

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – August 2018

Wednesday August 1, 2018



Pakistan: Muslim Town, Gujranwala district, Punjab province

Farhan Aziz (aged 26, brother of Amir Aziz, arrested on blasphemy charges after an ex-girlfriend sent a text message from his phone to a Muslim radical)

Amir Aziz (brother of Farhan Aziz)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/08/christian-in-pakistan-charged-with-blasphemy-in-scheme-involving-islamist-party-sources-say/>



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)

Pakistan: Waran Chak Balyana village, Kasur district

A mob attacked several Christians in a land dispute, several women were stripped of their clothing

Sagar Masih (aged 10, arm fractured)

Anand Masih (aged 18, lips lacerated, hospitalized, received 8 stitches)

Nasreen Masih (hit on the left side of her head, suffered a concussion)

Bashir Masih (said "A charged mob of over 50 Muslim men, led by Mukhtar Ahmad, a local Muslim, attacked the Christians")

Barkat Masih (said: "Ahmad tried to cultivate a piece of land with a tractor which belongs to the church. The local Christians requested him not to violate court orders, however, Ahmad abused the Christians and passed derogatory remarks against the church, stating, 'Building a church is nonsense.' Within no time, Ahmad's armed companions attacked the Christian men, women, and children with arms and sticks. They left two seriously injured and other with minor injuries. The mob stoned the under-construction church as well.")

Fr Nadeem Rafique Joseph (aged 40, minimized the religious aspects of the dispute)

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

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/kasur-charged-mob-attacks-christians-over-church-property-dispute/>

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 Abraz (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>

Saturday August 4, 2018



Uganda: Namasuba para zone, Wakiso district

Pastor Moreen Sanyu (struck in the forehead with a stone thrown through a church window, said “I fell down and became unconscious. When I woke up, there were only a few members who surrounded me – the rest of the church members had fled in different directions...The throwing of stones [for months] broke glass windows and destroyed a solar panel, and as well as there was the uttering of abusive and threatening words to me and my church members...I just shared the gospel of Christ and his love for humanity with my Muslim neighbors, and they freely accepted the Christian faith, especially when many sick people that I prayed for got healed”, hospitalized for 2 days, church closed)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/08/church-near-kampala-uganda-closes-after-months-of-islamist-attacks/>

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-utvecklad-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>



Pakistan: Chak 460, Purani Maaki, Sheikhpura district

Amara Bibi (wife of Boota Masih, mother of five, **shot** in her home for refusing a relationship with a Muslim man, hospitalized in critical condition)

Boota Masih (husband of Amara Bibi)

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/sheikhpura-christian-woman-gunned-down-upon-refusing-to-enter-in-friendship/>



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://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/seven-ethiopian-orthodox-churches-burned-down-in-ethiopias-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



India: Khunti, Jharkhand state

Pastor Jidan Herenz (aged 55, husband, father, member of the indigenous Adivasis people, charged in [March 2018](#) with sedition and other crimes, fled into the jungle; **UPDATE**: granted bail, said "It worries me, it is difficult to gather as a church, and several false cases have been booked against me. There is severe opposition, threats, but the ministry must continue...It's a miracle that I have been granted bail by the High Court. Everybody I met after moving back to Khunti told me the allegations are very serious, and they never thought that I can be free...The six months spent in the forest sharing the gospel, and in

prayer and worship, were fruitful and joyous, and the bail is a result of the Lord hearing our prayers. The Lord raised a church there”)

Pastor Zacharias Purthi (reported that RSS paramilitaries have been behind the charges against Pastor Jidan Herenz: “He was never involved in those matters [Adivasis tribal politics]. As pastors, we are busy in the ministry and pastoral duties, and he or me, we never showed any interest in the local politics”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/08/hindu-extremists-suspected-in-false-charges-against-pastor-in-india-sources-say/>



Iran: Bushehr

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

Parastoo Zariflash (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/>

Friday August 10, 2018



Peru: Yamakentsa, Bagua province

Fr Carlos Riudavets Montes SJ (aged 73, teacher, Spanish national, missionary, found bound and **stabbed to death** in his school kitchen)

<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2018/08/13/jesuit-priest-murdered-peru>

