

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – December 2018

Saturday December 1, 2018



India: Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh state

Christians demonstrated at a peace rally against the closure of hundreds of house churches

Rev David (said "[Varanasi] is the spiritual and religious capital of India. Most of the cases of persecution have taken place around the district of Varanasi. In the main city of Varanasi one of the very old Methodist churches was also attacked by right wing Hindus. Churches are being attacked because high caste Brahmins think that the all scheduled castes and other backward communities will be converted. They look at it as a threat. Because then they cannot take advantage of these communities")

Rev P S Nehemiah Christie (**UPDATE:** said the peace rally "was successful. [Christians] came out to speak up against the oppression and violence [with] more than 1,100 people attending")

www.asianews.it/news-en/Christians-stage-peace-rally-in-Varanasi-against-forced-church-closures-45641.html



Iraq: Bartella

Fr Behnam Benoka (church occupied by Iraqi military forces for several hours on [July 12, 2018](#); **UPDATE:** verbally abused and threatened by Iraqi military personnel who blocked access to the church while claiming to use the service of a neighboring photo studio for wedding photography and who fired automatic weapons into the air for 30 minutes)

<http://www.aina.org/news/20181130191449.htm>



Central African Republic: Bossangoa

Bishop Desire Nongo Aziagbia SMA (reported: “Following the incidents which led to the destruction of camps for displaced persons, private homes in the districts of Tarabanda and Yabende as well as the Catholic presbytery in the parish of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in Batangafo, from 12 to 16 November 2018, I went on a fact finding mission to assess the situation, assisted by the Joint Protection Team [JPT] of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic [MINUSCA], 8 members of which come from the Office of Bossangoa and 6 from headquarters in Bangui...Despite efforts on the part of our local Church to promote peace and fraternal relations, despite our total solidarity with those in need regardless of beliefs or political conviction, we have been targeted. Priests killed, church buildings torched or desacralized, sacred objects stolen or destroyed. These actions can be interpreted as a method used by countless enemies to plunge us into a religious crisis...”)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/65190-AFRICA_CENTRAL_AFRICA_Local_Church_denounces_episodes_of_violence_in_past_two_months

Sunday December 2, 2018



China: Pingxiang, Jiangxi province

Liao Hongcong (military veteran, church raided by police, Bibles and furniture seized, said “I am an old Chinese soldier and dedicated my youth and made my contribution to the country. However, I don’t have religious freedom now and couldn’t even protect my religious freedom. We seniors worshipped at home. What law did we violate? We sang hymns and read the Bible. What law did we break? We need religious freedom. I love Jesus, I love China, and I love all people...The stools and Bibles were looted on the morning of Dec. 2. At that time, only more than 10 seniors were holding a worship service in my home. I have already made a police report, but the police station hasn’t sent anyone out yet”)

China: Xuzhou, Jiangsu province

Zhang Baoluo (home raided by police without warrant, entire family detained, Bible and other items seized, all were released after being held for 30 minutes)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/jiangsu-police-detain-entire-christian.html>
<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/i-dont-have-religious-freedom-chinese.html>

Monday December 3, 2018



Iran

Ebrahim Firouzi (convert, aged 33, welder, rearrested on [August 21, 2013](#) while visiting two other Christians in [Karaj](#); 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**: denied a furlough to attend the funeral of his mother)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/12/iran-staggering-number-of-christians-arrested-114-in-a-week/>



Ukraine: Rivne province

Archpriest Alexander Bakhov (head of the Ukrainian Church [Moscow Patriarchate]'s legal department; **UPDATE**: responded to the summoning of questioning of over 20 priests by Ukrainian counterintelligence: "Given the systematic nature, the simultaneity, and the mass character, these actions are aimed at the bishops with the purpose of pressuring and forcing them to participate in the 'unification council'")

Archpriest Ivan Savchuk (summoned by Ukrainian counterintelligence, said "I called a lawyer and together we drove up to the office, the summons was given, but not charges were pronounced. At this point, I still don't understand what is going on")

Archpriest Vasily Nachev (summoned by Ukrainian counterintelligence, said "I was trying to figure out why I was summoned, but to no avail. Am I surprised? No, such actions are expected in light of recent Church events. In fact, this is the beginning of what the Holy Fathers warned about")

<http://orthochristian.com/117624.html>

Tuesday December 4, 2018



Philippines: Manila

Bishop Antonio Ablon (**UPDATE**: protested the continuation of martial law in Mindanao which would "terrorize people in cities and in the countryside...The future of [the people of Mindanao] is dark and murderous under [President] Duterte's martial law")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/filipino-protestant-prelate-leads-anti-martial-law-protest/84021>



