

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – October 2018

Monday October 1, 2018



Myanmar: Shan state

Churches continued to be closed by the Chinese backed United Wa State Army, 92 church leaders and 42 Christian students were detained

Tat Jack (reported to have said “My uncle is a preacher. He lives at a village nearby the Wa rebel base, Panghsang city. He and his son were detained in early September. But we are not allowed to visit them. We also heard that many members of the Christian community there are detained”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/10/rebels-in-burma-detain-more-than-90-christian-leaders-shut-down-more-churches/>



United Kingdom

Bishop Gavin Ashenden (**UPDATE:** Twitter account reported to have been suspended after citing a study purporting that most of the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic church was due to homosexuality and not pedophilia, immediately restored after he deleted the tweet)

<http://archbishopcranmer.com/bishop-blocked-twitter-truth-sex-abuse-catholic-church/>



Canada: Toronto

Blaise Alleyne (assaulted by pro-abortion demonstrators)

Katie Somers (assaulted by pro-abortion demonstrators)

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/video-second-toronto-pro-abortion-activist-assaults-pro-life-demonstrators>

Tuesday October 2, 2018



Philippines

Sr Susan Bolanio OND (**UPDATE:** wrote to authorities to request an investigation into a social media post that called her and two tribal leaders of being Communists for being a "malicious and vile design to put her life in danger, especially as Mindanao is under martial law...To be linked to a terrorist communist group is to condemn a person as all-out anti-government...The mere suggestion of affiliation to a terrorist communist group poses a serious threat to the lives, dignity and security of the persons singled out")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/filipino-catholic-nun-tagged-as-communist-fears-for-life/83511>



Indonesia: Sumatra

Rev Ojahan Tampubolon (spoke after local officials ordered churches to relocate or merge "We haven't decided yet. We need to discuss it first. Let's say we do this, it will last only a month")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/sumatra-churches-forced-to-close/83532>



Egypt: Abu-Hashem village, Beni-Sweef province

Simon Mahros (aged 17, disappeared while on her way to school)

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2018/10/08/from-egypt-a-list-of-recently-reported-assaults-on-coptic-christians/>



United States – Oklahoma: Norman

Prof Brian McCall (resigned as Dean of the University of Oklahoma School of Law under pressure due to having advocated a return to traditional Christian norms of modest dress for women in a 2014 book)

<https://kfor.com/2018/10/02/university-of-oklahoma-college-of-law-associate-dean-resigns/>

Thursday October 4, 2018



Cameroon: Santa Teresa of Bamessing village, near Ndop, Ngo-Ketunjia department

Gerard Anjiangwe (aged 19, seminarian, only child of Stephen Akiata and Comfort Akiata, **shot dead** by soldiers inside a church while praying the rosary in prostration)

Stephen Akiata (husband of Comfort Akiata, father of Gerard Anjiangwe)

Comfort Akiata (wife of Stephen Akiata, mother of Gerard Anjiangwe)

Archbishop Cornelius Fontem Esua (issued a statement on the murder of seminarian Gerard Anjiangwe: "[While parishioners] were in front of the church, a military truck arrived from Ndop and stopped at the beginning of the road leading to the church. Some soldiers got out of the vehicle and started shooting...The military tried in vain to open the door [to the sacristy where parishioners had taken refuge], then they approached Gerard lying on the floor and ordered him to get up, which he did hesitantly. [After interrogating him] they shot him three times in the neck and he died instantly")

[http://www.fides.org/en/news/64929-AFRICA_CAMEROON_A_young_seminarian_killed_in_the_English_speaking_region](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64929-<u>AFRICA_CAMEROON_A_young_seminarian_killed_in_the_English_speaking_region</u>)

Friday October 5, 2018



China: Baoding, Hebei province

Fr Liu Honggeng Liu (aged 47, detained without charge in **2006**; released after **August 9, 2014**; arrested on **May 7, 2015**; **UPDATE**: whereabouts still unknown, family has asked why the recent China-Vatican concordant did not specify the release of current Catholic prisoners)