Saturday August 11, 2018



Philippines: Cebu

Fr Amado Picardal (abandoned his hermitage after a likely six-man death squad on motorcycles with covered faces appeared at his monastery, apparently in retribution for his opposition to extrajudicial killings of drug suspects, said “That was usually the time I would go out to the supermarket and the coffee shop. I immediately concluded that they were the death squad and I was the target. Had I gone out, there would have been no escape for me...I am ready to accept martyrdom if they catch up with me, but I do not seek it nor do I make myself an easy target. Thus, I have decided to temporarily vacate my hermitage up in the mountain and continue to spend my life of silence, solitude, prayer and writing in a more secure location. I will continue to speak out against evil in society through my writings and will fast and pray that the Lord will deliver us for evil.”)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/filipino-priest-who-criticized-duterte-says-he-has-gone-into-hiding-33959>

Sunday August 12, 2018



India: Ranchi, Jharkhand state

Archbishop Felix Toppo SJ (criticized a raid the previous day on several Christian charities by the Criminal Investigation Department and Anti-Terrorism Squad, said "We are accused of diverting our foreign donations for religious conversion but no evidence to substantiate the charges has been provided to us to file our replies. We are not against any probe. We want the government to either make public or share the proof of the alleged charges of religious conversion so that we can give specific replies")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/bishops-cry-foul-as-indian-police-probe-church-agencies/83062>

Tuesday August 14, 2018



Philippines

Sr Mary John Mananzan OSB (reported on [August 3, 2018](#) to have spoken regarding the issuance of arrest warrants for four former members of Congress for the murder of two farmers more than 10 years ago "I personally know these four people and they cannot possibly have done what they are accused of"; **UPDATE:** said after the charges against the four former members of Congress were dismissed that she hoped the government would end the practice of false prosecutions)

Philippines: Mindanao

Bishop Rhee Timbang (accused the government of "cases of harassment, threats and intimidation as efforts to co-opt the church to kowtow")

Bishop Carlo Morales (husband of Maria Teofina Morales, arrested with others at a police checkpoint in [Gango](#) on [May 11, 2017](#) while travelling with an alleged member of a rebel group; still jailed as of [October 16, 2017](#), has been charged with illegal possession of explosives; reported on [March 19, 2018](#) to have been released on bail after a judge in [Ozamiz City](#) ruled that the evidence presented by the prosecution would not prove a conviction; **UPDATE:** has been visited 4 times by the military in recent weeks)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-bishop-decries-threats-to-clergy/83065>

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/court-drops-charges-against-filipino-leftist-leaders/83074>



Thailand: Bangkok

Elvin Gill (aged 29, husband of Zarish, father of three including Moses, arrived in Thailand on [February 15, 2013](#) after having fled Pakistan due to a blasphemy allegation; **UPDATE:** arrested while out buying milk for overstaying his visa)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/bangkoks-pak-christian-asylum-seekers-face-nightmares-as-thai-police-continue-crackdown>



Ethiopia: Somali State

Fifteen priests were reported to have been killed in Muslim violence in the previous week, four were burned to death together

Fr Kidane Mariam Nibretu (**killed**)

Fr Yared Hibu (**killed**)

Fr Gebiremariam Asfaw (**killed**)

Fr Abreham Tigabu (**killed**)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/08/ethiopian-pm-sends-condolences-to-orthodox-church-after-15-priests-killed/>

Wednesday August 15, 2018



Indonesia: East Nusa Tenggara

Church leaders were reported to have asked the government to reschedule the next presidential election, it had been scheduled for Holy Week in 2019

Fr Siprianus Sande (said "We don't want political activities to ruin the solemnity of [Holy Week] celebrations")

Archbishop Vincentius Sensi Potokota (aged 67, said "It's not just a petition to change [the date of the election]. It's about the government not having carefully considered the needs of communities")

Juventus Prima Yoris Kago (Catholic Student Association chairman; **UPDATE**: said "I fear many Catholics will not take part in the election")

Fr Siprianus Hormat (**UPDATE**: said the national bishops' conference welcomed the petition of the local bishops)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/indonesian-bishops-call-for-election-date-change/83077>



