

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – August 2018

Wednesday August 1, 2018



Ukraine: Krasnodon, Donbass region

Sergei Zharkov (church leader, church leader, worship service with 35 parishioners in [Molodogvardeisk, Luhansk region](#) raided by 5 armed men on [June 3, 2018](#), most parishioners were released after giving their personal information, forced to write a statement, building sealed; summoned to a police station on [June 4, 2018](#), 'brutally' questioned, driven around with his eyes covered with a bandage, home searched, phone and other items seized; **UPDATE**: fined US\$127)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2401



Ireland

Niamh Uí Bhriain (Life Institute; **UPDATE**: reported to have commented on government threats to seize Catholic hospitals if they continued to refuse to perform abortions and to force doctors to make abortion referrals "Minister [for Health Simon] Harris has already said he will try to force doctors to take part in the abortion process by insisting that they must refer for abortions, despite the opposition of the National Association of General Practitioners [NAGP] who represent the vast majority of family doctors...This small-minded bullying may well backfire on the Minister. GP services are in crisis because there simply aren't enough doctors in general practice in Ireland, and this is set to worsen as record levels of doctors emigrate and others retire...There are many pro-life doctors who will move to a different area of medicine if Harris tries to force them to refer one of their patients – the preborn child – to be killed. If these GPs, and some Catholic hospitals, are forced out of service by bully tactics on abortion, then already hard-pressed patients will suffer the consequences...That may well be the price the people will be forced to bear for yet another failure of a Minister for Health who seems fixated on abortion instead of real healthcare")

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/irish-bishops-catholic-hospitals-wont-commit-abortion-or-refer-women-for-ab>



United States – Delaware: Pike Creek

Fr William Graney (elderly priest, reported to have been beaten in his office, dowsed with wine and forced to orally ingest compressed air, hospitalized in serious condition)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/man-in-custody-after-delaware-priest-assaulted-66227>

Thursday August 2, 2018



India

AP (convert at aged 38, Afghan citizen, shot in the leg during a [November 2014](#) Taliban attack on an underground church in [Kabul](#), hospitalized, arrested, fled the country to India; **UPDATE:** reported to have suffered persecution from other Afghan refugees)

SI (aged 30, recent convert, Afghan refugee, reported to fear persecution from other Afghan refugees)

India: Bulandi village, Jounpur district, Uttar Pradesh state

Durga Prasad Yadav (criminal complaint lodged against him)

India: Sonapat district, Haryana state

Sajan K George (**UPDATE:** described how a number of families that had recently converted to Christianity were called before an ad hoc village committee and questioned about their conversions: "[The village chiefs] did not appreciate the choice of families and call it 'evil'. They also claim that members of society are not allowed to convert to other religions and that those who have decided to change their religion will have to retrace their steps and explain their reasons. Then they said that the conversions carried out in secret will not be tolerated...a committee of 11 members was convened to investigate the reasons that led families to conversion...Often the community imposes [these meetings] to maintain the discipline of those who transgress tradition. This has the effect of weakening vulnerable Christian families who want to embrace Christ as our Lord and Savior...four families have presented the necessary documents [a declaration by the priest and countersigned by the individual faithful who certifies that the conversion was a free choice and not imposed], while other families are preparing them...[Those Christians who] challenge the diktats of the community are eventually subjected to marginalization and social boycott. The same happens in the states of Chattisgarh and Jharkhand, where

Christians are forced to face the agony of exclusion. The trauma of ostracism by the family is difficult to cope with and even the protection of civil laws does not provide adequate support for the victims")

India: Thangam colony, Anna Nagar district, Chennai, Tamil Nadu state

Rev Sam Raj Kumar (complained of the demolition of a wing of his church to widen a road:

“The church has been here for 50 years. The High Court of Madras [the ancient name of Chennai] still has to announce the verdict on the demolition and instead the demolition has been carried out all the same”)

Sajan K George (**UPDATE:** said after the church wing demolition "in the area there are several [Hindu] temples built in the middle of the road and the traffic is diverted on purpose. The sentiment [of the Hindus] is respected by the government. Why does not it happen when it comes to Christians?")

