

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2015-12-06 through 2015-12-12



Bangladesh

Rajesh D' Cruze (brother of Ranjan D' Cruze, banker, attacked by 5 armed men on a busy street, hospitalized in critical condition, attack was similar to that against Fr Piero Parolaru)

Ranjan D' Cruze (brother of Rajesh D' Cruze, attacked by 5 armed men on a busy street, hospitalized in critical condition, attack was similar to that against Fr Piero Parolaru)

Date: December 10, 2015

Location: Arjotpara, Mohakhli, Dhaka

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Dhaka,-brutal-attack-on-Catholic-brothers-leaves-them-fighting-for-life-36112.html>



China

Li Shengfen (house church member, described how his church has been ordered to register despite being too small to legally register, said “It seems as if, according to the...stipulations, 30-50 people are required to apply. We don’t have that many people. Is meeting together with our friends and neighbors in our home not OK?...If we go to the city to meet, many of the Christians are old and some people get carsick. I said, ‘How can you not give us freedom?’”)

Date: November 10, 2015

Location: Dazhou, Sichuan province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2015/12/authorities-demand-house-church.html>

Pastor Su Tianfu (**UPDATE**: church raided by police during a prayer session attended by 200, church closed)

Date: December 9, 2015

Location: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/china-christian-church-crackdown-guizhou-province-voice-america-communism-152202/>

Hu Shigen (church elder, disappeared on July 10, 2015; **UPDATE**: still missing, attorney has filed papers with the police requesting a meeting with his client)

Date: October 28, 2015

Location: Beijing

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2015/12/lawyer-petitions-for-meeting-with.html>

Event: Municipal authorities forced the dismissal of the attorneys for a detained family

Pastor Bao Guohua (husband of Xing Wenxiang, detained on July 26, 2015 on embezzlement charges after trying to prevent the demolition of a cross on a church, pastoral license revoked)

Pastor Xing Wenxiang (wife of Bao Guohua, detained on July 26, 2015 on embezzlement charges after trying to prevent the demolition of a cross on a church, pastoral license revoked)

Deacon Bao Chenxing (son of Pastors Bao Guohua and Xing Wenxiang, detained on July 26, 2015, tortured, hospitalized, still in custody)

Wang Zhaojun (detained on July 26, 2015, released the following day)

Date: December 10, 2015

Location: Jinhua, Zhejiang province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2015/12/authorities-arrest-family-dismiss.html>



Egypt

Antonious Fam Bertie (aged 10, son of Fam Bertie, abducted on the way to school by masked gunmen)

Fam Bertie (father of Antonious Fam Bertie, reported his son's abduction)

Date: December 8, 2015

Location: Rahmaniya village, Nag Hammadi, Qena province

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=65226>



India

Toko Teki (general secretary of Arunachal Christian Forum, criticized the RSS paramilitary organization for its complaint of the growth of Christianity in the northeast states “The people of Arunachal are animists and not Hindus, as claimed by RSS. Yet, all the animists have been included among Hindus in census after census. Many of them are becoming Christians. That is why our numbers are growing. The pattern is the same in the other north-eastern states...We not anti-nationals. We are no less patriotic than any other. RSS is trying to generate hostility towards Christians”)

Date reported: December 7, 2015

Location: Arunachal Pradesh state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2015/12/4146705/>

Archbishop Thomas Ignatius Macwan (said of religious freedom "Difficulties arise in the case of the baptism of catechumens because the draconian laws passed [in 2003 and 2006] by the then government of Narendra Modi prevent us from welcoming the newly baptized into our communities, unless a judge gives his consent", police go so far as to inspect baptismal records to ensure compliance)

Date: December 9, 2015

Location: Gujarat state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Archbishop-of-Gandhinagar-on-the-Jubilee-of-Mercy-and-anti-conversion-legislation-36097.html>

Sajan K George (**UPDATE**: said "The denial of justice to Dalit [untouchable] Christians goes against the letter and the spirit of Articles 14, 15, 16 and 25 of the Constitution of India on equal justice, equal opportunities and freedom of religion. It is a tragedy that nearly 75 per cent of India's Christians, some 20 million, belong to Scheduled Caste communities, and are denied statutory and constitutional benefits because of the 1950 Presidential Order. The worst thing is that when a Dalit decides to convert to Christianity, he or she loses all the advantages related to his social affiliation")