United States – Colorado: Denver

Jack Phillips (bakery owner, cited in 2013 for refusing to make a cake for a same gender wedding; the state Supreme Court in Denver refused on April 25, 2016 to hear his appeal; the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the state Civil Rights Commission ruling against him and upheld his right to exercise his religious beliefs on June 4, 2018; the state Civil Rights Commission ruled against him in another separate but factually identical case on June 28, 2018; **UPDATE**: reported to have brought suit in Federal against the state Civil Rights Commission which alleged “unconstitutional bullying” against him)

https://gazette.com/news/colorado-cake-shop-owner-in-supreme-court-case-sues-hickenlooper/article_e cd606e6-a09c-11e8-a831-6744f8b7a726.html

Thursday August 16, 2018



Vietnam: Nghe An

Le Dinh Luong (aged 53, husband, former soldier, sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment followed by 5 years' house arrest for involvement with the Viet Tan democracy movement, smiled and said "I am innocent. Free me immediately," after the verdict was read)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnam-court-jails-catholic-activist-for-20-years/83097>



Pakistan: Lahore

Vicky Saleem Masih (aged 35, High Court employee, husband of Hina, father of three, brother of Salman and Robin Masih, **shot dead** in a private dispute on his 9th wedding anniversary while out buying a cake, no arrests made)

Hina (aged 28, widow of Vicky Saleem Masih, mother of three)

Salman Masih (aged 23, brother of Vicky Saleem Masih, attempted to bring his brother to a hospital on a motorcycle)

Robin Masih (aged 24, brother of Vicky Saleem Masih, attempted to bring his brother to a hospital on a motorcycle)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-man-shot-by-neighbour-on-his-wedding-anniversary-was-on-his-way-to-buy-a-cake>

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/griefstricken-family-blocks-road-with-murdered-envoys-body-after-police-delay-the-culprits-arrests>

Friday August 17, 2018



Philippines: Manila

Bishop Pablo Virgilio David (**UPDATE**: said in a homily directed to supporters of the extrajudicial killing of drug addicts and couriers: "the cries of the bereaved families of victims have been heard on the throne of Mercy... You have been weighed and have been found wanting, therefore your names will be written on the walls of the deepest recesses of the underworld. Woe to you who claim to be waging a war against illegal drugs but are killing its victims instead of saving them... Who gave you the right to pass judgment on people who are sick? You claim to care about the future of young people in this country. What future awaits them if they end up dead on a street alley after a 'legitimate' police operation?... [To you who] just stand by and watch while the masked killers kill their targets in broad daylight, how long has it been since your consciences died?")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-bishop-condemns-supporters-of-drug-war/83118>

Saturday August 18, 2018



Pakistan: Chak 460, Purani Maaki, Sheikhpura district

Amara Bibi (wife of Boota Masih, mother of five, **shot** in her home on [August 7, 2018](#) for refusing a relationship with a Muslim man, hospitalized in critical condition; **UPDATE**: **died**)

Boota Masih (widower of Amara Bibi)

Pakistan: D C Society, Mehmoodabad 2, Karachi

John Elvin (aged 48, nurse, husband, father of three including Vikram John and Sunil John, home attacked by Muslims who threatened them with death if they did not leave, beaten along with his sons after he attempted to file a police report, hospitalized, released, no police report filed)

Vikram John (aged 25, son of John Elvin, engineering student, beaten, hospitalized, lost sight in both eyes, will have to leave the country for surgery for any chance of recovery, said "I can't believe this has happened to me. I was going to complete my studies in civil engineering this year and now that opportunity has been taken away from me. After completing my course, I had a job lined up with a large firm but the stable future I saw before me is now fraught with uncertainty. I have done nothing to deserve such treatment I only stayed faithful to God, yet these evil men began to be jealous of the success of our family and the hatred they have for our faith boiled over. I am unmarried and few women will want to marry me now what is left of my life will now be very difficult. I know God will help me through these difficult times and I seek him in prayer daily only He can save me from my dilemma")

Sunil John (aged 23, 'severely' beaten, hospitalized, released)

Anthony Naveed (**UPDATE**: Provincial Parliament Member, visited Vikram John in the hospital, helped file a police report)