Pakistan: Muslim Town, Gujranwala district, Punjab province

Farhan Aziz (aged 26, brother of Amir Aziz, arrested on blasphemy charges on [August 1, 2018](#) after an ex-girlfriend sent a text message from his phone to a Muslim radical; **UPDATE**: still jailed despite the arrest of his ex-girlfriend and her brother)

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/gujranwala-decelerated-justice-leaves-christian-youth-accused-of-blasphemy-in-limbo/>



Niger

Fr Pierluigi Maccalli SMA (Italian national, abducted in [Bomoanga](#) on [September 18, 2018](#) by jihadists, probably taken over the border into Burkina Faso; **UPDATE**: still in captivity)

Bishop Djalwana Laurent Lompo (**UPDATE**: reported that information had been received that Fr Pierluigi Maccalli was alive and well)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/65198-AFRICA_NIGER_Bishop_of_Niamey_Fr_Maccalli_is_alive_and_well_we_continue_to_pray_for_his_release

Wednesday December 5, 2018



China: Pu'er, Yunnan province

Rev John Cao San Qiang (husband of Jamie Powell, father of two sons, U.S. resident, minister to Myanmar Christians, arrested [at the Myanmar border with China](#) on [March 5, 2017](#) and charged with illegal border crossing; sentenced to 7 years' imprisonment on [March 23, 2018](#), fined US\$3,168; **UPDATE**: appeal postponed)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/north-carolina-pastors-appeal-postponed.html>



Iran

Mansour Borji (Article 18 advocacy director; **UPDATE**: reported that the government had arrested 142 Christians in the past month in “10 or 11 different cities” - 114 in the past week - and released most after hours or days “as they had arrested so many of them and didn’t know what to do with them all”, the released Christians were all told to expect phone calls from military intelligence)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/12/iran-staggering-number-of-christians-arrested-114-in-a-week/>



Nicaragua: Managua

Fr Mario Guevara (aged 59, attacked with acid while hearing confessions, hospitalized with severe burns on his face, arms, and shoulders)

Cardinal Leopoldo Jose Brenes Solorzano (aged 69; **UPDATE**: deplored the attack on Fr Mario Guevara)

Auxiliary Bishop Silvio Jose Baez Ortega (**UPDATE**: deplored the attack on Fr Mario Guevara)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/nicaraguan-priest-attacked-with-acid-during-confession-60341>

Thursday December 6, 2018



China: Henan province

Cao Nan (**UPDATE**: reported to have been recently released after a 10 day detention)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/jiangsu-police-detain-entire-christian.html>

Monday December 10, 2018



China: Chengdu, Sichuan province

At least 100 Christians were detained after police raids on their homes, at least three of both sexes were raped by police

Pastor Wang Yi (husband of Jiang Rong; **UPDATE**: detained)

Jiang Rong (wife of Pastor Wang Yi; **UPDATE**: detained)

Guo Hai (detained along with his wife, two children left behind at home)

Qin Defu (church elder, forced to the ground during a police search of his home)

Song Enguang (husband, detained along with his wife, electricity shut off from his home)

Jiang Ruolin (detained)

Ge Yingfeng (detained)

Zhu Hong (detained)

Xiao Hongliu (detained)

Ye Yin (detained)

Zhang Jianqing (detained)

Liu Yingxiu (detained)

Assistant Deacon Zhang Guoqing (detained)

Su (church elder, husband, detained along with his wife)

Xiao Yingshan (husband, detained along with his wife)

Xiao Baoguang (detained)

Zhou Xiaojuan (detained)

Liu Daxuan (detained)

Zhou Yong (detained)

Li Yingqiang (**UPDATE**: evaded police, contacted foreign media)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/associated-press-group-says-dozens.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/breaking-80-church-attendees-in-custody.html>

Tuesday December 11, 2018



China: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Li Yingqiang (evaded police during the [December 10, 2018](#) detentions of his fellow parishioners, contacted foreign media; **UPDATE**: detained)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/associated-press-group-says-dozens.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/breaking-80-church-attendees-in-custody.html>

December 2018, date unknown

Today's Martyrs

2490 Black Rock Turnpike #455

Fairfield CT 06825-2400

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

Permission is granted to copy, disseminate and forward this document without charge or fee, provided no changes are made and full attribution is made to Today's Martyrs