

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – March 2018

Friday March 2, 2018



Congo, Democratic Republic: near Biyenge village, Kasai district

Fr Florent Mbulanthie Tulantshiedi (aged 46, **found dead** in a boat on the Kasai river, appeared to have been strangled)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/63852-AFRICA_DR_CONGO_Mysterious_death_of_a_religious



United Kingdom: Brixton

Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chief Executive of Christian Concerns, **UPDATE:** wrote regarding the case of Pastor Paul Song "...A common thread in such cases is the way in which the authorities, when exposed for their wrong doing, distort the facts [which often become 'established facts' on which unfair judgments are founded]...the Muslim Chaplain to Brixton Prison, had stated categorically to Pastor Song that he wanted to "wipe out the Christian domination" at Brixton. But for our exposure of what is going on, Christian witness within the prison may well have been wiped out...We have also spoken to numerous other Christian groups who have volunteered in Brixton for over a decade, leading Alpha courses, Christian drama courses, prayer groups and other vital ministries, only to have since been told that they can no longer continue at the prison. Some of them wish to remain anonymous out of fear, though they all tell the same story. Their courses ran smoothly until Imam Mohammed Ahmed took over as Senior Chaplain in 2015. From then on, one by one, their ministries were shut down. Different reasons were given. Some were told that there was no longer a demand for their course, despite them regularly being oversubscribed. For others, procedural minutiae prevented them from continuing. For others, Imam Mohammed Ahmed made it so clear they were no longer welcome that they felt intimidated and left...There is nothing at all to show at any point that the Imam has not simply made this up. In an atmosphere which prisoners have described as having a

‘militant Muslim’ feel, where we have signed statements showing that forced conversions are also happening by radicalized Muslim gangs, we should not be surprised that a radical Imam would attempt to have Pastor Song removed from Brixton...")

<http://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/freedom/andrea-calls-out-hmp-brixton-governor>

Saturday March 3, 2018



Pakistan: Village 77/4R, Sahiwal district, Punjab province

Pastor Cecil Daniel (church attacked, said "More than two dozen men carrying sticks forced their way into the church and beat up Christian worshippers. Women and children are among those who have been injured in the attack")

George Masih (aged 70, father of Babar, beaten while supervising the construction of a wall around his church)

Babar Masih (aged 22, son of George Masih, beaten with an axe, hospitalized)

William Masih (son of George Masih, beaten, hospitalized)

Nasreen (daughter of George Masih, beaten)

Jamila (daughter-in-law of George Masih, beaten)

Mubarak Masih (human rights activist, said "Although this was a matter of personal enmity, the attackers found it convenient to enter the church and beat up worshippers. The village has around 200 Christian families who are confined to their homes over fear of further violence")

Sami Minhas (chairman of the Muthida [United] Christian Movement in Sahiwal, said "The incident took place during a worship service but the police are treating it as a land dispute between two parties...[Christians] are also told that if they would seek filing of blasphemy charges against the perpetrators, then blasphemy cases would be filed against them as well, as there had been requests [to do so] from local mosques")

Aftab Gill (Christian Masiha Millat Party [MMP], **UPDATE:** said "The attacks have become so frequent that it has become difficult to keep count. The Punjab government has failed in its constitutional duty to protect the rights of Christians living in the province")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/mob-attacks-christian-worshippers-in-pakistan/81701>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/03/pakistan-christian-family-attacked-helping-build-church-wall/>

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/muslim-mob-attacks-innocent-christians-while-worshipping-at-church-in-sahiwal>



Central African Republic: Bangui

Fr Barwende Medard Sane SJ (Catholic University Center director, reported that "The clashes in the capital are serious, but represent an exception. Life is relatively normal in Bangui...Since the dissolution of the Seleka movement and the anti-Balaka movement at least 14 factions have emerged that continuously clash with each other for the control of the territory and mineral and natural resources [gold, uranium, timber]. This creates a climate of general insecurity that has serious consequences on the civilian population")

http://www.fides.org/en/news/63842-AFRICA_CENTRAL_AFRICA_Instability_and_general_violence_the_Church_s_commitment_to_solidarity_and_peace

