Arba Minch

Temesgen Mitiku Mezemir (aged 24, charged with 'causing outrage to religious peace and feeling' on [January 23, 2018](#) 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; **UPDATE**: convicted, sentenced to 7 months' imprisonment)

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

Friday February 2, 2018



Indonesia: Jakarta

Basuki Tjahaja Purnama aka Ahok (former governor, sentenced on [May 9, 2017](#) to 2 years' imprisonment on blasphemy charges despite the court ruling there was no evidence of guilt and the prosecutorial recommendation of a suspended sentence, detained; **UPDATE**: appealed his conviction)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/jailed-former-jakarta-governor-seeks-conviction-review/81577>



Ethiopia

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<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/03/ethiopian-christian-loses-appeal-prison-sentence/>



United Kingdom: Bristol

Svetlana Powell (teacher, dismissed from her position on [July 27, 2016](#) after being questioned on her views on homosexuality, reported as a 'radicalization threat' to a government anti-terrorism agency; **UPDATE**: case dismissed by the Employment Tribunal on the grounds that she had interjected her personal religious views into the classroom, stated that the school's retention of a militant atheist teacher who interjected his views into the classroom had no bearing on her case)

<http://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/employment/christian-teacher-dismissed-and-referred-to-counter-terrorism-watchdog-after-s>

Saturday February 3, 2018



Syria: Deir Ezzor

Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem II (**UPDATE**: led the Divine Liturgy in a ruined church, said "It's an indescribable feeling for us to pray in a nearly-destroyed church, which serves as a consolation for our hearts and a message of hope to the people of the city to come back and take part in building it anew")

Bishop Maurice Amsih (**UPDATE**: said "The important thing now is for life to come back - for Deir Ezzor's residents and Christians to come back to it")

Shadi Tuma (aged 31, remained in the city during the war, said "The hard times that Deir Ezzor went through pushed the families to leave, but there was a determination inside of me to stay in this city. Deir Ezzor will always have coexistence. Christians will always have a presence here")

Sally Qassar (aged 40, said "Prayer for me is like a new life. It gave me the determination to come back to Deir Ezzor and put up with the poor provision of services, and participate in rebuilding it")

<http://www.aina.org/news/20180204152627.htm>

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/syria-christians-hold-first-prayer-in-years-in-ravaged-deir-ez-zor-church-1.701475>

<http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/first-holy-qurobo-in-deir-ez-zor-after-its-liberation/>



Ukraine: Tithes Monastery of the Mother of God, Kiev

Archimandrite Gideon Kharon (U.S. citizen, issued a statement regarding ultranationalist threats against his monastery “We have appealed to the Ukrainian Security Service, the Mayor of Kiev, and the President of Ukraine...We have appealed to the United Nations. We have appealed to the ambassadors of many countries. We have also appealed to the President of the United States of America Donald Trump with a request to protect the Tithes Monastery”)

<http://orthochristian.com/110459.html>



Nigeria: Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, Adamawa state

Erick McBen Kyari (aged 25, college student, beaten with sticks and machetes by rioting Muslim students, **died**)

Ajine Delo (Christian Association of Nigeria Youth Fellowship president, said “At the time of the attack, there was no single Muslim female student at the campus. They have all left since Friday, but nobody informed the Christian students. The assailants may have been angered by the elections of the Student Union Government leadership, held on 29 January 2018. The results had seen the emergence of Christian students on almost all the positions of the Union”)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/nigeria-9-churches-burnt-down-and-christian-students-attacked-as-violence-continues/>



United States - District of Columbia: Georgetown University

Amelia Irvine (college student, president of the campus group Love Saxa which supports traditional marriage, as of **October 20, 2017** had been threatened with banishment from campus as a hate group; the student government voted 8-4 on **November 3, 2017** to not banish Love Saxa; **UPDATE**: complained to the university that hundreds of dollars in

donations to Love Saxa had been diverted by the student government to LGBTQ campus groups)

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-traditional-marriage-group-georgetown-funneling-donations-to-lgbt-groups-216181/>

Sunday February 4, 2018



India: Sehla village, Jammu and Kashmir

Pastor Jaggar Singh (husband, father, polio survivor, church destroyed by more than 300 RSS paramilitary members on [January 16, 2018](#); **UPDATE**: a meeting of village elders placed a bounty of US\$7,795 for his arrest, said "It has been a debilitating life I have suffered since the attack on our church. I have been forced to hide in unsafe places and have been close to being caught several times and if found due to the weakness in my leg I would not have been able to run away. My wife and I cry out to God every night and he has answered our prayers...I have a young daughter who has slept little since the attack she has recurring nightmares, this is the work of the evil one and we know only prayers can save us, so we will continue to pray and ask for you all to pray for us as well...I will not be broken because I know God is with me")

India: Suleeswaranpatti, Pollachi Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu state

Pastor Challamuthu Stephen (described an attack by 10 Hindu extremists on a church "They shouted slogans demanding us to stop running the church. They damaged the roof of the church and every object in their sight, and issued threats that if we continue gathering as a church, they will kill us. The Christians got frightened and scattered from there...The extremists warned us, 'This area is dominated by Hindus. How dare you run a church here! You can go to America or any foreign land and serve your Christ there!'. Police arrived and asked the Hindu activists to leave, but once the police were gone, they came back again and continued shouting at us")

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

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/03/india-tamil-nadu-continues-lead-way-violent-attacks-christians/>



Canada: London, Ontario

Bishop Ronald Peter Fabbro CSB (**UPDATE:** wrote to his parishes that the diocese will not accept summer job grants from the government due to the requirement that it profess support of abortion: “I believe that we need to take a stand against the position of the government of Canada and say that we will not be bullied into even the appearance of collusion on this issue. While others may take an alternative path, we can make a powerful statement by saying ‘no’ to the conditions as set down by the government...Ironically, expecting such an attestation to get a job grant is in violation of some of the rights that are actually found in the Charter, while some of the contentious positions espoused by the Government are not”)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/canadian-catholics-wont-be-bullied-into-supporting-abortion-bishop-says-92510>

Monday February 5, 2018



China: Shenzhen, Guangdong province

Mr Chen (reported on the closure of a church for alleged fire code violations, 30% of the parishioners were foreign workers)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/02/authorities-close-shenzhen-church.html>



Iran

Five Christians were arrested while celebrating Christmas on December 24, 2013 in east Tehran; UPDATE: all are still missing

Ahmad Bazayr

Amir-Hossein Ne'matollahi

Faegheh Nasrollahi

Mr Hosseini

Mastaneh Rastegari

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3890>



Ukraine: Tithes Monastery of the Mother of God, Kiev

People gathered to protect a monastery from further incidents following a January 25 arson attack

Alla Ratushnaya (said "Because we will not fight. We will kneel, we will pray - but we will not give up our holy things")

Artem (said that the arsonists were misled by political slogans and should turn to faith)

Valentina Kudryavskaya (said "We are united by a common impulse to protect our holy places. People with a pure heart go to protect their home, their saints, ")

Archimandrite Gideon Kharon (U.S. citizen; **UPDATE:** said "We decided to act in a Christian way, with mercy, that [the arsonists] are released, we will officially submit documents to the appropriate authorities to take them on bail")

Archpriest Alexander Bakhov (said that the monastery had full legal title to its land and buildings)

<http://orthochristian.com/110496.html>

<http://uoj.org.ua/novosti/zashchita-tserkvi/budem-molitsya-poka-ne-prekratyat-popytki-snesti-veruyushchie-o-desyatinnom> - with translation

<http://uoj.org.ua/novosti/nasushchnyj-vopros/yurist-upts-desyatinnyy-monastyr-postroen-na-zakonnykh-osnovaniyakh> - with translation



Nigeria: Plateau state

At least 75 Christians have been killed in the past month

Rev Jacob Gidado (reported to have called on President Buhari to protect Christians against the "incessant killings...[Christians have been] persecuted beyond measure")

Peter Ahile (House of Assembly Member, reported to have said "As a lawmaker, I can only talk. The governor, as the chief security officer of the state, is the one [who] can enforce security, he is supposed to come out and address the people of the state. I don't have the security apparatus. We are only calling on the government to take action because it is the responsibility of the government to protect lives and property")