Date: December 10, 2015

Location: Mumbai

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-leader-calls-for-an-end-to-discrimination-against-Christian-and-Muslim-Dalits-36110.html>



Iran

Esmaeel Falahati (**UPDATE**: released from jail on bail, said "The Revolutionary Guard interrogators told me that it would be better for me to leave the country when I'm released temporarily, otherwise they would harm me and my family")

Mehdi Haj Mola-Hosseini (arrested on August 7, 2015, released from jail on bail)

Hayedeh Shadnia (**UPDATE**: released from jail on bail a few days after Esmaeel Falahati and Mehdi Haj Mola-Hosseini)

Date: September 9, 2015

Location: Karaj

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=2680>



Iraq

Event: Airspace has been closed to commercial aviation for 48 hours, stranding 150 Christian refugees

Fr Douglas Bazi (**UPDATE:** said “Russia is said to be sending missiles to several targets and therefore the airspace needs to be ‘free’. My people are a little bit disappointed, but they have been waiting for 15 months already and so two days does not make much difference”)

Nisan Hekmat (refugee, said “They told me that travel is delayed for 48 hours. In Iraq this is not unusual. In other countries it may be different but here it’s ‘normal’ to hear good news and bad news all at the same time...It is difficult for us all. Friends and family came to say goodbye and now the journey has been put on hold. We have everything packed and we’ve given away things like rice and oil that other families will need”)

Ramy (aged 22, refugee, said “It’s difficult for me to smile any more, but I want to, because I believe in goodbyes with a smile instead of with tears”)

Date: December 7, 2015

Location: Erbil, Kurdistan

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2015/12/4147384/>



Kazakhstan

Yklas Kabduakasov (aged 54, father of eight, arrested by KNB secret police on [August 14, 2015](#) for spreading 'religious discord' by discussing his faith with others and offering Christian books to others; sentenced on [November 9, 2015](#) to 7 years' restricted freedom, will not be able to travel or move without permission, banned from most public locations; **UPDATE:** sentence under appeal, prosecutor is asking that the sentence be changed to 7 years' imprisonment)

Pastor Andrei Teteryuk (reported on Yklas Kabduakasov's appeal)

Date: December 4, 2015

Location: Astana

Nikolai Popov (aged 54, husband, father of five, fined US\$1,122 on [October 29, 2013](#) for religious activities; fined US\$597 on [January 15, 2014](#) for religious activities; had refused to pay the two fines, banned on [May 13, 2015](#) from leaving the country; **UPDATE:** fined US\$64 for not paying his previous fines)

Date: November 9, 2015

Location: Balkhash, Karaganda region

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2130



Lebanon

Radwan Mahmoud (Syrian refugee, provider for a family of twelve, deep in debt "Especially in wintertime. The jobs are getting less and less")

Younes Shereedeh (Syrian refugee, husband, father of three, former grocery store owner, owes more than \$500, said "No, I had no idea I'd be asking for credit like this...They're good people here")

Date: December 10, 2015

Location: Bar Elias, Bekaa Valley

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20151210170153.htm>



Nigeria

Pastor Segun Towobola (Christian Center partially demolished by local Muslims, said "My wife, kids, and other students were holding classes on the premises when Mohammed and his group carried out the destruction on our property. I immediately rushed to the church to see them carrying out the destruction. I had to call in the police, who arrested him and his group...Mohammed Uduans since his arrest and detention by the police, and after being released by the police, has boasted that he has relations in the government and the money to take possession of our property, as he said he would never allow a church near his house", is now the defendant in a civil suit that claims wrongful possession of the property)

Date: September 18, 2015

Location: Kissayip area of Bassa, Plateau state

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2015/12/muslim-who-attacked-ministry-building-in-nigeria-attempts-to-seize-property/>



North Korea

Pastor Lim Hyeon-Soo (aged 60, Canadian citizen, disappeared after his [January 31, 2015](#) entry to the country; confessed on July 31, 2015 in [Pyongyang](#) to attempting to overthrow the state; **UPDATE**: still under interrogation)