[http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Chennai,-a-church-demolished-to-widen-a-road.-Brawl-between-policemen-and-faithful-\(Photos\)-44590.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Chennai,-a-church-demolished-to-widen-a-road.-Brawl-between-policemen-and-faithful-(Photos)-44590.html)

<http://asianews.it/news-en/Haryana,-Hindu-families-converted-to-Christianity-risk-marginalization-44572.html>

<https://www.persecution.org/2018/08/06/five-incidents-anti-christian-violence-hit-uttar-pradesh/>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/coe/afghan-convert-to-christianity-flees-but-persecution-follows-him/>



Pakistan: Nabipur village, Sheikhpura district

Vishal Masih (aged 18, severely beaten after defeating a Muslim in an arm wrestling match, family beaten, hospitalized)

<https://www.persecution.org/2018/08/07/pakistani-christian-brutally-beaten-arm-wrestling-match/>

Friday August 3, 2018



Philippines

Fr Edwin A Gariguez (**UPDATE:** reported to have condemned the issuance of arrest warrants for four former members of Congress for the murder of two farmers more than 10 years ago "This is a common strategy of the government and the military to harass and to silence opposition...[a] deplorable tactic")

Sr Mary John Mananzan OSB (**UPDATE:** reported to have said "I personally know these four people and they cannot possibly have done what they are accused of")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/manhunt-for-leftists-alarms-philippine-church-leaders/82985>



Indonesia

Nurul (aged 68, convert, widow, reported to have been abandoned by her family for converting)

Pastor Kongkin (reported to have spoken regarding converts from Islam "The numbers are getting bigger and bigger in many parts of Indonesia. There is steady growth. Yes, the number is growing. I think a lot of Muslims are realizing that Islam is false; they see the bombings and terrorist attacks done in the name of Islam, and they wonder 'Is this it? Is this what I want?'. They realize there has to be a better way, and then they find Christ")

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/elderly-poor-indonesian-woman-turned-away-by-her-muslim-children-because-of-faith-in-jesus-226584/>



United Kingdom: Ferryhill, England

Pastor Richard Smith (forced to resign as mayor [on or about July 4, 2018](#) after outrage over his posting of Biblical statements on his Facebook page; a vote to remove him from the Town Council was defeated on [July 11, 2018](#); **UPDATE:** all remaining charges against him were dismissed for lack of evidence or for political motivation)

<https://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/freedom-of-speech/complaints-dismissed-against-christian-ex-mayor-accused-homophobia>



Ireland

The Irish government was reported to have rejected 100% of Pakistani visa applicants who wanted to attend the World Meeting of Families in Dublin with Pope Francis

Fr Anthony Abrax (parish priest in Karachi, Pakistan, rejected)

Samuel Sarfraz (pharmaceutical employee in Multan, Punjab province, three children denied visas, said "This is a conspiracy to mint money from people who are already marginalized and discriminated against in a Muslim-majority country. If the policy was to reject all Pakistanis, why did they accept [nonrefundable] visa and registration fees for

the world meeting?...We only wanted to see our beloved Holy Father. The refusal affects our prospects of visiting any European country")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistani-families-denied-visas-to-see-pope-francis/82987>

Sunday August 5, 2018



India: Gurdaspur, Punjab state

Anjali Masih (aged 9, recent convert along with her family, abducted by a group of men, **gang raped and strangled with a telephone wire**)

India: Kospundi, Maharashtra state

Gallu Kowasi (badly beaten by Hindu radicals)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/08/well-close-one-church-every-week-indian-christians-told/>

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/08/nine-year-old-indian-girl-from-christian-convert-family-gang-raped-and-murdered/>