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



United States – Michigan: Metro City

Pastor Jeremy Schossau (received death threats for having hosted a sexual identity workshop for teen girls)

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/man-charged-misdemeanor-threatening-pastor-lesbian-youth-counseling-workshop-218652/>



Mexico: Taxco, Guerrero state

Two priests were killed while driving on a highway

Fr Ivan Anorve Jaimes (**shot dead**)

Fr Germain Muniz Garcia (**shot dead**)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/two-priests-murdered-in-mexico-40846>

Tuesday February 6, 2018



Vietnam: Dien Chau district, Nghe An province

Two Christians were convicted of 'resisting officials on duty' and 'abusing democratic freedoms to infringe the interests of the state, the legitimate interest and rights of organizations and citizens' for helping fishermen sue a Taiwanese steel plant for pollution

Hoang Duc Binh (aged 35, sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment, 10 relatives were detained by police at the trial and beaten)

Nguyen Nam Phong (aged 38, husband, sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment)

Fr John Baptist Nguyen Dinh Thuc (**UPDATE**: was not allowed to testify at the trial, said that Hoang Duc Binh and Nguyen Nam Phong were right to not open their automobile to police during a **February 2017** demonstration because they saved 2 nuns from police beatings)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/catholic-activists-get-harsh-sentences-in-vietnam/81456>



Austria: Linz

Bishop Manfred Scheuer (said at an interfaith meeting that 1 in 10 Christians is persecuted “That is more than 200 million people in 60 countries. But what does Europe care? Political correctness does not want to know anything about the ongoing persecution and suppression of Christianity and so it is being ignored in an almost sinister way”)

<http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/8523/europe-s-disregard-for-christian-persecution-almost-sinister->



Germany

Bishop Hans-Jorg Voigt (wrote that the government acceptance of asylum applicants who were Christian converts from Islam had dropped from 100% to 10% in 2 years, called it a “scandal that is silently taking place under our very noses”)

<http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/8523/europe-s-disregard-for-christian-persecution-almost-sinister->



United Kingdom: Cardiff, Wales

Daniel (aged 31, alias, convert, Iranian citizen, said “If I went back, the authorities would arrest me. They would put me in jail and I would be killed, I would be hanged. They will kill me, me and my family. I am not afraid because I will be meeting Jesus but I am afraid about my family”)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3894>



United States – Florida: Port Charlotte

Donna Dunbar (banned from leading a Bible Study in a common area by her condominium association, the association also posted a sign on the common area organ stating "ANY AND ALL CHRISTIAN MUSIC IS BANNED!")

United States – Oklahoma: University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond

Ken Ham (speaking engagement cancelled after the college was pressured by LGBT groups, said "Free speech in America is under increasing attack by some very intolerant people")

<https://www.charismanews.com/us/69475-lgbt-activists-kick-ken-ham-off-college-campus>

<https://www.charismanews.com/opinion/american-dispatch/69998-condo-bans-senior-citizen-s-bible-study-christian-music>

Wednesday February 7, 2018



Russia: Belgorod

Anatoly Shalyapin (detained for 48 hours for membership in a banned organization, released, under travel restrictions)

Sergey Voykov (detained for 48 hours for membership in a banned organization, released, under travel restrictions)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2355



United States - New York

Ed Mechmann (Archdiocese of New York spokesman, responded to Governor Andrew Cuomo's executive order requiring all holders of state contracts to support LGBTQ rights "... earlier this week, the Governor veered frighteningly into the territory of the suppression of free thought and speech, and intolerance for religious freedom...By citing this completely irrelevant federal proposal, the press release inadvertently made clear that the Governor's new order is rooted in animosity towards religious freedom...The idea that 'LGBTQ rights' might be 'vulnerable' [whatever that means] because of a decision relating to health insurance coverage of contraceptives is something that only an ideologue could believe...This is classic Orwellian doublethink - simultaneously believing in two utterly contradictory things. You cannot at the same time quash religious liberty and freedom of thought and still claim to be protecting the rights of everyone. This order is premised on the assumption that freedom is a zero-sum game with winners and losers - and the Governor has chosen which side he wants to win...To really capture the import of the Governor's new policy, just consider his own words: **“I can tell you that any school that refuses to protect transgender students will not receive a penny of state money and then they are out of business.”** No subtlety to that threat. The only schools he could be talking about are religious ones, and everyone knows that means Catholic, Christian and Orthodox Jewish schools. The message is clear - conform or be destroyed...”)

United States – Texas: Corpus Christi

Frank Castillo (aged 61, **stabbed to death** by a fellow parishioner during a prayer meeting)

Pastor Janson Abraham (stabbed, hospitalized along with 2 other parishioners, said "I would say, you know, we don't know what made him do this but we can extend forgiveness, we can extend love. And his mother is a part of our church. So we are going to help her in the process")

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/pastor-forgives-congregant-who-stabbed-him-killed-1-member-at-prayer-meeting-217149/>

<https://archny.org/news/big-brother-in-albany>

Thursday February 8, 2018



China

Several provinces have begun to require that churches post notices that prohibit the entry of legal minors

Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-Kium SDB (aged 86, **UPDATE**: reported on a Shanghai underground church "The priest has told Catholics not to come because there will be no Mass since they have not registered")

Peter (said he saw the signs in Xinjiang "When minors enter internet bars, the government and police turn a blind eye. However, they are becoming very strict in prohibiting minors from entering religious venues. It is ridiculous")

Fr Stephen (underground priest, said children are forced to lie to teachers about their faith "Is this the way to build up our civilization?")

Fr Thomas (said "All religious sites must be registered, no religious activities can be held beyond registered venues, non-registered clergymen are forbidden to host religious liturgies, and party members and minors are prohibited from entering a church. The living space for the church is getting less and less", had begun talks with the State Administration of Religious Affairs "to strive for space for religious freedom and the church to survive; to protect the church and staff from being attacked; and to preserve the church's dogma")

Fr John (said "Officials do not want us to be really underground, which would mean they would lose our traces and not know where we are. If our dogma is not meddled with, everything will be fine. If the religious affairs bureau and the public security bureau understand us, they will not have any worries. If we are really undergoing clandestine activities, we are really a problem to them. For myself, I do not want to be hidden but if we are not allowed to have our religious gatherings, the only way is to become clandestine")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/china-church-further-squeezed-by-revised-regulations/81469>



Bangladesh: Tongi

Fr Chanchal Hubert Pereira (held at gunpoint during a church robbery, beaten, said "To save my life I had to give them money, about US\$ 420, my mobile phone, and laptop computer")

Bejoy Costa (rectory cook, said "When I entered the Father's room, I found him in tears and tied up")

Bablu Peris (parish council member, said "[I am} worried about the security of the church and the parish priest. We will arrange for video surveillance cameras and a night guard as soon as possible")

Hemanto Corraya (Bangladesh Christian Association secretary general, said he wants "the police to arrest the robbers soon and ensure exemplary punishment")

Momota Costa (housewife, later said "The thieves not only hurt our parish priest, but also our Lord Jesus Christ")

Shipra Sero (wept and fasted after the robbery)

[http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Dhaka-church-ransacked,-priest-beaten-and-threatened-with-death-\(photos\)-43051.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Dhaka-church-ransacked,-priest-beaten-and-threatened-with-death-(photos)-43051.html)

[http://www.asianews.it/news-en/More-than-200-Catholics-pray-and-march-in-silence-over-looted-Church-\(Video\)-43090.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/More-than-200-Catholics-pray-and-march-in-silence-over-looted-Church-(Video)-43090.html)



Pakistan: Islamabad

Elisha (aged 12, daughter of Iqbal Masih, abducted and forced into an Islamic marriage in [November 2017](#); **UPDATE**: returned to her family by the High Court)

Iqbal Masih (father of Elisha, said after her [November 2017](#) abduction "In order to stop us from going to seek legal assistance in this matter, Ismail's family got my wife and I locked up in the local police station for a day after filing false charges, which is why since November I am now living with my relatives and leading life in hiding"; **UPDATE**: said "after Elisha was handed over to us by the court, Ismail's family is threatening dire consequences if the case is not withdrawn and Elisha not returned")