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/karachi-vandals-beat-christian-family-threaten-them-to-leave-their-house/>

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/christian-lawmaker-calls-on-christian-youth-attacked-by-extremists/>

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/sheikhupura-christian-woman-gunned-down-upon-refusing-to-enter-in-friendship/>

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/pak-christian-engineering-student-beaten-blind-by-a-violent-mob-of-neighbours-for-being-the-only-Chr>



Mexico: Tierra Caliente region, Michoacan state

Fr Miguel Gerardo Flores Hernandez (disappeared while in a truck)

<https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-americas/2018/08/27/priest-murdered-in-mexico-in-what-archdiocese-labels-isolated-case/>

Sunday August 19, 2018



China: Guizhou province

Zhang Shiqun (arrested while attending an underground church)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/09/authorities-raid-henan-church.html>



Bangladesh: Chittagong

Archbishop Moses M Costa CSC (**UPDATE:** condemned violence in which 7 tribal hills people were shot dead: "At least 60 percent of the [1997 peace] accord remains unimplemented, and it causes uproar and bloodshed on the hills. Some people opposed the treaty and the government didn't do enough to diminish their grievances. The government needs to take the issue more seriously, listen to locals and find an acceptable way to tackle conflicts")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/panic-condemnation-after-killings-in-bangladeshi-hills/83120>



India: Tamil Nadu state

Fr Joe Antony SJ (reported to have commented after Hindu radicals forced Carnatic [an upper caste Hindu style] singers and musicians to withdraw from Christian concerts "[the controversy] is yet another instance of right-wing Hindu groups trying to intimidate anyone who does anything opposed to their agenda...What is surprising and sad is that such incidents have begun to occur in Tamil Nadu, which for a long time was immune to such tactics of hate mongers")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/hindu-musicians-hit-wrong-note-at-indian-christian-concerts/83110>

Monday August 20, 2018



United States – Colorado: Denver

Doug Wilson (Catholic Benefits Association CEO, secured a permanent injunction in Federal court in [March 2018](#) after the court ruled that the Federal government's contraception mandate violated the Religious Freedom Restoration Act; **UPDATE:** said "In addition to our current and future members, Americans of all faiths will benefit from the legal precedents we have achieved and from the court's affirmation" after the court ruled that the Federal government had to pay the Association's \$718,000 legal costs)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/after-religious-liberty-win-judge-orders-payment-to-catholic-benefits-association-19714>

Tuesday August 21, 2018



Indonesia

Bonar Tigor Naipospos (Setara Institute for Democracy and Peace deputy director; **UPDATE:** released a report stating said there were 109 cases of discrimination, intolerance, violence and hate speech in 20 provinces, up from 80 cases in the first half of 2017" Some regions had regional elections earlier this year. Now we are preparing for [presidential and legislative] elections next year. Government officials are afraid of losing voters if they take decisive action. I am pessimistic that there will be significant improvement in the way the government deals with cases of religious freedom violations in near future")

Fr Antonius Benny Susetyo (**UPDATE:** said "It is important to be vigilant. Leaders of each religion must work hand in hand to maintain national security and mutual respect. In this political year, the possibility of using religion for political purposes is open wide")

Bona Sigalingging (**UPDATE:** said "Now that he [President Joko Widodo] wants to run for president again in next year's election, he must remember the promise he delivered to bring freedom to all Indonesian citizens regardless of their religions and beliefs,"

Indonesia: Medan, Sumatra

Prasetyo Nurhardjanto (Association of Catholic Graduates and Intellectuals of Indonesia, called for the release of Meliana [a Buddhist woman sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment for complaining that a mosque's loudspeakers were too loud], said her trial "was grossly unfair and influenced by mass pressure")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/religious-intolerance-on-the-rise-in-indonesia/83131>

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/indonesian-activists-issue-call-to-free-blasphemy-victim/83217>