Bishop James Su Zhimin (aged 86, disappeared while in police custody in 1997; family told on or before August 29, 2015 that he was being held as a bargaining chip with the Vatican; **UPDATE:** whereabouts still unknown)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/hebei-priest-still-missing-despite-china-vatican-deal/83553>



Sudan: Port Sudan

Rev Ismail Abdurahman Kenani (Bible Society director, announced that shipments of Bibles which had been held by the authorities for years had been released in August 2018, said “We came to learn that proper documents for the shipments were intentionally misplaced by one of the officers of the port authority”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/10/sudan-releases-bible-shipments-detained-in-port-years-ago/>

Sunday October 7, 2018



China: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Pastor Su Tianfu (**UPDATE:** stated “Multiple schools in Guiyang have asked teachers and students to sign a religious background inquiry, forcibly requesting that religious people put ‘no religion’ on the form”)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/10/christians-churches-under-scrutiny-as.html>

Monday October 8, 2018



Pakistan: Islamabad

Aasiya Noreen aka Asia Bibi (aged 53, wife of Ashiq Masih, mother of five including Isham, daughter of Soran Masih, convicted of blasphemy in 2009 and sentenced to death; **UPDATE:** final appeal heard by the Supreme Court, verdict reached but reserved for future declaration)

Pakistan: Lahore

Anil Saleem (aged 27, brother of Kiran Saleem [who was killed by doctors, male nurses, and hospital security personnel on [March 26, 2018](#)]; **UPDATE**: reported that no arrests had been made in the murder of his brother, said “Moreover, the police exonerated the main accused, Dr. Saira, in the initial investigation, even though she was the one who had instigated her colleagues and the security guards to attack us in the hospital ward...We think that the police were told by the provincial government not to arrest the doctors to avoid confrontation with the YDA [Young Doctors Association, which had threatened a strike if prosecutions went ahead]...They have made several attempts to settle the case through money, offering up to 2 million rupees [US\$26,905], but I have refused to take the money. No money can heal the wound we have suffered. I have told the accused that I will not withdraw the case until all of them, including Dr. Saira, are put behind bars. How can they just absolve Dr. Saira, when it was she who had instigated the attack in the first place? The court has directed the police to re-investigate the case, but they are delaying presenting the report on one pretext or the other”)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/asia-bibi-fate-is-sealed-after-final-appeal-but-the-decision-is-reserved>

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/10/six-months-after-medical-personnel-kill-christian-in-pakistan-no-arrests-brother-says/>

Tuesday October 9, 2018



Thailand: Bangkok

Seventy adult Pakistani Christian refugees and scores of children were arrested for immigration violations

Mona Sumbal (teacher, hid in a boiler room to avoid arrest, later said "I had not even woken up when I heard shouts and screams as people began to warn others to escape. Our community is protective of one another and for many the first thought was help others slip the arrest that would place them into brutal incarceration in Bangkok IDC [Immigration Detention Centre]. I heard the children I teach weeping and my heart was broken, I wanted to help but knew that if I came out of hiding I would be arrested too and the end result would be a return to Pakistan where my life is at threat. I just hunkered down closed my eyes, covered my ears and prayed to God to save me from arrest. He was my only hope. I waited an hour after all the noise had dissipated and discovered our school had been destroyed and no-one was around from the community everyone was arrested. I felt isolated and alone and broke down and wept as I fell into a deep depression. About 20 mins later my cousin appeared she is only 18 and now from such a large community only the two of us remain free. I feel helpless and have been crying

constantly this latest raid has left me in a position I have never been in before, one where I no longer have the safety and protection of my family")

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/in-excess-of-70-pak-christians-arrested-as-thai-authorities-raid-santi-suk-asylum-community>



Algeria: Bouira

Rachid Ouali (convert, appeared in court after his wife accused him of attempting to convert her from Islam, denied the accusation, said his wife had said she was pressured by relatives into making the accusation)

Ali Larchi (aged 67, husband, father of five, appeared in court after the wife of Rachid Ouali accused him of attempting to convert her from Islam, denied the accusation)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/10/christians-face-trial-in-algeria-over-wifes-accusations-of-evangelizing/>