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/pakistani-christian-says-12-year-old-daughter-was-abducted-forced-to-convert-to-islam-and-marry/>



Kazakhstan

Teymur Sultan ogly Akhmedov (aged 61, husband, father of three sons, arrested in [Astana](#) on [January 18, 2017](#) for sharing his religious beliefs with KNB secret police informants, denied cancer treatment; sentenced on [May 2, 2017](#) to 5 years' imprisonment followed by 3 years' prohibition on preaching; **UPDATE**: underwent surgery, two tumors removed, one malignant)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2359



Iraq: Mosul

Nadia Younis Butti (fled her home on [July 17, 2014](#) due to ISIL; **UPDATE**: returned to her home after the defeat of ISIL, said “It is still extremely dangerous in Mosul. I just spoke to a police officer who lost a colleague this week. He was shot at night. A lot of Mosul’s inhabitants collaborated with ISIL for three years, and some might have relatives or family members who were even part of ISIL. There are a lot of Sunnis who have supported ISIL...The city was liberated by the Iraqi army, which is supported by many Iranian Shiites. In Mosul, they are met with a lot of distrust: they aren’t seen as allies. For me, the city has not become safe since its recapture...I can’t believe my eyes when I see what ISIL has done to my church. I remember sitting here, in the midst of my friends when the Liturgy was served very well. I remember being on the square outside with all the parishioners and using the rooms for meetings: the women in the rooms on the left, the men on the right. Thinking about that time saddens me deeply...After the turn of the century, it was already getting worse for Christians in Mosul. In 2008 and 2009, Christians began to be threatened, abducted and killed for their faith. I received a letter once that said I had to pay, or I would pay with my life. A well-known priest was abducted and slaughtered. His body was found in pieces...When I just looked up, I suddenly felt intense happiness. I saw that the blue dome with Jesus’ image had survived the occupation of ISIL reasonably well. Not not much of its beauty has remained, but the image shows how beautiful this church was. The jihadists have only been able to destroy the edges of the picture. Seeing Jesus above me gave me great joy”)

<https://zenit.org/articles/mosul-iraq-i-cannot-believe-my-eyes-when-i-see-what-isis-has-done-to-my-church/>



Egypt: Atfih

Eid Attia (reported to have been fined US\$20,380 and given a suspended sentence for building an unlicensed church, the 19 Muslims who attacked the church and Christian homes and shops were fined US\$28 each)

<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=2084&A=33861>



Nigeria

Eleven Catholic bishops met with President Buhari to deliver a statement that read “Innocent citizens in different communities across the nation are brutally attacked and their sources of livelihood mindlessly destroyed. Property, worth billions of Naira, including places of worship, schools, hospitals and business enterprises, are torched and turned to ashes. We are still more saddened by the recent massacre of unarmed citizens by these terrorists in some communities in Benue, Adamawa, Kaduna and Taraba states, which has caused national shock, grief and outcry...the government, whose responsibility it is to protect the life and property of every citizen, seems either incapable or unwilling to do this. The silence of the federal government...is, to say the least, shocking...[support for the President] is being fast depleted by some glaring failures of government which we have the moral duty to bring to your notice...[there is] a near civil war situation in many parts of the country”

Archbishop Ignatius Ayau Kaigama (**UPDATE**)

Bishop William Avenya

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/nigerian-bishops-accuse-government-failing-protect-citizens-terrorist-herdsmen/>



United States – Michigan: Detroit

Iraqi Christians were reported to continue to face deportation

Mukhlis Murad (aged 59, father of Summer, grandfather)

Jony Jarjiss (aged 58, father, grandfather, home foreclosed upon during his detention)

Nadir Jawad (aged 44)

<http://www.aina.org/news/20180208180234.htm>

Friday February 9, 2018



Malaysia

Pastor Raymond Koh Keng Joo (aged 63, husband of Susanna Liew, father of Esther, Elizabeth, and Jonathan Koh, abducted by 5 armed and masked men in [Petaling Jaya](#) on [February 13, 2017](#), police initially refused to file a report despite witness accounts of the abduction; **UPDATE**: still missing)

Pastor Joshua Hilmy (convert from Islam, husband of Ruth Sitepu, apparently abducted in [March 2017](#); **UPDATE**: still missing)

Ruth Sitepu (wife of Pastor Joshua Hilmy, apparently abducted in [March 2017](#); **UPDATE**: still missing)

Archbishop Julian Leow Beng Kim (**UPDATE**: asked Christians “to continue to look to God in prayer and to seek closure [for] this dastardly act on a servant of God” regarding the abduction of Pastor Raymond Koh Keng Joo)

Rev Dr Hermen Shastri (**UPDATE**: said "We fear we are at the threshold of the undoing of the constitution, so that it becomes compliant to Islamic laws of sharia and hudud...The government is seeking to insinuate some link between churches and opposition parties since our demands to practice our faith in freedom and non-interference, and for peace and harmony, resonate with the stance taken by the political opposition. Our prayer for Malaysia is for it to remain a secular nation as envisioned by the founding fathers in 1957 and to abide by the tenets of the constitution")

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/struggle-continues-for-minorities-as-malaysias-reputation-as-moderate-muslim-nation-hangs-by-a-thread/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/07/christian-preachers-disappearance-in-malaysia-stokes-fears-of-crackdown-on-religious-minorities>



Uzbekistan: Tashkent

Yelena Nazarova (wife of Ahmadjon Nazarov, fined US\$44,333 in [Urgench](#) on [September 4, 2017](#), Bible and literature ordered to be destroyed; **UPDATE**: the Supreme Court reduced the fine to US\$11,083 and ordered her Bible be returned)

Nilufar Isakova (fined US\$44,333 in [Urgench](#) on [September 4, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: the Supreme Court reduced the fine to US\$11,083)

Madina Yokubova (fined US\$44,333 in [Urgench](#) on [September 4, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: the Supreme Court reduced the fine to US\$11,083)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2361

Saturday February 10, 2018



Bolivia: Oruro

Archbishop Jesus Juarez (two attacks with explosive devices killed 12 and injured at least 60, the first attack was against a religious procession, later signed a statement: "We lift up our prayers for the victims and express our solidarity with relatives of those who have died in the two explosions...We call on the authorities to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation and to take measures to prevent these lamentable incidents")

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/bolivia-bishops-call-for-thorough-investigation-of-explosions-in-oruro-80657>

Sunday February 11, 2018



Indonesia: Selman district, near Yogyakarta, Central Java

Fr Karl-Edmund Prier SJ (aged 81, Dutch national, stabbed by a Muslim while presiding at Mass, hospitalized in stable condition)

Permadi (stabbed in the back, said "He was wielding a sword, and he hit me", hospitalized in stable condition)

Fr Endra Wijayanto (issued a statement condemning the attack)

Archbishop Robertus Rubyatmoko (said the victims "feel protected by God")

Juventus Prima Yoris Kago (Catholic Student Association chairman, said "Let us show the example of being a good religious person who is trying to love everyone. We show that we reject destructive acts in any name")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63732->

[ASIA_INDONESIA_Attack_on_a_church_is_extremism_threatening_Christians](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63732-ASIA_INDONESIA_Attack_on_a_church_is_extremism_threatening_Christians)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/elderly-dutch-priest-among-four-injured-in-sword-attack/81516>



China: Guiyang, Guizhou province

A church building was auctioned off by the local government, the listed owners were notified the same day

Pastor Su Tianfu (**UPDATE**: notified, said "This afternoon, court personnel, policemen, and community workers knocked on my door and gave me the ruling regarding the [three sites]. To me, the ruling is actually a secret auction...")