Sunday March 4, 2018



China: Hangzhou Qiandao Lake, Zhejiang province

Zhu Yufu (aged 65, arrested in 1998; released in 2006; arrested in May 2007; released in 2009; arrested on March 5, 2011 for his poem It's Time; **UPDATE**: released from prison, placed under house arrest at a vacation resort, in ill health)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/03/democracy-advocate-released-immediately.html>



India: Kotwali Laksar village, Uttarakhand state

Rev Vipin Kumar (detained by police for 8 hours after Hindu radicals interrupted a prayer meeting, released without charge)

India: Aligonda, Orissa state

Fr Ayit Kumar Nayak (reported on the destruction of a religious statue "I pray for the little flock in the parish of Aligonda. The head of the statue of Mother Mary has been destroyed. We are upset and saddened. We are praying for the people who carried out this gesture consciously and unconsciously. We forgive them. God bless them. This is my request: let us respect each other and respect each other's faith")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Uttarakhand-pastor-arrested-and-then-released-without-charges-43261.html>

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63851->

[ASIA INDIA A statue dedicated to the Virgin Mary destroyed the faithful forgive the vandals](#)



United Kingdom

Bishop Gavin Ashenden (**UPDATE:** wrote an essay on the demands of Christian baptism "...And here is the dilemma for the Church of England. A state Church wedded to a state that hates Christian virtue and Christian ethics: a state that has begun to criminalize Christian witness as hate speech, where police arrest street preachers and have them thrown in prison at the push of a SJW's phone button: a state that has begun preparations to remove children from their Christian homes if social workers detect what they improperly label 'homophobia' in the parents: a state where Christian teachers are expelled and sacked if they do not endorse the secular brainwashing on the fluidity of gender...Faced with this kind of state, it does not require a subtle reading of Scripture to observe that the gap between the world and Church has grown wide and fierce in our generation. And as always when this happens Christians have to choose between the vigorous and sometimes brutal demands of allegiance the state imposes to cow and tame them, or the faithful witness to Jesus which comes with an increasing and painful cost...")

<https://ashenden.org/2018/03/04/meghan-markle-justin-welby-the-use-and-abuse-of-baptism/>

Monday March 5, 2018



United States – Pennsylvania: Bloomsburg

Lisa Boucher (bridal shop co-owner, reported to have announced the closure of the shop due the imminent passage of an ordinance that would prohibit her religious refusal to cater to same sex weddings, "So what they [the LGBT community] did was got enough people to run for town council and they had a lot of the kids from [Bloomsburg University] vote those members in so a law could be passed. We actually have a document from the Democratic Committee here pretty much saying that there is going to be a fight with W.W. Bridal...We are closing and this is our livelihood. At this point, we don't have any plans of what to do in the future. We are kind of just resting on God's Word and hoping that He is going to pull us through it and open some sort of doors. I am sure He has

blessings and will take us to wherever He wants us to serve, whether it be in our church or volunteer locally")

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-bridal-shop-closes-down-over-fear-of-lgbt-law-after-facing-death-threats-220306/>

Tuesday March 6, 2018



Greece: Neapolis district, Thessaloniki

Metropolitan Barnabas Tyriss (aged 60, office attacked with a firebomb)

<http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/terrorist-attack-committed-at-metropolis-headquarters-in-thessaloniki/>



Canada: Hamilton, Ontario

Event: A Christian couple were fired as foster parents after they refused an order to tell the children in their care that the Easter Bunny was real, filed suit in [April 2017](#) against the agency to remove the negative reference from their file; **UPDATE: the court found that the agency had violated their religious and other freedoms, ordered the agency to disclose the court's ruling to other agencies when the couple sought a reference**

Derek Baars (husband of Frances Baars)

Frances Baars (wife of Derek Baars)

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/court-vindicates-christians-who-lost-foster-girls-for-refusing-to-say-easte>

Wednesday March 7, 2018



Canada: Toronto, Ontario

Mary Wagner (arrested on [December 8, 2017](#) for entering an abortion clinic waiting room and handing out roses and pro-life literature; **UPDATE**: released on bail)

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/pro-life-activist-mary-wagner-freed-on-bail-after-3-months-in-jail>