Ireland

Bishop Kevin Doran (**UPDATE**: attacked by Minister of Health Simon Harris after he said "There is undoubtedly a place in schools for an appropriate presentation of the church's teachings on human sexuality", Minister Harris tweeted in response "Please just make it stop! Increasing access to & availability of contraception is and will remain public health policy. Religion plays an important role for many on an individual basis – but it will not determine health and social policy in our country any more")

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2018/08/06/varadkar-ill-push-pope-on-accepting-same-sex-families/>

Monday August 6, 2018



China

Fr Shan Ren Shen Fu (alias 'the hermit priest', reported to have written: "Yesterday, a brother priest of mine told me on WeChat: 'Brother, our bishop called me saying to remove the cross and the inscription 'Catholic Church'...There is a parish priest in the diocese who received an order from the organization: the summer catechetical course must be suspended...Then, the Changcheng Biotech vaccine scandal in Changchun exploded. As early as two years ago, with regard to the case of Shandong's 'ineffective vaccine' I wrote at the end of an article: 'In the great debate about 'ineffective vaccines', the most urgent thing to think about is whether this country has lost the truth, and what is the truth that lives in people's hearts? We should find it and retrieve it'...religious faith is the basis for forming people with a righteous conscience. Just as a child is vaccinated to prevent disease, conscience can prevent people from making a mistake in the future. I dare not say that there is no evil among all believers, but we can believe that even a bad believer feels bound in their heart to the law of God...For the child's body there is a problem with vaccines, but for the spirit, the vaccine of faith is rejected. Thus, Chinese children suffer dual damage...As long as the authorities can continue to blindly lie, human life will never be safe...If Chinese children are 'castrated' from an early age and prevented from receiving faith in God that naturally exists in the human spirit, then in a world without God, generation after generation, the tragedies that violate the depths of human consciousness will inevitably continue...")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/A-priest's-pain:-Crosses-destroyed,-ban-on-catechism,-the-vaccine-scandal-44596.html>



Iraq

Archbishop Timotheus Mousa Shamani (**UPDATE**: reported to have said "An international peace-keeping force should be stationed on the Nineveh Plains. We want a guarantee that our freedom and our security will be upheld. We suspect that a group similar to Daesh [ISIL] will evolve in future, whatever it may call itself...This summer is very critical for us. We must make every effort to rebuild these villages. The Iraqi government has already told us that it has no money and will not be helping us. Without the help of church organizations such as Aid to the Church in Need we Christians would not have survived here")

<http://www.aina.org/news/20180806181903.htm>



Ukraine: Alchevsk, Donbass region

Pastor Peter Dudnik (**UPDATE**: church raided during a worship service by men armed with automatic weapons, all were forced to lie on the floor, church computer seized)

Pastor Viktor Koval (church service raided, detained with other church leaders, released)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2401



Sweden: Norrköping

Gorgis Gecizi (church treasurer, church damaged in an arson attack after having received threats, said "I have no words, this is so emotional. Such a shame")

<http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/swedish-police-claim-syrian-orthodox-church-set-ablaze-in-arson-attack/>

<https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/ost/fullt-utvecklade-brand-i-kyrka-i-norrkoping> - with translation



United States – Iowa: Des Moines

Kristina Schrock (InterVarsity Graduate Christian Fellowship president, brought suit in Federal Court against the University of Iowa after it decertified all student groups that had restrictions on officers including adherence to an article of faith)

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/intervarsity-sues-university-of-iowa-38-student-groups-expelled-over-policies-226641/>

Tuesday August 7, 2018



China: Hangzhou Qiandao Lake vacation resort, Zhejiang province

Zhu Yufu (aged 66, arrested in 1998; released in 2006; arrested in May 2007; released in 2009; arrested on March 5, 2011 for his poem *It's Time*; released from prison on March 4, 2018, placed under house arrest at the [Hangzhou Qiandao Lake vacation resort in Zhejiang province](#), in ill health; **UPDATE**: reported to have been denied access to his vested

pension by the government, has appealed for financial aid, said he would like to return to prison because “they at least provide three meals a day there”)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/08/human-rights-activist-struggles.html>