Deacon Zhang Xiuhong (church board chairwoman, detained in late [July 2015](#); reported on [August 7, 2017](#) to have been released, said her faith had become stronger and that she had shared her faith with many prisoners; **UPDATE**: notified)

Liang Xuewu (notified)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/02/officials-auction-church-to-pay-fine.html>



Pakistan: Malir district, Karachi

A Christian church was attacked by Muslims who mistook a roof construction crew as voyeurs

Pastor Samson Ashiq (described the cause of the attack "One of our faithful had climbed onto the roof of the church with some workers to build a cross on the building, which is quite new. According to some Muslims, young Christians were spying on Muslim homes, dishonoring their families. At that point a quarrel broke out. I apologized to the members of the Muslim community, explaining that this was a misunderstanding. And I did not expect an aggression", signed a document forgiving the attackers)

Faysal Inayat (injured, said "We were in church for the Sunday liturgy when some Muslim men blocked the church gate with motorcycles. They did not allow people to go home and harassed some women outside the church gate")

http://www.fides.org/en/news/63761-ASIA_PAKISTAN_Attack_on_a_church_Christians_forgive_the_aggressors



Uzbekistan: Urgench, Khorezm region

Stanislav Kim (**UPDATE**: home raided by police during a worship service)

Oybek Rahimov (**UPDATE**: present during the police raid, Bible seized)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2361



Sudan: North Khartoum

Rev Yahya Abdelrahim Nalu (Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church, husband, father of a two year old boy; evicted from his [Omdurman](#) home by police on [August 15, 2017](#);
UPDATE: protested the demolition of a church by police “These crazy actions will not stop us from praying and praising God! God is Almighty”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/02/authorities-sudan-demolish-church-building-khartoum/>



Nigeria: Zanwra village, Jebu-Miango, Plateau state

Rev Biri Gado Sunday (described a [January 24, 2018](#) Muslim attack on his village following the funeral of a parishioner murdered the day; **UPDATE:** described another attack "...we were about to have our service, then they killed three people again. They ambushed them")

<http://www.persecution.org/2018/02/20/fulani-militants-burn-village-including-pastors-home/>

Monday February 12, 2018



Lebanon: Akkar district

Bishop Georges Abou Jaoude (reported to have thanked a judge who sentenced two Muslim youth to memorize passages of the Quran concerning Mary the mother of Jesus after they had been convicted of desecrating a statue of her)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Teenagers-who-desecrated-a-statue-of-Our-Lady-required-to-learn-the-Qur%CA%BE%C4%81n-as-punishment-43082.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; **UPDATE:** wrote from jail to his wife "I am very discouraged. Please have prayer for me. I love you — can't handle the thought of growing old in this place, without you")

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/us-pastor-andrew-brunson-writes-heartbreaking-message-to-wife-from-turkish-prison-217416/>

Tuesday February 13, 2018



Turkmenistan: Lebap

Arslan Begenchov (aged 18, arrested on [January 2, 2018](#) for refusing military service; sentenced to one year's imprisonment on [January 17, 2018](#); **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2363



Turkey: Istanbul

Archbishop Karekin Bekdjian (elected Armenian Locum Tenens [temporary Patriarch] of Istanbul on [March 15, 2017](#), election annulled by the government within the hour; **UPDATE**: announced his resignation as Locum Tenens, wrote the government's intent is to "sabotage the 85th Patriarchal Election and is the product of a long and planned campaign")

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2352

Thursday February 15, 2018



Iraq

Archbishop Bashar Matti Warda CSSR (**UPDATE**: said at [Georgetown University, Washington DC, United States](#) "Having faced for 1,400 years the slow-motion genocide that began long before the ongoing ISIS genocide today, the time for excusing this inhuman behavior and its causes is long since past...The harsh truth to this question is that without an end to this persecution and violence there is no future for religious pluralism in Iraq or anywhere else in the Middle East for that matter...So few of us are left, some estimate 200,000 Christians or less. While it is true that our numbers are small, the apostles were

much smaller...We forgive those who murdered us, who tortured us, who raped us, who sought to destroy everything about us. We forgive them in the name of Christ. We say this to our Muslim neighbors, learn this from us. Let us help you heal. Your wounds are as deep as ours...We pray for your healing”)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/archbishop-of-erbil-christians-in-iraq-are-scourged-wounded-but-still-there-62878>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INt_N-9KatE

Friday February 16, 2018



Pakistan: Ferozewala, Punjab province

Usman Masih (arrested on [May 25, 2016](#) on blasphemy charges after he filed a criminal complaint against a gang of Muslims and Christians who had beaten him; **UPDATE:** acquitted, released)

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/pakistani-christian-usman-masih-acquitted-from-blasphemy-case/>



Mexico: Chilapa, Guerrero state

Bishop Salvador Rangel Mendoza (**UPDATE:** issued a statement condemning criminal violence after a parochial school was closed following the murder of parents and a sister of one of the nuns)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/63763-AMERICA_MEXICO_Escalation_of_violence_the_nuns_flee_a_school_closes

Saturday February 17, 2018



India: Dhar district, Madhya Pradesh state

Event: Thirteen tribal Christians were arrested in **January 2016** on forced conversion charges;
UPDATE: all were reported to have been sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment

Balu Kesu (husband of Bhuri, visually impaired, sentenced)

Bhuri (wife of Balu Kesu, visually impaired, sentenced)

<http://www.persecution.in/node/4544>



Pakistan

Sabir Masih (cousin of Amir Masih, hit in the head when he attempted to intervene in a quarrel between his cousin and the owner of a rickshaw stand, **died**)

Amir Masih (rickshaw driver, cousin of Sabir Masih, witnessed the killing of his cousin)

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/pakistani-christian-sabir-masih-killed-over-400-rupee/>



Kenya: Qarsa, Wajir county

Al-Shabaab militants attacked a school dormitory, killing 3 Christians

Seth Oluoch Odada (husband of Caroline, teacher, **killed**)

Caroline (wife of Seth Oluoch Odada, **killed**)

Kevin Shari (teacher, **killed**)

Fr Alfred Murithi (later said “I have never seen so much fear among the teachers. Many of them want to leave, but I have heard the headteachers are stopping them. I think the attackers wanted to cause fear and disrupt learning in this region. We have been questioning the overall motive. We think it’s senseless...Those [teachers] who are in towns say they encounter less challenges, but those in rural areas say they are not welcomed and treated as outsiders by the community”)

Fr Peter Kariuki (later said “They have been killing Christians or non-Muslims who can’t recite their prayers”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/02/suspected-al-shabaab-militants-kill-three-christians-northeast-kenya-sources-say/>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/kenya-engaged-couple-killed-together-fellow-primary-school-teacher-suspected-al-shabaab-attackers/>



Congo, Democratic Republic: Kinshasa

Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya (**UPDATE**: signed a statement with his fellow bishops "Why so many deaths, injuries, arrests, kidnappings, attacks on parishes and ecclesiastical communities, humiliation, torture, intimidation, desecration of churches, prohibitions to pray?...The national and international community is witness to a series of campaigns of intoxication, discredit and defamation aimed at weakening the moral strength of the Church...in the Grand Kasai, in North and South Kivu, in Ituri, the presence of assailants who sow death and desolation makes one think of a set up plan of occupation and Balkanization. At this stage of the electoral process one has the right to ask: who benefits from destabilizing the Country?")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63783->

[AFRICA DR CONGO The Bishops A campaign of defamation of the Church underway while the Country prepares to vote](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63783-)

Sunday February 18, 2018



Russia: Kizlyar, Dagestan

An Islamic State supporter opened fire on worshippers as they left a church, killing 5 and wounding 5

Fr Pavel Kalikin (**UPDATE**: church rector, husband, father, pulled parishioners into the church during the shooting, added "I saw through a window how the killer was pulling on the door handles and broke inside. He had a completely crazed, glazed-over look. Meanwhile, the church workers closed the remaining rooms downstairs. We asked everyone to lie on the floor in the church. The sacristan climbed the bell tower and started ringing the bells. The bells probably scared the killer and he started leaving, still shooting. We saw him leave the church property, walking along the fence, still shooting. The police met him there. A shootout began. The killer was killed")

Dr Lyudmila Georgievna Scherbakova (cardiologist, cousin and housemate of Vera Gavrilovna Morgunova, **shot dead**)

Vera Gavrilovna Morgunova (retired government administrator and unofficial ombudsman, cousin and housemate of Dr Lyudmila Georgievna Scherbakova, **shot dead**)

Nadezhda Sergeevna Terliyan (aged 45, parish pilgrimage coordinator, physical education teacher, **shot dead**)

Irina Sosikovna Melkomova (aged about 60, alms collector, hit the shooter with her alms bags, **shot dead**)

Vera Sergeevna Blinnikova (wife of a disabled husband, **shot dead**)

Sergei Anatolievich Presnyakov (had been escorting his elderly mother from the church to their automobile when the shooting began, ran toward the shooter to draw his fire, shouted “Shoot me! Are you scared? You can only shoot at old women?”)

