

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>



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-ezzor-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")

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



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 Bazyar

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>

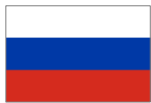


United States – Oklahoma: University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond

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>

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/>



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>

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

<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



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



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**)

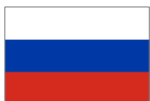
Kevin Shari (teacher, **killed**)

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/>



Russia: Kizlyar, Dagestan

An Islamic State supporter opened fire on worshippers as they left a church, killing 5 and wounding 4

Fr Pavel (said "We had finished the liturgy and were beginning to leave the church. A bearded man ran towards the church shouting 'Allahu Akbar' - 'God is greatest' - and killed four people [a fifth died later]. He was carrying a rifle and a knife")

Vera (shot dead)

Lyudmila (shot dead)

Nadezhda (shot dead)

Irina (shot dead)

Vera (shot dead)

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>
and <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/five-women-shot-dead-outside-church-in-dagestan-immediately-after-rite-of-forgiveness/>
and <http://orthochristian.com/110856.html>



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_und_erway_while_the_Country_prepares_to_vote](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63783-<u>AFRICA_DR_CONGO_The_Bishops_A_campaign_of_defamation_of_the_Church_und_erway_while_the_Country_prepares_to_vote</u>)

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 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/>

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")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/hindu-attacks-onchristians-double-in-india/81570>
<https://www.ucanews.com/news/probe-call-as-court-acquits-accused-in-go-cross-vandalism/81593>



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

Christians in Henan province have reportedly been warned to not display poetic couplets on their homes for Chinese New Year

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

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: Puyang diocese, Henan province

Fr John (said Christians in his area had received verbal warning to not display couplets)

China: Xuliang, Bo'ai county, Henan province

Fr Peter (saw village cadres prohibiting Christians from displaying couplets, 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>



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>

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")

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

[ASIA PAKISTAN Asia Bibi s family at the Vatican The Pope will pray for us and with us](#)

February 2018, date unknown

Today's Martyrs

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