Ecuador: Quito

Fr Arturo Rene Pozo Sampaz (aged 62, **found dead** in his bedroom with his hands and feet tied)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/64904-AMERICA_ECUADOR_Funeral_of_the_priest_found_dead_in_Quito_have_been_celebrated



United States – Illinois: Chicago

Fr Paul John Kalchik (sexual abuse victim, GoFundMe account for financial support closed for unspecified violations of Terms & Conditions, the account had been opened by supporters following his suspension and eviction by Cardinal Blaise Cupich [which happened after he allowed his parishioners to burn a rainbow flag])

United States - New Jersey: Jersey City

Joan Simon (fired from her Catholic school after circulating a letter written by an orthodox Catholic theologian on the current sex abuse scandals)

<https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/gofundme-yanks-fundraising-campaign-for-fr.-paul-kalchik>

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/catholic-school-fires-teacher-after-she-handed-out-famed-evangelists-letter>

Wednesday October 10, 2018



Thailand: Bangkok

Iqbal (alias, Pakistani refugee, bail for immigration violations cancelled, told to report with his brother to the detention center, said "I don't know how long they will keep us there...People are being persecuted back home and now we are being persecuted here too. It's time [people in] the world woke up about what's happening")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistani-catholic-refugees-in-thailand-plead-for-vatican-help/83642>



Myanmar: Kyaing Tong, Shan State

Rev Lazarus (reported that about 100 Christians had been released by the United Wa State Army after signing statements pledging to worship only at home, 92 pastors were still detained, said "Christians will face more restrictions and be closely monitored by the United Wa State Army, so the situation is worrisome")

Myanmar: Shan state

Rev Thang Cin Lian (reported to have said "We are praying for the Christians in the Wa Hills")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/christians-forced-to-sign-pledge-curbing-faith-in-myanmar-region/83588>



Syria: Hasakah

Souleman Yusph (journalist, disappeared in [Qamishli](#) on [September 30, 2018](#), believed to have been detained by the Asayish [the Kurdish security and intelligence service], had extensively reported on Kurdish closure of Christian schools; **UPDATE**: reported to have been released, in seclusion at home)

Archbishop Jacques Behnan Hindo (**UPDATE**: spoke on the release of Souleman Yusph: "It is understandable that he wants to keep a low profile, but I want to continue to speak out

against the discriminatory campaign by Kurds against Christians in the north-eastern Syria. He was arrested simply for telling the truth, for denouncing the abuses...more targeted attacks and violent incident cannot be excluded. We can expect anything from the Kurdish authorities. They do not understand that they are pawns in the hands of the West and are used for political purposes", added information about an upcoming meeting he will have with a Kurdish delegation: "it will be a tense meeting...They know that I am against their way of doing and governing the region. The major problem is not the Syrian Kurds, but those who come from Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan who want to annex ancient Mesopotamia to their territory")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mgr-Hindo:-Despite-Christian-journalist's-release,-fears-of-more-Kurdish-abuses-remain-45173.html>



Kenya: Mandera East

Suspected al-Shabaab militants attacked a school, killing 2 Christians and severely wounding three others

Johnstone Okumu (teacher, **killed**)

Simon Wekesa (teacher, **killed**)

Martin Kamutu (teacher, said "It is painful to lose our colleagues through such a heinous act of cowardice. Our hearts bleed because even after dedicating our time and professionalism in serving this community, they still hate Christians")

Rev John (said "This is another bad example of what religion can do. We are losing Christians at a very high rate in Mandera. Last month we lost five to terrorism and now again we have lost two teachers. We ask the international community and human rights groups to get involved in northern Kenya")

<https://www.persecution.org/2018/10/11/two-christian-teachers-murdered-northeastern-kenya/>