Archbishop Varlaam (gave permission for the five women to be buried on the cathedral grounds as martyrs)

Hieromonk John Anisimov (said this was the first terror attack on a church in the area)

<https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/four-killed-in-dagestan-shooting-russian-authorities-1814212>

<http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/five-women-shot-dead-outside-church-in-dagestan-immediately-after-rite-of-forgiveness/>

<http://orthochristian.com/110856.html>

<http://orthochristian.com/110968.html>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/dagestan-church-attacker-linked-militant-group-unlikely-hero-emerges/>

Monday February 19, 2018



Pakistan: Dhair village, Shahdara town, Lahore, Punjab province

Patras Masih (aged 17, son of Inderyas Masih, cell phone lost then used to post blasphemous content to his Facebook account, went into hiding, a mob of more than 3,000 gathers to demand his lynching and the burning of Christian homes if he was not arrested, 800 Christian families fled their homes and received word they had been looted, surrendered to police to save his family and neighbors)

Inderyas Masih (father of Patras Masih, sanitation worker)

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; as of [January 13, 2018](#) had received several surgeries to remove infected tissue including a colostomy, condition stable; **UPDATE**: requires additional surgery to reattach her intestines and reverse the colostomy)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/quetta-bomb-victim-aleeza-recovering-well-but-needs-operation-to-connect-intestine-to-bowel>

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/blasphemy-allegation-against-christian-results-in-riots-in-shahdara-lahore>

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/1000-families-forced-to-flee-their-homes-after-a-fourth-teenager-has-been-arrested-for-blasphemy>

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/pakistani-christian-patras-masih-accused-of-blasphemy-in-lahore/>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/pakistan-800-christian-families-flee-neighbourhood-blasphemy-accusation/>



Nigeria: Dapchi, Yobe state

Boko Haram abducted 110 female students from a secondary school

Leah Nathan Sharibu (aged 15, student, abducted by Boko Haram)

Fr Donald Zagore SMA (later said "Terrorism is a diabolical phenomenon that aims at the destruction of humanity. This atrocious phenomenon shows how man, a creature in the image and likeness of God, has become transformed into the expression of Satan's face. It is tragic to see lives destroyed, especially young girls, kidnapped and forced to become sexual objects, but also kamikaze [suicide bombers] at the mercy of individuals who have violence and terror as the intrinsic logic of their lives. How long will these people without faith or law continue to destroy families and break the future of so many girls and boys on the continent?")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63818->

[AFRICA NIGERIA Boko Haram terrorism Allah does not send anyone to kill on his behalf](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63818-AFRICA_NIGERIA_Boko_Haram_terrorism_Allah_does_not_send_anyone_to_kill_on_his_behalf)

<http://www.persecution.org/2018/03/22/one-dapchi-schoolgirls-released-christian/>

Tuesday February 20, 2018



India

Shibu Thomas (**UPDATE**: released a report stating that Hindu persecution of Christians has doubled in the last year, said "It is a new trend to accuse Christians of serious crimes...is a clear indication that those opposed to Christians want to portray them as serious threats to the nation's safety and security...In 99 percent of cases, they bring false witnesses and charge victimized Christians with serious offenses like sedition. When victims reach for police help, they find themselves accused of violations. 'It is you who have done it,'

police say. This is a dangerous sign. Unfortunately, the police are in league with fanatics and elected members support their actions")

Pastor Anil Andrias (said "Christians are not safe anymore in India under the current situation. Christians' struggles will certainly multiply if the ruling dispensation retains power after the 2019 general election...They threaten believers and their leaders with measures like social boycotts if they practice Christianity")

India: Goa

Francis Xavier Pereira (aged 55, taxi driver, arrested on [July 15, 2017](#) for the recent wave of cross and cemetery desecrations; **UPDATE**: acquitted on 11 of the 19 counts, said "[Chief Minister] Parrikar said he was under pressure from Center [New Delhi] to nab the culprit and ordered me to accept the cases. He promised my nephew a government job and money to me. He also promised that the courts would release me in two or three months")

Fr Savio Fernandes (**UPDATE**: said "The [diocesan] fact-finding team sticks to its earlier demand for an impartial investigation into the desecration of the crosses")

Fr Loiola Pereira (said "It was clear that a game was on because the arrested man is over 55. Not even a 25 year old would be able to commit such monumental destruction in a single night. It had to be a collective effort")

India: Telangana state

Pastor Ramesh (aged 30, dragged from a government office and beaten by Hindu radicals "They [Hindu radicals] dragged me out of the revenue office...Around seven people led by Mr Narsihmulu forcibly took me to a deserted place nearby the revenue office and beat me blue and black. It looked [like] the attack was pre-planned as they used wooden sticks and iron wires to attack me and I sustained bruises all over my body, especially on my back...[The radicals illegally] transferred the land that was bought to construct the church to Mr Narsihmulu, and he paid 50% less than the value of the land...it was like a life and death situation for us as a family. My wife and kids are so scarred and depressed over the developments. My youngest daughter is three months old and the eldest is five years. For a moment I did not know what to do, so I fled from the village...literally hiding for life")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/hindu-attacks-onchristians-double-in-india/81570>

<http://persecutionrelief.org/annual-report-2017/>

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/probe-call-as-court-acquits-accused-in-go-cross-vandalism/81593>

<http://www.persecution.org/2018/03/22/exponential-increase-attacks-christians-telangana-india/>



United States - Texas

Bishop Michael Olson (issued a statement with the other bishops of the state defending Catholic Charities in a lawsuit brought by a same sex couple who had been denied an adoption

“Catholic Charities of Fort Worth's International Foster Care program is an outreach that is faithful to the Church's mission to care for the poor and vulnerable. This mission is entrusted to the Church by Christ...It would be tragic if Catholic Charities were not able to provide this help, in accordance with the Gospel values and family, assistance that is so essential to these children who are vulnerable to being mistreated as meaningless in society”)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/texas-bishops-support-catholic-charities-in-wake-of-gay-adoption-lawsuit-40613>

Wednesday February 21, 2018



India: Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh state

Bishop Chacko Thottumarickal (**UPDATE:** reported to have signed a petition to the government along with leaders of other faiths that expressed concern over the rising interreligious violence in the state and nation)

India: Meghalaya state

Rev Paul Msiza (South African citizen, President of the World Baptist Alliance, denied a visa to enter the country for the 150th anniversary celebration of Christianity in the Garo Hills region, had been blacklisted after a prior visit when he was placed under surveillance and accused of visa violations)

Vincent H Pala (politician, said the banning of Rev Paul Msiza would cost the Hindu nationalists votes in the upcoming state election "This could cost the BJP and its allies dearly")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/visa-row-in-india-threatens-state-poll-backlash/81600>

<http://www.bwanet.org/news/news-releases/499-african-installed-president-of-global-baptist-body>

<http://india.ucanews.com/news/religious-leaders-demand-action-against-extremist-groups-in-mp/36672/daily>

Thursday February 22, 2018



China: Anyang diocese, Henan province

Fr John (said "no study classes for Catholics are allowed and especially those for minors should absolutely be prohibited...Catholic churches are victimized indirectly" but Protestant churches appeared to be the main target due to their higher number of baptisms)

China: Guangdong province

Sui Muqing (human rights attorney, **UPDATE:** reportedly has been ordered to surrender his law license for allegedly disrupting court order)

China: Henan province

Thomas (said he expected his province would now have its turn with a religious clampdown)

China: Puyang diocese, Henan province

Fr John (said Christians in his area had received verbal warning to not display poetic couplets on their homes for Chinese New Year)

China: Shangyao, Jiangxi province

Zhang (described the demolition of an officially sanctioned church cross "The government agreed to my demand of making a smaller cross, but we can only place it on the church wall. We are not allowed to place a large cross on top of the building. Currently, the cross inside the church is still intact")