Date: December 9, 2015

Source: <http://directory.ucanews.com/news/canadian-pastor-still-being-interrogated-in-north-korea/2915>



Pakistan

Event: The Capital Development Authority has announced that it will demolish several Christian-majority slums without the relocation plans that are required by law

Yaqub Masih (mason, cousin of Aamir, said “It is one thing being poor, but things are far worse if you are poor and Christian. Has the government even considered where I would take my family if they put us out on the street?...Our elders have been residing on this land since the inception of Islamabad in 1960. Most of us migrated to this city from other parts of Punjab, mainly Sialkot, Narowal and Faisalabad in search for a better life. But things have never been easy for us”)

Aamir (cousin of Yaqub Masih, said “Life is much better for our Muslim neighbors in Islamabad, who at least manage to get better paid jobs, whereas we Christians have no other option but to earn a livelihood from cleaning jobs. Now they want us to just pack up and leave our homes just because they think that we will outnumber the Muslims. This is a ridiculous notion that amplifies the prejudice we have been suffering all these years”)

Arif Bhatti (provider for a family of eight, said “There are no equal rights in Pakistan, not for Christians. We have been living in our colony [i.e. ghetto] for the last 15 years, and now they are threatening to send us off in trucks ‘to wherever we have come from.’ But this is our home now, and we don’t have any other place to go”)

Date: December 9, 2015

Location: Islamabad

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2015/12/christian-slum-dwellers-fight-eviction-in-islamabad-pakistan/>

Event: Christmas celebrations have been muted compared with past years due to the March 15, 2015 terror attacks on two churches

Fr Nasir George (said "New threats have given rise to a new wave of fear")

Nusrat Bibi (teacher, said how the city was "a symbol of the spirit of Christmas in the city...[people] decorate the streets, the houses, the churches", but now "everything is empty")

Luke Francis (street vendor, said "It doesn't not even look like Christmas, there are no events, no decorations, no participation by the people")

Xavier Williams (President of Life for All, said "For years, Pakistan has been fighting against terrorism that has hit the streets, squares, schools, mosques and churches. We will continue to pray unceasingly to God for the gift of peace, invoking the strength to overcome difficult moments like this. Terrorism is a challenge that affects us all. Christmas is a message of joy, hope and victory over death")

Date: December 10, 2015

Location: Youhanabad, Lahore

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Bomb-threats-and-security-clamp-down-on-Christmas-festivities-for-Lahore's-Christians-36104.html>
and http://www.fides.org/en/news/39020-ASIA_PAKISTAN_Threats_to_churches_for_Christmas_Christians_respond_with_prayer#.VmpORsJgkfg



Syria

Bishop George Abu Khazen OFM (**UPDATE**: wrote on the Year of Mercy "In recent years Syria has been living through a war that has cost hundreds of thousands of lives and millions of refugees...We have already suffered far too much from the consequences of violence and the absence of mercy of the various parties to the conflict. We have experienced the consequences of acting in the name and on behalf of a God that is far from "compassionate and merciful"! Therefore the time has come for us all to review our hard and merciless behavior!")

Date: December 10, 2015

Location: Aleppo

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Vicar-of-Aleppo:-Only-mercy-will-save-Syria-from-war-and-destruction-36109.html>



United Nations

Archbishop Silvano M Tomasi (**UPDATE**: said that international humanitarian law is "increasingly ignored and violated" and that "The short attention span of the communications media, and of many others in the international community, should be challenged by regularly calling attention to the ongoing emergencies that seem to be multiplying in intensity and complexity")

Date: December 9, 2015

Location: Geneva

Source:

<http://www.ecumenicalnews.com/article/vatican.says.international.humanitarian.law.increasingly.ignored/36607.htm>



United States

George Alexander (Secretary of the Orthodoxy Cognate web page, criticized comedian Stephen Colbert for calling Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem II a "Golden Snake Santa Pope" who could serve as King of Mardi Gras in his vestments)

Date: December 8, 2015

Source: <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/?p=45293>



Vietnam

Nguyen Van Dai (attorney, beaten by police for having attended a human rights forum that covered freedom of religion, three others also beaten)

Date: December 6, 2015

Location: Quan Hanh, Nghi Loc district

Source: <http://www.csw.org.uk/2015/12/09/news/2890/article.htm>

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