Thursday March 8, 2018



Philippines

Church leaders reported to have commented on the possibility of terror acts during the upcoming Holy Week

Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo (**UPDATE**: said "there are always groups out to make trouble")

Fr Jerome Secillano (**UPDATE**: said "the public should be vigilant lest we become victims of possible terror acts. [The police] should improve and make intelligence gathering efficient and truly reliable")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippines-on-alert-for-holy-week-terror-attacks/81736>



Indonesia: Palembang

Archbishop Aloysius Sudarso SCJ (condemned the vandalism of a newly consecrated chapel "Last March 4 I had blessed the new chapel situated in a village in an isolated area, a three-hour journey from the parish. It was a celebration in an atmosphere of supreme cordiality, with the heartfelt participation of village leaders, civil authorities, Muslim religious leaders. The church was built following all the regulations and the necessary legal process. This act of gratuitous violence surprises us, but we believe it is the work of few radical members who want to fuel, here and throughout Indonesia, religious hatred, intolerance and violence...The police are investigating. Acts of desecration like this are perceived as a shame for the whole society...we are saddened by this act but the solidarity received by many Muslims consoles us")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63874->

[ASIA INDONESIA Acts of vandalism on a newly inaugurated Catholic chapel in Sumatra](#)



Iraq: al-Mashtal neighborhood, Bagdad

A Christian family was stabbed to death in a targeted robbery

Dr Hisham Shafiq al-Maskuni (aged 61, husband of Shaza Malik, **stabbed to death**)

Shaza Malik (wife of Dr Hisham Shafiq al-Maskuni, daughter of Khairiya Dawood, **stabbed to death**)

Khairiya Dawood (mother of Shaza Malik, **stabbed to death**)

Fr Biyos Qasha (said "We are seen as a lamb to be killed at any time")

Rayan al-Kldani (said "This crime has only one message. Frightening our people and forcing them to leave the country")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Chaldean-patriarchate-mourns-latest-victims-of-anti-Christian-violence-in-Baghdad-43330.html>

<http://www.aina.org/news/20180310110029.htm>

<http://www.aina.org/news/20180311125028.htm>



Central African Republic: Bangassou

Bishop Juan Jose Aguirre Munos MCCJ (Spanish citizen, described on [August 31, 2017](#) how his seminary in has taken in 2,000 Muslims who feared death at the hands of the anti-balaka militia; **UPDATE**: is about to return to his diocese from Spain, said that the Muslim refugees at the seminary have been starved by the anti-balaka blockade and sexually exploited by the UN peacekeepers "They are desperate, they die of hunger...I told him [UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres] that there are women who are raped, some of whom are minors, and that was a crime against humanity. An investigation has been opened, but nothing has changed. This is not the first time UN soldiers behave in this way. In 2015, a group of Congolese peacekeepers were expelled for offering lentil boxes in exchange for sex", added that anti-balaka dismember their victims ["The hearts or internal organs of the victims are torn because they say that in this way they steal their souls"] and spoke of himself "The Catholic Church is the last to turn off the light. We cannot leave. I do not sleep well, I am stressed. Every time I prayed I heard the explosion of bombs and gusts of machine guns. I had moments of psychological fragility and that is why I had to take a break")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/63871->

[AFRICA CENTRAL AFRICA Bishop of Bangassou Sexual abuse and violence committed by the Blue Helmets against refugee women](#)



Nigeria: Kaduna state

Sunny Isa (youth, reported to have said “They called us ‘infidels’. “They also said we are ‘poor’ and that’s why they date our girls and convert them to Islam and marry them. These insults and humiliation from the Muslim boys has been going on for long, so we decided to constitute a committee to stop our girls from dating Muslims, since Muslim girls are even prohibited from dating Christians”)

Rev Danlami Gajere (reported to have commented on violence between Christians and Muslims over Muslims dating Christian girls “They [Muslim boys] date Christian girls and sleep with them and come to mock the Christians. They will tell us that they sleep with our wives and our daughters and call us ‘infidels’. On the other hand it is an abomination for Muslim girls to date Christian girls. ‘Who are you to date a Muslim girl!’ They don’t even have regard for non-Muslims. That’s the reason why Christian youths constituted a committee to stop Christian girls from dating Muslims – to avoid the insults and humiliation”)