United Kingdom: London

Daniel McArthur (husband of Amy McArthur, owner of a bakery in **Belfast** convicted on **May 18, 2015** of discrimination for refusing to provide a cake with a pro-same sex marriage message, fined US\$786; **UPDATE**: conviction overturned by the Supreme Court, said "I want to start by thanking God. He has been with us during the challenges of the last four years. Through the Bible and the support of Christians, He has comforted us and sustained us. He is our rock and all His ways are just... We're delighted and relieved at today's ruling. We always knew we hadn't done anything wrong in turning down this order. After more than four years, the Supreme Court has now recognized that and we're

very grateful. Grateful to the judges and especially grateful to God...We're particularly pleased the Supreme Court emphatically accepted what we've said all along – we did not turn down this order because of the person who made it, but because of the message itself...The judges have given a clear signal today. In fact, it couldn't be clearer. 'Family businesses like ours are free to focus on giving all their customers the best service they can – without being forced to promote other people's campaigns.'")

Amy McArthur (**UPDATE**: conviction overturned)

<https://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/equality/victory-for-freedom-of-expression-bakers-win-supreme-court-case>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V68fvVrbNeg>

Thursday October 11, 2018



Norway: Oslo

Dr Katarzyna Jachimowicz (Polish citizen, fired from her job in [Sauherad](#) in 2016 after refusing to implant IUDs; an appellate court in [Skien](#) ruled on [November 24, 2017](#) that her termination was illegal; **UPDATE**: appeal upheld by the Supreme Court, attorney stated “Today’s Supreme Court decision marks an important step in the right direction, not only for doctors, but for people of faith in all professions. The ruling protects one of the most fundamental rights, the right to act in accordance with one’s deeply held beliefs. She vowed to protect life, and objected to having any part in taking it. The Court established today that she had every right to do so”)

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/doctor-wins-landmark-pro-life-conscience-rights-case-in-norway>



Mexico: Tijuana, Baja California

Fr Icaro Arturo Orta (disappeared)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/64918-AMERICA_MEXICO_Lifeless_body_of_the_parish_priest_who_died_three_days_ago_has_been_found

Friday October 12, 2018



Myanmar: Wa Hills

Two priests, three nuns, and three lay teachers were expelled by the breakaway and Chinese supported United Wa State Army, churches seized

Fr Raymond Than SDB (said "We are not problem-makers...We will continue to provide food and school expenses of the students")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/china-backed-militia-expels-more-clergy-in-northern-myanmar/83645>



Turkey: Izmir

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, told he would be deported; confirmed to be a hostage at a [September 28, 2017](#) press conference by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President explicitly called for the U.S. government to exchange him for Sufi cleric and U.S. resident Fethullah Gulen; prosecutors said on [March 13, 2018](#) that they would seek life imprisonment; denied bail on [July 18, 2018](#); a court ruled on July 25, 2018 that he is to be released from jail and placed under house arrest, banned him from leaving the country; **UPDATE:** convicted on espionage and terrorism charges despite prosecutorial witnesses recanting their testimony, sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment, released with time served, said to the court "I am an innocent man. I love Jesus, and I love Turkey", left the country)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/10/brunson-freed-permitted-to-leave-country/>

Saturday October 13, 2018



Pakistan

Mehwish Bhatti (British Pakistani Christian Association officer; **UPDATE:** spoke on threats of violence against Christians by Islamic groups should the Supreme Court in its pending decision acquit Asia Bibi: "The on going protest in Pakistan by extremist groups with regards to Asia's possible release is a great concern for the whole Christian community in

Pakistan. We all want Asia to be released and at the same time being a minority we want assurance of peace and security. I implore the Government of Pakistan to induce special measures to protect Christians in Pakistan. The past attacks on Christians have not been forgotten many from the communities of Rimsha Masih's village [[click here to read the Today's Martyr's biography of Rimsha Masih](#)], and Gojra are still homeless. Christians should not be seen as anything other than equal citizens and our quality of life should not be diminished by our choice of faith")

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/militant-islamists-blackmail-justice-for-asia-bibi-as-christian-communities-seek-protectio>



