

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2017-03-19 through 2017-03-25



Australia

Fr Tomy Mathew Kalathoor (aged 48, Indian citizen, stabbed by a mentally ill man at the beginning of Mass, said by telephone "By all means I will continue [to serve]")

Date: March 19, 2017

Location: Melbourne

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/stabbed-indian-priest-vows-to-continue-in-australia/78733>



Canada

Cardinal Thomas Collins (**UPDATE:** spoke before a Parliamentary committee "It is sad that I and others need to come before you today to urge you to protect these devoted healers from the punishment which they face if they refuse either to administer a lethal injection to their patients or, in effective referral, to arrange for that injection to be administered")

Bishop Ronald Peter Fabbro CSB (**UPDATE:** said "We strongly encourage you to include in Bill 84 adequate protection for freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. It's essential")

Date: March 24, 2017

Location: Ottawa

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/watch-pounding-table-cardinal-tells-ontario-govt-its-bullying-to-force-docs>



China

Tu Yan (detained for 'cult activity' on [October 22, 2016](#), released, arrested a month later on the same charge, between 4 and 12 fellow Christians arrested with her, some released;
UPDATE: still in custody, has denied involvement with the 'Three Classes of Servants')

alleged cult which her attorney says has not been officially identified by the government as a cult)

Su Min (detained for 'cult activity' on [October 22, 2016](#), released, arrested a month later on the same charge; **UPDATE**: still in custody)

Date: [March 16, 2017](#)

Location: Xiangyang, Hunan

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/03/court-orders-further-investigation-for.html>

Event: The government has begun to install television cameras in all churches to 'maintain social order'

Fr Francis (underground priest, said that all churches have received notices and that "Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin, an underground bishop who is not recognized by the government, felt helpless to resist the demand. As for the faithful, some feel angry but some are ignorant, not knowing or caring about the issue")

Joseph (said "Officials installed cameras inside the church hall before the funeral of late Bishop Zhu Weifang in September 2016. But we removed them. Then they installed cameras outside the church")

Date: [March 22, 2017](#)

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/beijing-using-cctv-in-churches-to-spy-on-christians/78721>

Pastor Seong-do Ohn (aged 66, South Korean citizen, detained at the airport with his wife, had been aiding North Korean refugees, wife released after a few days)

Date: [March 15, 2017](#)

Location: Qingdao

Pastor Byeong-gi Lee (aged 42, South Korean citizen, detained at his hotel with his wife, had been aiding North Korean refugees, wife released after a few days)

Date: [March 15, 2017](#)

Location: Qinhuangdao

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2017/03/23/committee-calls-for-the-release-of-south-korean-pastors-detained-in-china/>



Colombia

Bishop Julio Hernando Garcia Pelaez (said "It is impossible to live here...Violence in Upper Baudo does not stop. The communities along the Baudo and San Juan rivers are living a serious humanitarian crisis, and many have begun to flee...The people here were peaceful, but in recent years, due to the war, anxiety, mistrust and deaths affecting the civilian population, especially women and children, people have stopped being peaceful")

Date: [March 21, 2017](#)

Location: Istmina-Tado, Choco province

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/61963->

[AMERICA COLOMBIA It is impossible to live here says Mgr Garcia on the violence in Upper Baudo#.WnkDRW8rKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/61963-AMERICA_COLOMBIA_It_is_impossible_to_live_here_says_Mgr_Garcia_on_the_violence_in_Upper_Baudo#.WnkDRW8rKM8)



Egypt

Marina (daughter of Nashat Labib, disappeared on her way to a private lesson)

Nashat Labib (father of Marina, begged police to find his daughter)

Date: March 10, 2017

Location: Qena

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1859&A=30052>

Fr Bolous Halim (**UPDATE**: said that about 310 Christian families had been displaced from the Sinai)

Samir Shukri (refugee from Sinai, said of the government minister for social solidarity that the refugees from ISIL attacks were 'on a trip': "The minister knows nothing about the situation in el-Arish...Some culprits will be arrested, and new bodies will litter the streets. They tell us el-Arish is safe, but then we discover that the stench of death is following us around", which was a reference to the government fabrication of a shootout with ISIL at a checkpoint in which prisoners were executed)

Maher Zeki (monastery volunteer, has been aiding Sinai refugees)

Mina Nasr (refugee from Sinai)

Date: March 23, 2017

Location: Ismailia

Source: <http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/03/23/what-next-for-sinai-displaced-copts/>