Rev Makama Mazadu (reported to have said “I was called by the Sarkin Kajuru [traditional ruler] for a meeting. When I went to the meeting, I saw a lady in hijab. The Sarki told me that as CAN chairman, he wants to tell me that the lady named Alheri wants to convert to Islam ... that she is [now] a Muslim and they wanted to let me know. I told him that this is unacceptable because I cannot handle this alone. I requested to take the girl along with me, but he said I can’t go with the girl as she was already a Muslim. He said the Muslims had agreed that whoever wants to convert to Islam should, within eight to ten hours be converted”)

Sunday “Sunny” Oibe (Public Relations Officer for the Christian Association of Nigeria, **UPDATE:** reported to have said “Abducted girls are always taken to the palaces of some traditional rulers, where the conversion and marriage takes place and when the matter is reported to the police, nothing is done to bring the culprits to justice. Why do Muslims find it convenient to marry Christian girls but [they] will not allow their own daughters to marry Christians? We must discourage [this]. Nigeria has a constitution and laws, but the only thing is that our security agencies are not living up to expectations. That is why this issue of abduction and forceful conversation has continued. The police should be able to arrest and prosecute all those doing this”)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/03/bloody-clashes-in-kaduna-as-christian-youths-resist-dating-and-conversion-of-christian-girls/>

Friday March 9, 2018



Syria

Cardinal Mario Zenari (apostolic nuncio [Vatican ambassador], **UPDATE:** commented on the continued fighting “It's terrible. I always say, it's a massacre of the innocents...the deep wounds, above all in these children, are worse than what is seen...Jesus in his passion sweat blood, from his whole body...[the] blood of the entire Church, the blood of the martyrs. We are in the eighth year of the Passion”)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/syria-is-a-new-massacre-of-the-innocents-nuncio-says-17726>



Nigeria: Bauchi, Yobe state

Bishop Hilary Nanman Dachelem (reported to have spoken on the [February 19, 2018](#) Boko Haram abduction of 110 schoolgirls in [Dapchi](#): "My call is for the government to leave politics aside and bring back these girls: leave politics and protect lives. You do not politicize life, for Christ's sake")

http://www.fides.org/en/news/63876-AFRICA_NIGERIA_Bishop_of_Bauch_i_Leave_politics_aside_Bring_the_abducted_girls_back_home

Saturday March 10, 2018



Iran: Karaj

Mansour Borji (human rights spokesman, reported on the government seizure of a church retreat center “...[it is] not only a takeover of a property by corrupt judiciary and Intelligence officials, but yet another move in an ongoing and systematic campaign by the Iranian state to uproot Protestant Christianity...Labelling a long-standing and vibrant Church with national security charges for its rightful religious activities and accusing them of collusion with the CIA is indeed worrying. It should be a concern for anyone who is interested in safeguarding freedom of religion and belief in this country”, added that churches have been forced to conduct only one service on Sundays “This was an attempt to restrict participation in services, especially for the converts to Christianity, as Sunday

is a weekday and Friday is a day off for many people in the country. Training camps and programs held during the week were shut down too”)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/03/iran-christian-retreat-centre-ordered-close-tomorrow/>



Eritrea: Asmara

Patriarch Abune Antonios (aged 85; **UPDATE**: still under house arrest)

<https://occidentalworld.com/persecuted-christians-and-a-dying-church-in-eritrea/>

Monday March 12, 2018



India: Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh state

Hindu radicals seized land belonging to a Christian hospital

Fr Vineesh Mathew (said “Some 60 masked men armed with cycle chains and pickaxes came with bulldozers around 9 am and broke the front gate of the hospital and fenced off some 2,000 square feet of the hospital land”)

Sr Elsy Jacob (roughed up along with other nuns, said that four nurses were beaten and that the electricity to the hospital was severed “We are operating some sections with the help of a generator”, added that police did not protect the hospital)

<http://mattersindia.com/2018/03/church-hospital-in-ujjain-attacked-nurses-beaten-up/>

March 2018, date unknown

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<http://todaysmartyrs.org/events/>

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