China: Xuliang, Bo'ai county, Henan province

Fr Peter (saw village cadres prohibiting Christians from displaying poetic couplets on their homes for Chinese New Year, said "The village cadres were yelling on the streets as they delivered circulars to every Catholic family. I asked one of them, 'When was Article 36 of the Chinese Constitution rewritten to restrict religious freedom?' He just turned and walked away...The situation is tenser this year and religious policy has been tightened too")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/religious-freedom-takes-another-hit-in-china/81601>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/02/lawyer-forced-to-return-license.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/03/government-demolition-crew-destroys.html>



Pakistan: Dhair village, Shahdara town, Lahore, Punjab province

Bishop Emmanuel (under pressure by Muslims to leave his community after he helped accused blasphemer Patras Masih evade a lynch mob and surrender to police)

Pastor Sanfia Bashir (said after accused blasphemer Patras Masih evaded a lynch mob and surrendered to police "Police have been stationed [at his church] for a reason. I have been asked to stay alert. We are obliged to obey the laws of our country. I was in constant touch with the victim's family on the phone and only followed the legal procedure in handling this case")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/protestants-face-pakistan-protest-for-helping-blasphemer/81609>



Germany: Berlin

Fr Alain-Florent Gandoulou (Republic of the Congo national, **beaten and stabbed to death** with an umbrella while in his office)

<http://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2018/03/02/african-born-priest-murdered-in-berlin/>

Friday February 23, 2018



Pakistan

Ashiq Masih (husband of imprisoned Christian Aasiya Noreen aka Asia Bibi, father of five including Isham, **UPDATE**: reported to have said during a visit to [Vatican City](#) "We believe in Jesus Christ and we turn to Him by putting Asia's life in his hands. We are sure that the Lord will listen to us, also thanks to the Pope's prayer and to the prayers of all the faithful in the world...Asia Bibi confides in the Pope's prayer and asks the Holy Father to pray for her and for her liberation. She lives her imprisonment with great faith and entrusts herself to the Lord every day")

Isham (**UPDATE**: accompanied her father to [Vatican City](#))

Joseph Nadeem (Renaissance Education Foundation executive director, **UPDATE**: said "the lawyers are taking care of the appeal and we are awaiting a date for the hearing, which let us hope happens as soon as possible. This family lives the drama of the imprisonment of an innocent wife and mother. We have full confidence in the rule of law and the Pakistani judiciary. We are convinced that we can prove to the Supreme Court Asia Bibi's innocence")

Pakistan: Illahi Abad neighborhood, Faisalabad

Six Christians was accused of blasphemy after they allegedly prevented a Muslim from spray painting an Islamic proclamation on a wall

Fayaz Masih

Riaz Masih

Intiaz Masih

Sarfraz Masih

Saqib Masih

Mrs Riaz

Pervez Hayat (activist, said “It was actually an issue over kite flying which was purposely turned into a religious dispute. Earlier, Christian and Muslim children got into a fight over catching a kite in the street which later involved the elders of the two communities. To teach the Christians a lesson, the Muslims of the area damaged Bible verses which were painted on the outside wall of the Khushkhabri Church. Muslims wanted to paint a name of an Islamic political party over the verses, but the Christians reacted to it and the issue turned into a religious dispute”)

Pakistan: Lahore

Patras Masih (aged 17, son of Inderyas Masih, cousin of Sajid Masih, cell phone lost then used to post blasphemous content to his Facebook account, went into hiding on [February 19, 2018](#), a mob of more than 3,000 gathers to demand his lynching and the burning of Christian homes if he was not arrested, 800 Christian families fled their homes and received word they had been looted, surrendered to police to save his family and neighbors; **UPDATE**: interrogated in the presence of his cousin at the Federal Investigation Agency office)

Sajid Masih (aged 24, cousin of Patras Masih, college janitor, arrested by the Federal Investigation Agency under suspicion that he had blasphemous content on his cell phone, no such content found, hospitalized in critical condition after falling from a fourth floor window at the FIA office, said in a video recording "I asked why they were beating me, what have I done that was wrong. They started roundly beating me again and told me they were hitting me because I was the 'cousin of that boy' [Patras Masih]. They told us to insult each other by using the word 'Laanti' [men under a curse], my frightened young cousin complied under great duress. They asked me to remove my cousin's trousers and have oral sex with him. I refused outright. I explained that I can't have oral sex with him because he is my brother, but my pleas made them angry. They then started shouting loudly at both of us. I saw a window in the room and quickly jumped out of it. After this they [FIA officers] downstairs asked why I had jumped from the window, at the time I was semi-conscious. But I could hear everything", was later charged with the crime of attempted suicide)

Wilson Chowdhry (Chairman of the British Pakistani Christian Association, **UPDATE**: wrote "This news has shattered what little confidence I had in Pakistan's security forces...The sadistic actions of the FIA officers are in breach of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment which Pakistan has ratified as a nation...They also breach sexual harassment laws and are an alarming testament to the sexual deviation that we have long said exists within the Muslim population of Pakistan, due to sexual repression in Islam and the brutal uninspected madrassa training centers across Pakistan where sexual assault is commonplace...The audacity of the FIA to place suicide charges on a man simply trying to escape torture...is a risible act")

Michelle Chaudhry (President of the Cecil & Irish Chaudhry Foundation, **UPDATE**: said “We are outraged, shocked and horrified by the alleged behavior of the FIA Cybercrime Wing officials. We demand that this incident be investigated at the earliest and firm action be taken against the officials involved. These acts of brutality cannot be overlooked...A fair

trial is every citizen's right regardless of faith, cast or gender; this kind of extreme hostility and inhuman behavior during investigation is unacceptable and uncalled for and has to end. We demand that the Government look into this on priority and fulfill its responsibility to protect the life and dignity of every single Pakistani")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63799->

[ASIA PAKISTAN Asia Bibi s family at the Vatican The Pope will pray for us a
nd with us](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63799-)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-man-told-to-strip-and-give-oral-sex-to-his-cousin-accused-of-blasphemy-leaps-from-fourth>

[http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-jumps-from-fourth-floor-during-the-interrogation-in-Lahore.-Activists-ask-for-a-fair-trial-\(Video\)-43203.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-jumps-from-fourth-floor-during-the-interrogation-in-Lahore.-Activists-ask-for-a-fair-trial-(Video)-43203.html)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christians-fast-to-save-young-man-wounded-during-an-interrogation-43213.html>

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/blasphemy-accused-critically-injured-after-allegedly-attempting-to-escape/>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/pakistan-blasphemy-suspect-says-he-jumped-from-fourth-floor-to-escape-forced-sex-act/>

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/tension-arisen-in-faisalabads-neighborhood-after-blasphemy-law-invoked-against-six-christians/>

Saturday February 24, 2018



China: Jiangmen, Guangdong province

Ruan Haoan (husband of Luo Caixia, father of two, church greeter, hotel chef, detained in **June 2017** for false illegal cult activity, released after a month; **UPDATE**: said "When I came out, I went to work at the original hotel. They would not hire me, saying I was a cultist. None of the big hotels wanted me either. After checking my ID, they said they knew I had been detained and was in a cult. Some hotels asked me to wait for a response at home, but I never got an answer. Now, I can only work in a small restaurant for minimum wage", said he cannot support his family)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/02/christian-chef-blocked-from-jobs.html>



Nigeria

Rebecca Bitrus (wife, mother of Zachariah and Joshua, abducted by Boko Haram in [August 2014](#), miscarried, pretended to convert to Islam to save Zachariah after Joshua was killed following her first refusals, said “I was never convinced about Islam. I kept my trust in the Lord and I was praying the rosary with my fingers. I am convinced that the prayer of the rosary saved me from captivity”; forced into an Islamic marriage, repeatedly raped, gave birth to Christopher on [December 25, 2015](#); rescued along with her two sons by the Nigerian military in [2016](#), reunited with her husband; **UPDATE**: met with Pope Francis in [Vatican City](#), said “I am convinced about Jesus' teaching on forgiveness...even on the cross Jesus forgave those who inflicted pain to him”)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/former-boko-haram-captive-shares-harrowing-tale-of-faith-forgiveness-27861>