Mexico: Ley del Servicio Civil area, Tijuana, Baja California

Fr Icaro Arturo Orta (disappeared on [October 11, 2018](#); **UPDATE**: **found dead** with hands and feet bound and with signs of violence)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/64918-AMERICA_MEXICO_Lifeless_body_of_the_parish_priest_who_died_three_days_ago_has_been_found

Monday October 15, 2018



Egypt: Giza

Eid Attiya (owner of a building in [Waslin village, Atfieh, Giza](#) used as a church that was attacked and contents destroyed by a mob on [December 22, 2017](#); detained for four days beginning on [December 24, 2017](#); convicted of erecting a building without a license in [January 2018](#), sentenced to one year's imprisonment and fined EGP360,000, sentence suspended; **UPDATE**: sentence overturned on appeal)

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2018/10/15/alleged-offenders-and-victim-aquitted-in-attack-against-etfeh-church/>



Central African Republic: Kaga-Bandoro

Bishop Tadeusz Kusy (criticized UN refugee policies: "[The UN says they are encouraging people to stay in their communities] but at the same time they are building structures 3 kilometers from their houses, and they are told: 'You can stay here' therefore where is it? the truth? There is no truth in these programs", also criticized the lack of UN policing that empowered Seleka guerrillas and Sudanese and Chadian mercenaries: "I had planned a pastoral visit to that area [between Ndele and Kaga-Bandoro] in December 2017, but I managed to only do it in May 2018")

www.fides.org/en/news/64920-

[AFRICA CENTRAL AFRICA Strong insecurity in the diocese while the UN send s contradictory messages denounces the Bishop of Kaga Bandoro](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64920-)

Tuesday October 16, 2018



India

Event: The Center of Policy Analysis, a RSS paramilitary think tank, issued an [October 10, 2018](#) report that called for the abolishment of church sponsored schools

Archbishop Thomas D'Souza (**UPDATE:** reported to have criticized the report "In effect, they are asking to change the Indian constitution...All Indians, particularly religious minorities, should be afraid about such demands")

Joseph Dias (**UPDATE:** reported to have criticized the report "Catholic institutions keep a high standard...And, a huge majority of students in them are non-Christians. So doing away with such institutions will hit the majority community more than minorities")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/church-schools-in-india-among-those-that-should-not-exist/83634>



Iran: Evin Prison, Tehran

Ebrahim Firouzi (convert, aged 36, welder, disappeared on the way to work on [March 7, 2013](#) in Robat-Karim, apparently arrested by plain-clothes police; reported on [May 1, 2015](#) to have been sentenced to five additional years' imprisonment for "action against national security through collusion and gathering", the gathering in question was a meeting where he met with friends to say goodbye before the beginning of his original prison term; **UPDATE:** has suffered from a toothache that has 'spread throughout his jaw and face',

denied medical treatment, unable to eat, request for a furlough refused, mother has been unable to visit him in prison due to visual impairment and cancer)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=4107>



Nigeria

Event UPDATE: Boko Haram announced that two Christian women in captivity would be "slaves for life" due to their refusal to convert to Islam, they also released a video of the execution of Muslim 24 year old midwife and health care student Hauwa Leman for apostasy, which they judged from her employment with the Red Cross Red Crescent

Leah Nathan Sharibu (aged 15, student, abducted by Boko Haram on [February 19, 2018](#))

Alice Ngaddah (UNICEF worker)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/10/leah-sharibu-kept-as-slave-aid-worker-killed-as-apostate-in-nigeria-report-says/>



Burkina Faso

Dr Ken Elliot (aged 84, husband of Jocelyn Elliot, Australian citizen, missionary, abducted by al-Qaeda linked militants in [Ouagadougou](#) on [January 15, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: still in captivity)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/10/1000-days-since-kidnap-of-84-year-old-doctor-in-burkina-faso-family-plea-for-freedom>



United Kingdom: Ampleforth Abbey and College

Fr Cuthbert Madden OSB (brought suit almost two years after being cleared of sex abuse charges by both civil and church authorities because he had not yet been reinstated into his former positions)

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2018/10/16/ampleforth-abbot-launches-legal-action-to-be-reinstated/>

October 2018, date unknown

Today's Martyrs

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