Wednesday August 22, 2018



Egypt: El-Zeniqa village, Luxor province

Moheb Thabet (witnessed a mob attack on a church that has attempted to legally register “A great deal of Muslim young men, aged 16 – 26, from our and nearby villages gathered in front of our church building, shouting “Allahu Akbar” [Allah is the greatest] and chanting hostile slogans against Copts and the church, such as ‘We don’t a church in our Islamic village’. They tried to break the front door...but we locked...[it] from the inside. We immediately called the police who arrived and dispersed the demonstrators but they didn’t arrest anyone. They then closed the church building, sealed it and placed security guards with it, and security forces cordoned off the village streets”)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/08/egypt-muslim-mobs-force-closure-of-8-coptic-churches-seeking-official-recognition/>

Thursday August 23, 2018



United States – Missouri: St Louis

James S Diel III (vice president of a Christian retirement home, reported to have said that the home's board is "prayerfully and thoughtfully reviewing this issue" after it was sued by a same sex couple because it required married residents to follow the traditional Christian definition of marriage)

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/lesbians-sue-christian-senior-center-over-biblically-based-policy-banning-same-sex-cohabitation-226953/>

Friday August 24, 2018



Egypt: Ezbet Sultan Pasha village, Minya province

Malak Fayez (witnessed a mob attack on a church that has attempted to legally register “The [crowd] pelted the church with stones and bricks resulting in breaking CCTV cameras on

the church wall and gate. They then moved to the old house we [currently] pray in and continued throwing stones at it as well as at some Coptic-owned houses next to it, damaging some of the facades. All the while they were shouting ‘Allahu akbar’ [Allah is the greatest] and chanting hostile slogans against the church and Copts, such as: ‘We don’t want any church in our village’, and ‘We don’t allow you, oh Kaffir, to pray in any place in our village’. Meanwhile Copts were trapped in their homes”)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/08/egypt-mob-attacks-prevent-coptic-churchs-recognition-for-security-reasons/>



United States - New York: Buffalo

Dennis C Walczyk (Catholic Charities CEO, reported to have announced that the charity would cease providing foster care and adoption services due to state same-sex nondiscrimination law)

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; an Army investigator was reported on [August 7, 2018](#) to have recommended that he be charged with dereliction of duty, would face up to six months’ imprisonment if convicted; **UPDATE**: charges dismissed)

Staff Sgt Kacie Griffin (chaplain assistant, charges dismissed)

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/catholic-charities-buffalo-ends-adoption-foster-services-avoid-placing-kids-gay-couples-226993/>

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/army-clears-chaplain-of-career-ending-charges-over-lesbian-marriage-retreat-controversy-227008/>

Saturday August 25, 2018



Philippines: Quezon City

Bishop Honesto Ongtioco (closed the cathedral for 2 days after a mentally ill man desecrated the tabernacle and the Eucharist, said "Because of this, the community of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral is to undertake acts of penance and reparation. I ask that these days be days of prayer and fasting")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-church-closes-after-desecration/83202>



Mexico: Tierra Caliente region, Michoacan state

Fr Miguel Gerardo Flores Hernandez (disappeared on [August 18, 2018](#) while in a truck;

UPDATE: **body reportedly found**, police identification disputed due to decomposition and a different set of clothes)

Auxiliary Bishop Herculano Medina Gargias (said “The motive we could define as this: It was to steal his truck and we known nothing else in the sense of how they killed him. These are isolated cases because if there was a war declared against the Catholic Church more of us would have been deprived of our lives and the cases are not that high in number...Sometimes the police have ties with criminals and other people and the priests can be taken somewhere else, and they’re not necessarily taking care of them and protecting them. My safety wouldn’t be guaranteed because I was in their custody...We know that everyone is exposed at this moment, as any other person, to an assault, a robbery, threats and extortions. The position of the Church continues to be a call for reconciliation and forgiveness”)

<https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-americas/2018/08/27/priest-murdered-in-mexico-in-what-archdiocese-labels-isolated-case/>

Sunday August 26, 2018



United States – Kentucky: Louisville

Bennie Berry (aged 43, church leader, **shot** while leaving church, hospitalized, **died**)

Pastor Vincent James (made no comment)

David Snardon (church minister, said "It just brings up a lot of questions — concern for the pastor, concern for the church, and concern for the community that something can happen on the sacred day, in a sacred place — with someone coming out of the church in broad daylight with a total disregard for human life...Crimes are not just committed against individuals, they are committed against communities")