India

Fr Eremito Rebelo (protested the governor's choice of the Hindu nationalist BJP party to form the new state government despite the Congress party receiving more seats, said it violated the Constitution and legal precedent)

Date: March 22, 2017

Location: Goa

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/protest-in-go-a-as-hindu-party-forms-government/78726>



Indonesia

Event: Three churches were ordered closed by the government after Islamic intimidation

Rev Abdi Saragih (church closed, said "We are struggling for our right to worship")

Alex A Makawangkel (parish council chairman, church closed)

Date: March 21, 2017

Location: Bogor, West Java

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/indonesian-district-bans-three-churches-from-worshipping/78713>

Fr Raymundus Sianipar (asked by police to leave his church after it came under attack by Islamic radicals who demanded its building permit be cancelled, tear gas was fired at the radicals)

Date: March 24, 2017

Location: Kaliabang, Bekasi, West Java

Source: <http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2017/03/24/hundreds-protest-against-new-catholic-church-in-indonesia/>



Iran

Maryam Naghash-Zargaran aka Nasim (aged 39, apparently had a heart attack in prison on September 29, 2013; **UPDATE:** health has taken a turn for the worse, medical treatment denied)

Date: March 24, 2017

Location: Evin Prison, Tehran

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3408>



Iraq

Noeh (aged 12, returned to his home after more than 2 years as a refugee, found that ISIL arsonists had completed gutted it)

Date reported: March 23, 2017

Location: Karamles

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/03/marbles-midst-ashes-iraqi-boy-returns-home-post-isis/>

Stephen Rasche (diocesan aid coordinator in Erbil, Kurdistan, U.S. citizen, said that the world must see Iraq's remaining 200,000 Christians as “a threatened people on the verge of extinction, the victims of horrific genocide...If we can't hold this community together over the next six to 12 months, it will all be for nought. [They could be reduced to] a custodian population looking after old church properties”, added that discrimination by the West against Christian immigrants was “absolute fact”, that the UN discrimination against Christian refugees has softened after the new U.S. administration took office, and that the sale of Christian land in Iraq was financed by Iran)

Date: March 25, 2017

Location: London, United Kingdom

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/03/six-weeks-medicine-and-two-months-food-for-displaced-iraqi-christians/>

Rev Andrew White (**UPDATE**: said in a television interview “The time has come where it is over, no Christians will be left. Some say Christians should stay to maintain the historical presence, but it has become very difficult. The future for the community is very limited. The Christians coming out of Iraq and ISIL areas in the Middle East all say the same thing, there is no way they are ever going back. They have had enough...If there is anything I can tell Americans it is that your fellow brothers and sisters are suffering, they are desperate for help”)

Date reported: March 21, 2017

Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/03/21/christianity-in-iraq-is-finished-says-canon-andrew-white-vicar-baghdad.html>



Kenya

George Omondi (aged 47, father of five, church guard, **shot dead** in a robbery attempt)

Fr George Kraakman (Dutch citizen, awakened by the shooting of George Omondi, found his body)

Date: March 19, 2017

Location: Kisumu

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/61959-#WNE7gG8rKM8>
[AFRICA KENYA The guardian of Nyalenda parish in Kisumu killed in a robbery](#)



Laos

Yeng (alias, church leader, home destroyed by arson)

Date: January 2017

Pastor Shu (alias, attacked by a relative with a gun, fled, arrested when he tried to file a complaint)

Date: January 2017

Lhang (alias, sentenced to 8 months' imprisonment along with his brother and another Christian, all later released, brother unable to properly walk after they were confined to a cell too small to stand or lie down, family allows neighbors to steal their food)

Date: December 2015

Location: Baan Hua Phu Cha

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/03/15828/>



Malaysia

Event: Over 100,000 Burmese Christians have fled from Myanmar and are now refugees, many seek immigration to the U.S.

Tin (aged 38, said "America is really our fatherland in terms of religion. They sent their missionaries to our country and taught us to be Christians. And now we had to escape. All we want is to be safe")

Sang (aged 29, teacher, former theology student, said "We are not terrorists, we are Christians. We will never be a problem in the United States. We will get educations, we will work hard. We only seek safety")

Date reported: March 21, 2017

Source: <http://christiantimes.com/article/thousands-of-christians-flee-to-malaysia-to-escape-persecution-in-myanmar/71784.htm>



Mexico

Fr Robert Coogan Francis (U.S. citizen, prison chaplain, halfway house operator, beaten by police during a nighttime raid without warrant, halfway house assistant detained and released)