Sunday February 25, 2018



China: Nanjing, Jiangsu province

Dr Li Baiguang (aged 49, human rights attorney, told on [May 31, 2013](#) that he has not passed the Beijing Justice Bureau's annual review, cannot renew his license to practice law, no reason given; abducted by 10 Communist Party agents in [Wenling, Zhejiang province](#) on [October 17, 2017](#), taken to a forest, beaten 'severely', threatened with death by dismemberment; **UPDATE: hospitalized with a stomachache, died hours later despite no previous health issues**, official cause of death was given as liver failure, death viewed as suspicious by other activists and Christians)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/02/renowned-christian-human-rights-lawyer.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/02/reuters-death-of-chinese-rights-lawyer.html>



Kazakhstan: Kyzylorda

Pastor Serik Bisembayev (aged 47, worship service in his wife's home raided by police without warrant, 30 worshippers were all questioned and video recorded, religious items seized, detained for fingerprinting and alcohol testing, asked why he had become a Christian and not a Muslim, told he would be investigated for 'inciting discord' which carried a 10 year maximum sentence)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2364



Iraq: Naeriyah district, Bagdad

Samer Jajjo (aged 27, husband, father of two, paint shop employee, **stabbed to death** in front of his home)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Archbishop-of-Kirkuk-remembers-Mgr-Rahho%E2%80%99s-martyrdom,-an-example-of-faith-for-Iraqi-Christians-43240.html>



Congo, Democratic Republic: Kinshasa

Fr Jean Claude Tabu (described an attack on people protesting the continued postponement of elections in which four were killed “Security forces blocked the roads around the churches. They came in and threw tear gas canisters into churches. They used live ammunition”)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/four-dead-after-catholic-lay-committee-protests-in-congo-23717>



Central African Republic: near Markoundia

Gabriel Ole (aged 66, husband, father of seven, church elder, relief worker, **killed** along with five other relief workers)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/03/central-african-republic-church-elder-among-six-aid-workers-hacked-to-death/>



Nigeria: Durumi, near Garki, Abuja Federal Capital Territory

A church service was disrupted by unknown gunmen for 30 minutes in the capital

Rabo Danboyi (security officer, shot in the leg, hospitalized)

Stephen Markus (aged 35, described the attack “Rabo Danboyi, the security officer manning the entrance into our church, was shot and injured on the leg by the gunmen, and he’s currently being treated at the Federal Medical Centre here in Abuja. When we heard gunshots and bullets hitting church walls, we all ran out in different directions. Some said

the attackers were Boko Haram terrorists who attacked us but were resisted by our church's security guards")

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/02/kidnapping-christian-girls-kaduna-nigeria-leads-casualties-area-christians-say/>

Monday February 26, 2018



India: West Champaran district, Bihar state

Two Christians were attacked on a bus while travelling to a prayer meeting, hospitalized

Rev D Joseph

Baldev Singh

Shibu Thomas (founder of Persecution Relief, **UPDATE:** described the attack "no one intervened to help them while they begged for help. A traffic agent tried to calm spirits, but he was turned away by the angry mob")

Rev Mariosh Joseph (said "It was evident from the mob that it was a pre-planned attack. There was a media person present to record and publish the entire episode in the media, along with the Hindu extremist mob...They told the Christians that they were visiting to lure the innocent and poor villagers with money and benefits and fool them into becoming Christians...Even being in a public place, no one came to their rescue, and passersby were mere spectators as the mob beat both the Christians mercilessly, while the other Christian teammates cried for help...Some of the women got so frightened that they fled the site and returned home from the bus station itself without attending the camp...The right-wing groups are specially instructed to hit in a way that they do not bleed anyone externally, but cause gruesome injuries internally...The police in most of the cases are biased and try to see how they can frame the victims, rather than doing the other way around...Though such an incident of violence against the Christian believers happened, the meeting continued, and the people were blessed and inspired by the Word of God")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Bihar,-Pentecostal-pastor-attacked-for-'forced-conversions'-43221.html>

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/03/hindu-extremists-eastern-india-attack-christians-coming-off-bus/>



Pakistan: Lahore

Sajid Masih (aged 24, cousin of Patras Masih, arrested by the Federal Investigation Agency under suspicion that he had blasphemous content on his cell phone, no such content found, hospitalized in critical condition on [February 23, 2018](#) after jumping from a fourth floor window at the FIA office to escape a coerced sexual assault on his cousin, was later charged with the crime of attempted suicide; **UPDATE**: reported to have received inadequate medical treatment)

Khalid Shehzad (activist, **UPDATE**: reported to have said that Sajid Masih and Patras Masih belonged to a social media group which “had 16 members but only Christians of the group are being interrogated”)

Safaniya Masih (reported to have said that land disputes were likely behind the blasphemy accusation against Patras Masih, also reported on an attempt by Muslims to tear down a cross that belonged to his church “We were not here but those who were left resisted and did not allow it to be brought down. A few girls were coming back when some boys shouted that sooner or later the houses of Christians would be set on fire. But we are hopeful that God will be with us and keep us safe in this troubled time”)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/pakistan-blasphemy-suspect-says-he-jumped-from-fourth-floor-to-escape-forced-sex-act/>



Russia

Patriarch Kirill aka Vladimir Mikhailovich Gundayev (threatened with death by the Islamic State (ISIL) along with President Vladimir Putin)

<http://orthochristian.com/111035.html>



Nigeria: Kasuwan Magani, Kaduna state

Two Christian teen girls were abducted by Muslims and forced to convert, some Christians attempted to rescue them, the Muslims defeated the rescue and then attacked Christian homes and businesses, killing 12 and injuring 20

James Madaki (aged 50, described the incident “The case was reported to the police, and the girls were not rescued, so [after 2 weeks] some Christians decided to rescue the girls, but the Muslims in the town attacked them. The Muslims did not just attack the Christians that went to rescue the girls, but also went round town attacking Christians they sighted and burned houses belonging to Christians...As I talk to you, 12 Christians have been killed and 20 others injured and are being taken to hospitals in the city of Kaduna. The names of those killed are not readily available to me at the moment, but I can confirm to you that they are Christians killed in the Christian area of the town”)

Omega Funom (texted “The crisis here occurred because two Christian underage girls were kidnapped and forced to become Muslims by some Muslims in this town. This is the practice by Muslims in Kaduna state. They abduct small Christian girls and force them to become Muslims, and when Christians reject this, they attack them to create the impression that there’s a religious crisis...The Assembly of God Church was burnt down. Muslims were armed with AK-47 guns as they attacked Christians. This is a Jihad by the Muslims”)

Rev John Hayap (Christian Association of Nigeria, said “There have been such forceful conversion of teenage Christian girls by Muslim leaders in northern Nigeria, and the Nigerian government has not been able to put an end to this. I feel very sad about such violence on Christians, but what more can we do than to pray and ask for God’s intervention. We’ll continue to preach peace and tolerance in our churches no matter the level of provocation from our Muslim neighbors”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/02/kidnapping-christian-girls-kaduna-nigeria-leads-casualties-area-christians-say/>



United States - Colorado

Greta Lindecrantz (jailed in contempt of court for refusing to testify against a man sentenced to death)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/colorado-bishops-support-religious-freedom-of-jailed-mennonite-85775>

Tuesday February 27, 2018



Taiwan: Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages, Sanmin district, Kaohsiung

Sr Beatrice Leung Kit-fun (research professor, reported to have opposed a Vatican agreement with the Chinese government after it published the new restrictions on religion "That shows the country runs counter to religious freedom. Any agreement signed under such circumstances is contrary to what really happens in China. Signing an agreement is give and take, but now only the Vatican is giving...I have talked to Hong Kong leftists who said that China's politics are like a wordless book, but the Holy See usually knows about China through files, which in many cases are translated into Chinese from Italian and lose their original meaning...Europeans regard the communist moderates, holding cups to talk about politics, allowing multi-party politics, and even members of a communist party

having religious beliefs, but it is totally different in China, which is a one-party dictatorship. That's why Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo recently said that China can best reflect Catholic social doctrine, which shows a failure to understand China")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/taipei-archbishop-pours-cold-water-on-vatican-china-deal/81613>



China

Christians spoke on the proposed constitutional change that would remove term limits on President Xi Jinping