<https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/crime/2018/08/27/louisville-man-killed-after-leaving-elim-baptist-church/1108761002/>

Monday August 27, 2018



Azerbaijan

Emil Mehdiyev (aged 18, conscientious objector, case charging him with evasion of military service opened in [Barda](#) on [January 5, 2018](#); trial begun on [May 7, 2018](#); motion to dismiss denied on [May 23, 2018](#); found guilty on [July 6, 2018](#), sentenced to one year's imprisonment, sentence suspended; **UPDATE**: appeal filed)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2408

Tuesday August 28, 2018



India: Ranchi, Jharkhand state

Fr Stan Swamy SJ (aged 82, home raided by anti-terrorism police from Maharashtra state without a court order, electronics, books, and research papers seized, questioned and released, homes of eight other activists raided and five arrested on charges including plotting to kill the Prime Minister, later said "All the activists targeted in this multi-city operation have been tirelessly involved in fighting for the rights of the poorest marginalized sections of society against serious state violations and unscrupulous corporates...If the police are trying to implicate me in an incident [regarding caste conflict] that happened in Pune, I was not present in Pune... Why should I plot to kill the prime minister? Let the prime minister be hale and hearty and this is my prayer")

Fr Davis Solomon SJ (said "Father Swamy researches the problems of marginalized people aiming to find practical solutions")

Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX (**UPDATE**: said "These raids appear to have been conducted to terrorize activists. But this will shake the faith of communities such as Dalits, indigenous people and others for whom these activists are speaking...It has become a fashion on some television channels to call all those who do not agree with them anti-nationals. Fighting for the constitutional rights of Dalit and other backwards people does not constitute anti-national activity")

Archbishop Felix Toppo SJ (**UPDATE**: said that Fr Stan Swamy had been targeted by authorities for his "firm stand" against injustice)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-police-raid-anti-national-jesuit-priests-home/83197>

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-jesuit-sees-state-attempt-to-silence-activists/83205>

Wednesday August 29, 2018



Philippines: Basilan

Fr Euclid Duenas Balosbalos (aged 45, beaten and robbed while on his way to church, hospitalized in serious condition)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/catholic-priest-attacked-in-southern-philippines/83213>



India: Odisha state

Fr Ajay Singh (**UPDATE:** spoke regarding a 2016 Supreme Court ruling on government actions after the 2008 anti-Christian Kandhamal riots “nothing has happened two years after the Supreme Court made this order...Nobody is bothered about what the Supreme Court had ordered on the shocking [number of] acquittals. When will we get justice?”)

Junos Nayak (retired policeman, said: “I have heard that the Supreme Court has ordered compensation for the injured victims. I have not got a penny earlier or now. I do not know whom to approach for the compensation. My name does not appear in the government list of the injured”)

Gladish Naik (said “many are not even aware of the enhanced compensation” following the 2016 Supreme Court ruling)

Fr Dibakar Parichha (said “The government claims that they have already deposited Rs 150 million [US\$2,133,000] to the bank accounts of the Rs 210 million [US\$2,986,200] the government has set apart for distribution. The challenge is to find out whether all those listed have got the compensation”)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/09/india-2-years-after-supreme-court-order-no-investigation-into-shocking-number-of-kandhamal-acquittals/>



Thailand

A Chinese couple was jailed by police despite their asylum application in New Zealand, are in danger of being forcibly returned to China

Yang Chong (husband of Wu Yuhua, detained)

Wu Yuhua (wife of Yang Chong, detained)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/08/chinaaid-urges-united-nations-to.html>



Pakistan: Karachi

Beenish Paul (schoolgirl, reported to have been abducted in an attempt to convert to Islam, thrown from a rooftop when she refused, suffered severe injuries)

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/sheikhupura-christian-woman-gunned-down-upon-refusing-to-enter-in-friendship/>