Ethiopia: Jijga province

Patriarch Matthias I (called for 16 days of prayer and fasting following Muslim Somali attacks in which about 30 including at least 6 priests were killed and at least 7 churches burned)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/64614->

[AFRICA ETHIOPIA Churches burned and priests killed in the Somali region](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64614-)

<http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/seven-ethiopian-orthodox-churches-burned-down-in-ethiopia-somali-region-many-killed-several-injured/>



Ukraine: Luhansk

Bishop Afanasi Yavorsky (**UPDATE:** said that a church was seldom used "because of constant threats from drunken fighters to throw grenades at the church" and that "Officials have warned that from 14 August [2018] activity by the Kiev Patriarchate will be halted")

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2401



United States - North Carolina: Fort Bragg

Major Scott Squires (U.S. Army chaplain, recommended for disciplinary action [on or before April 19, 2018](#) after a same sex couple attempted to register for a marriage retreat and he attempted to find another chaplain to take his place, issued a statement: "I was shocked the investigator concluded that I should be reprimanded for doing something I'm required to do under Army regulations and my endorser's [church's] rules. I hope the Army sees that I was simply following Army regulations and the tenets of my church"; **UPDATE:** an Army investigator was reported to have recommended that he be charged with dereliction of duty, would face up to six months' imprisonment if convicted)

Congressman Douglas Collins (U.S. Air Force Reserve chaplain, reported to have issued a statement: "Americans' right to freedom of conscience is Constitutional and non-negotiable. With that in view, the law requires each chaplain to fulfill their duties without violating their conscience or the tenets of the specific faith-group that endorses their

chaplaincy. Unfortunately, Chaplain Scott Squires is being subjected to a meandering investigation that could set a precedent for stripping all chaplains of their fundamental legal protections")

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/chaplain-accused-lesbian-soldier-discrimination-should-be-charged-dereliction-of-duty-army-226645/>

Wednesday August 8, 2018



Iran: Bushehr

Shapur Jozi (convert, husband of Parastoo Zariftash, arrested in 2015; **UPDATE**: reported to have been sentenced to 1 year's imprisonment, fled the country)

Parastoo Zariftash (convert, wife of Shapur Jozi, arrested in 2015; **UPDATE**: reported to have been sentenced to 1 year's imprisonment, fled the country)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=4077>

Thursday August 9, 2018



Iran: Evin Prison, Tehran

Naser Navar Gol-Tapeh (aged 47, convert, arrested on June 24, 2016; released on bail on October 29, 2016; sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment on June 22, 2017; transferred to Evin Prison on January 20, 2018; as of March 30, 2018 has been suffering from a severe and untreated gum infection, may be at risk of losing all of his teeth; **UPDATE**: reported to have written to prison authorities "...As the charges against me in my indictment states: 'Action against national security through the establishment of house churches', is the fellowship of a few Christian brothers and sisters in someone's home, singing worship songs, reading the Bible and worshiping God acting against national security?...Isn't it a clear violation of civil and human rights, and an absolute injustice to receive a ten-year prison sentence just for organizing 'house churches', which is a sanctuary sanctified as a place to praise and worship God due to closure of churches in Iran?...But I praise God that He has turned all things into a blessing. Because, now it's clear to all, including the prison authorities, judges, lawyers and my fellow prisoners, that I am in prison because of

my faith in Jesus Christ. This will serve to further advance the gospel. Therefore, first of all, I bless those who have persecuted me and put me in jail, and I hope one day the truths of His word, which is able to build everyone up, will save them. Secondly, I thank God in perfect joy and peace for considering me worthy to be here because of my faith in and witness to Jesus Christ. I trust the almighty God who is able to bring the dead to life, and I eagerly await His return. He can preserve me and keep me firm")

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/08/how-can-reading-the-bible-be-acting-against-national-security-asks-iranian-christian-from-prison/>

August 2018, date unknown

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

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