China: northeast of the country

Fr John (reported to have said "Xi does not arrange his successor and even Premier Li Keqiang is retained only to be a display. What is the impact on the church? Only worse! Xi is following Mao's leftist line, which is hostile to religions, especially 'Western' religions")

Paul (reported to have said "The influence will be great. If he [President Xi Jinping] wants to be a dictatorship, he will suppress those opposing him, including religion. That is exactly what Mao Zedong was doing. [The underground church under such a political atmosphere] can only be a slaughtered lamb")

China: Chinese University of Hong Kong

Ying Fuk-tsang (divinity school director, reported to have quoted the proposal as having "indirectly said that Xi Jinping's religious policy will continue, that the government's control will be more stringent")

China: Sichuan province

Fr David (open church member, reported to have said President Xi Jinping will become "a second Putin", added that the Chinese government has been deceiving the Vatican in their current negotiations)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/xi-jinping-dictatorship-worries-chinese-catholics/81653>



Indonesia: Banda Aceh, Sumatra

Two Christians were convicted of gambling despite the assurance that Islamic law would not be imposed on non-Muslims when it was passed

Dahlan Sili Tongga (aged 61, sentenced to eight lashes, sentence executed)

Tjia Nyuk Hwa (aged 45, sentenced to seven lashes, sentence executed)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-couple-sentenced-to-flogging-for-gambling-in-Aceh-43223.html>



Malaysia: Putrajaya

The Supreme Court dismissed an appeal by four Christian converts from Islam who had been denied the right to change their religion in the official document

Tiong Choo Ting (convert)

Jenny Peter (convert)

Salina Jau (convert)

Vanessa Elizabeth (convert)

Archbishop Simon Peter Poh (jostled by a crowd shouting “Allahu akbar” [“Allah is greater”] as he left the courthouse, surrounded and protected by other Muslims, later said “I am sure you heard the news... There were many good Muslims who were there to escort me safely out to the courthouse, including Sarawak’s Islamic Information Center chief executive officer Zabariah Matali, who is also a personal friend”)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/malaysian-federal-court-refuses-four-people-right-affirm-christian-identity/>

<http://malaysiandigest.com/frontpage/29-4-tile/725407-video-muslims-protecting-catholic-bishop-as-crowd-chants-allah-hu-akbar-a-heartwarming-reminder-of-malaysian-unity.html>



Bangladesh: Kularua, Moulovibazar

Sr M Madeleine MC (stabbed in the hand while returning from a bank)

Fr Sagor Louis Rozario OMI (reported on the stabbing of Sr M Madeleine “Together with another missionary she had gone to the bank to withdraw money necessary for the maintenance of the center. On the way back they were stopped by four unknown men, who approached them on board a motorcycle and a CNG [typical Bengali motor rickshaw with three wheels]. The criminals tried to steal the bag. Faced with the refusal of Sr M Madeleine, they unsheathed a knife and stabbed her in her left hand. The thieves abandoned her as she screamed in pain. Some passers-by rescued her and took her to the hospital. She lost a lot of blood and three stitches were needed“)

Boniface Khongla (secretary of the Justice and Peace Commission of the diocese of Sylhet, expressed “concern for the attack against a sister of Mother Teresa. In the diocese the missionaries manage two centers for the needy and forgotten people, for the most part

Muslims and Hindus. The religious serve those who are neglected by society. Who will serve them in the future if they are persecuted?“(

<http://mattersindia.com/2018/02/missionary-nun-stabbed-by-thieves/>



India: Chitrangapalli, Tangaguda village, Malkangiri district, Orissa state

Christian neighbors were beaten unconscious when they attempted to protect a Christian family from Hindu radicals, six were hospitalized

Sukra Markhami (husband, father of 13 year old Savitha, home attacked by Hindu radicals after he refused the radicals' demand that he pay US\$77 to bury his 3 years old daughter within the town, beaten unconscious, home burned to the ground)

Debe Nande (wife of Sukra Markhami, mother of 13 year old Savitha, home attacked by Hindu radicals after he refused the radicals' demand that he pay US\$77 to bury her 3 years old daughter within the town, escaped)

Nandi Madkami (aged 45, aunt of Savitha Markhami, beaten, threatend with being burned with gasoline)

Savitha Markhami (aged 13, daughter of Sukra Markhami, beaten unconscious when she attempted to save her aunt from being burned with gasoline, hospitalized, home burned to the ground)

Ganga Madkami (father of Sukra Markhami, beaten, hospitalized, right hand fractured)

Jaga Madkami (aged 52, brother of Sukra Deba Markhami, beaten, hospitalized, cycle destroyed, US\$153 stolen)

Danga Madkami (aged 45, beaten, leg fractured)

Enka Pusham (said “As they were attempting to burn her, Nandi’s 13-year-old daughter [Savitha] ran to her rescue”)

Fr Manoj Kumar Nayak (said "In Orissa there is still hatred and discrimination against Christians, and there are failings to meet the legitimate needs of Christian minorities")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63846->

[ASIA INDIA New violence and harassment against Christians in Orissa](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63846-)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/03/christians-seriously-injured-after-attempted-burial-in-eastern-india/>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/03/india-six-christians-injured-following-hindu-attack-over-babys-burial/>



Pakistan: Lahore

Shunila Ruth (wife of Clarence Rufin, member of the Punjab provincial parliament, **UPDATE:** spoke in parliament regarding the Federal Investigation Agency beating and attempted sexual assault of Sajid Masih, said “It shouldn’t be that FIA investigate their personnel who tortured and used these inhumane investigation techniques”)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/pakistan-blasphemy-suspect-says-he-jumped-from-fourth-floor-to-escape-forced-sex-act/>



Tajikistan: Yavan Prison

Daniil Islamov (aged 18, conscientious objector, forcibly conscripted in [April 2017](#) despite serious health issues; sentenced in [Qurghonteppa, Khatlon region](#) on [October 13, 2017](#) to six months' imprisonment; Supreme Court in [Dushanbe](#) sent his case back to court on [November 28, 2017](#) due to 'mistakes in the decision' but did not cite those mistakes; **UPDATE:** still in prison, location unknown)

Pastor Bakhrom Kholmatov (arrested in [Khujand](#) on [April 10, 2017](#) by the NSC secret police on charges of 'extremism'; reported on [July 14, 2017](#) to have been sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment for 'singing extremist songs in church and so inciting religious hatred', friends and family threatened with arrest if they disclose details of the trial; **UPDATE:** still in prison)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2357



Nigeria: Gwamba village, Adamawa state

Fulani Muslims killed 20 Christians

Rev Haruna Enoch (**killed**)

Sam Zadock (political party spokesman, **killed with machete blows**)

Margaret Inusa Habu (texted a description of the murder of Sam Zadock)

Tada Miwa (texted that her brother was missing but then returned home)

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

Wednesday February 28, 2018



China: Nanyang, Henan province

Ms Wang (reported that the local government has banned private worship in homes “Some of the house church members did not register with the Three-Self Churches, and government officials showed up and inspected their houses. Some brothers and sisters have been too scared to gather. Some split into smaller groups and continue to meet”)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/03/henan-increases-pressure-on-house.html>



India: Madhya Pradesh state

Fr Victor Mundargi (aged 40, arrested and jailed in [Tappa village, Dewas district, Madhya Pradesh state](#) on [March 14, 2016](#) on charges of raping a 10-year-old girl, denied bail, the allegations came entirely from social media; **UPDATE**: acquitted for lack of evidence)

India: Malayattoor, Kerala state

Fr Xavier Thelekat (aged 52, **stabbed to death** by a former church employee)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-priest-jailed-for-rape-acquitted-after-two-years/81675>

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63834->

[ASIA INDIA Indian priest Rector of a shrine stabbed to death in Kerala](#)



United States – Pennsylvania: Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Lake Ingle (college senior, religious studies major, accused of classroom disruption and barred from the class “Christianity 481: Self, Sin, and Salvation” after he stated there are only two genders, will not be able to graduate unless he is re-instated)

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/blogs/christian-booted-from-class-on-christianity...for-opposing-transgenderism>

February 2018, date unknown

Today's Martyrs

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