Thursday August 30, 2018



China: Henan province

Pastor Shen Xianfeng (wrote a letter concerning persecution in his province: "These days, I visited many persecuted churches in the cities of Xinyang, Tongbai, Tanghe, and Nanyang in Henan Province. All these churches were assaulted seriously: they [the government] has utilized any [government] department they could utilize with any methods/tricks they could adopt...All kinds of official forces, from public security, armed police units, high ranking officers or low rank ones from the levels of province, county, and village all came out to threaten, to detain, to tear down, and to seal house churches' doors and to hit, break, and rob, [using] all kinds of means to repeat what happened during 'the Cultural Revolution'. What they did was totally not based on the law, and it was improper and unreasonable. They acted in direct opposition to righteous and moral principles...My heart is aching, and I am sad. I am crying out loud. What I cannot figure out day and night is this: do these governing authorities really want to have the war be interior and exterior? To fight the exterior trade war with the U.S.A. and to fight the interior war with vulnerable and kind Christians? What are they thinking about? What is their purpose?...For all kinds of government departments, there are so many other major things they do not want to manage. But they are interested in using political machineries to make themselves the enemies of the Christians with while making trouble out of nothing. Do they have nothing to do? Who gives them the rights? What kind of result do

they want to achieve? Are they reaching their plot? Is it worthy to do this?...But alas, so sad, my country!")

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/08/i-am-crying-out-loud-pastor-writes.html>



India: Sidhwatola village, Palamu district, Jharkhand state

Reeta Devi (convert along with her family, land reported to have been seized by local villagers after their conversion, said “The villagers pick fights over basic necessities – even access to drinking water is challenging. They decide whether to supply water to us or not after every fight. They don’t like to be around us or even cross paths...We have been very patient and never abused or fought back when they attacked us physically...We filed a complaint with police, but they told us to solve the matter internally with the village heads”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/08/hindu-extremists-suspected-in-false-charges-against-pastor-in-india-sources-say/>



Nigeria: Abonong village, Foron district, Barkin Ladi local government area, Plateau state

Rev Adamu Gyang Wurim (aged 50, Ereported to have been **killed along with his wife and three children** when suspected Fulani Muslim gunmen surrounded and set fire to their home and church)

Isaac Choji (witnessed the attack)

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/pastor-wife-3-kids-burned-death-islamic-fulani-herdsmen-raze-nigerian-village-227105/>

<http://thenationonlineng.net/family-of-4-killed-in-fresh-plateau-attack/>

Friday August 31, 2018



China: Qingtian, Zhejiang province

Fr Lu Danhua (taken away by Religious Affairs Bureau agents on [December 29, 2017](#), reportedly taken to Wenzhou to study the new regulations of religion; **UPDATE**: still missing)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/call-for-prayers-for-missing-chinese-priest/83212>



Egypt: Dimshau Hashim village, Minya province

Muslim rioters attacked and plundered the homes of Christians because one was used for prayer

Adel Saeed Rizq (home attacked and plundered)

Reda Abdel-Sayed Rizq (home attacked and plundered)

Kamel Fawzy Shahata (home attacked and plundered)

Fawazy Shahata Boutros (home attacked and plundered)

Bishop Makarios (escaped a [September 30, 2013](#) assassination attempt in [el-Sario, Abou Qorqas, Minya province](#); **UPDATE**: visited with the families who experienced the attack on their homes, said it was terrible that their children “should be subjected to such horror simply because their families exercised their constitutional right of freedom of worship”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/09/coptic-christians-deprived-of-home-worship-hall-in-egypt/>

August 2018, date unknown



Pakistan

Cecil (aged 15, son of Mr Yousaf, received head injuries during a [February 2018](#) midnight home invasion by Muslim extremists angered by his refusal of their invitation to Islam, moved to a safe house; **UPDATE**: attacked again, stabbed in the foot, bones exposed)

Mr Yousaf (father of Cecil, spoke on the [February 2018](#) attack on his son "an armed mob attacked our house and tortured family members which resulted in minor injuries to the family's women and head injuries to Cecil. The mob made their way in, breaking the main gate of the house at midnight. The attackers broke the doors, windows, fans, furniture, damaged the vehicle, and looted the valuables, including two laptops, four mobile phones, and cash"; **UPDATE**: said “The religiously motivated group thrashed him badly. His foot was hit with some sharp weapon causing the skin on his foot to peel

off, exposing the bones”, added two months later “Cecil is still under medical treatment and his life is being threatened”)

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/pakistani-christian-teenager-brutally-thrashed-by-religiously-motivated-group/>

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