Date: March 17, 2017

Location: Saltillo, Coahuila

Source: <http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2017/03/21/us-priests-home-raided-by-police-on-st-patricks-day-in-mexico/>



Nepal

Event: Christians have opened a new cemetery and tell why

Bishop Narayan Sharma (**UPDATE:** said “Because Christians have no other way to put their dead bodies, they bury the dead person on their own private land. And in such cases, nearby neighbors and the community, they come up, and the next day they want the buried dead body to be taken out and put somewhere else...Though the government recognized the Christian community in Nepal and our Constitution gives equal rights to all religious communities in Nepal, still we struggle with [the issue of] the graveyard. We don’t know, after our death, where we will be taken for burial, where our bodies will be laid. We are still negotiating with the government, but so far there is no clue [as to what the government has done], no solution”)

Leela Bhakt Pradhan (said “[A few years ago] Shyam Nepali, a new believer who lived in Dolaghat area, died two months after accepting Christ. We buried his body on a private land that was owned by a believer. But after that, all the villagers came and objected to it. So we had to dig up his grave and walk about 3 miles with the body to bury him again on another private land belonging to a believer”)

Joshua Magrati (cemetery secretary, said “The biggest challenge is the road that leads to this cemetery. It’s about two miles from the main road. We have spent about 2.5 million Nepali rupees [US\$24,000], and yet it’s far from being complete. However, we have already buried two bodies here...In Kathmandu, there was a piece of land inside the complex of the Pashupatinath Temple, which allowed Christians to be buried. But they blocked that area for Christian burials [in 2011]. There was another cemetery in Lele area, but political parties incited villagers to object to burials there. So we can no longer use that land”)

Ang Dawa Sherpa (cemetery secretary, said “There is no other Christian cemetery near Kathmandu. There is one in Pokhara, and one in Chitawan. They are far from here”)

Parshuram Sunchuri (cemetery board member, said “We chose this place because of two reasons. One, we wanted a place that was really far from any human habitation, as opposition comes mainly from local communities near a Christian graveyard. Two, the nearer the land to the city, the more expensive it is”)

Date reported: March 23, 2017

Location: Makwanpur district

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/03/15929/>



Nigeria

Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme (**UPDATE**: said "Most of the donations from the western world do not get directly to the targeted people. Whenever interventions come, they always insist it must go through the government agencies and through this, such interventions go directly into the pockets of some individuals. Most of our politicians are corrupt")

Fr John Bakeni (**UPDATE**: described political tensions, government demolition of church buildings, and church support of refugees)

Date: March 23, 2017

Location: Maiduguri

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/61988->

[AFRICA NIGERIA Our politicians are corrupt and often aid does not go to those who need it denounces a Bishop#.WNUITm8rKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/61988-)



Pakistan

Prof Anjum James Paul (**UPDATE**: criticized the government for creating census forms which left off the Sikh religious category and used the derogatory term 'Isaai' for Christians)

Date: March 20, 2017

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Pakistan-census-ignores-Sikhs,-refers-to-Christians-disparagingly-40241.html>

Fr James Channan OP (director of the Dominican Peace Center; **UPDATE**: along with Iman Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad has been awarded an interfaith harmony prize)

Date: March 21, 2017

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/pakistani-priest-and-imam-awarded-for-their-pursuit-of-inter-religious-harmony/>

Event: Christian and other religious leaders met with national security officials to express their concerns

Senator Kamran Michael (**UPDATE**)

Bishop Abraham Daniel (said "We have expressed our concerns regarding the misuse of blasphemy laws, security and other issues to the national security advisor and hope for better results. Blasphemy laws condemn Christians and other religious minorities to live under the permanent threat of death. We seek not to abolish the law but to stop its misuse. Not only minorities but Muslims have also suffered due to the misuse of this law and many innocent people have been killed")

Joel Aamir Sohotra (former member of the Punjab state parliament; **UPDATE**: said "Theological seminaries and madrasas in particular are obligated to equip students for meaningful pastoral practice and leadership of their communities amid growing diversity. We must not forget the importance of interfaith understanding in the curriculum of our schools")

Date: March 17, 2017

Location: Islamabad

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/minorities-tell-pakistans-top-security-chief-their-concerns/78724>

Hyacinth Peter (criticized the local government for publishing an advertisement for employment of sanitation workers that specified that only Christians, Hindus, and Shia Muslims need apply, the government then apologized for having added Shias to the list)

Date: March 17, 2017

Location: Faisalabad

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/christians-selected-for-degrading-jobs-in-pakistan/78708>



Philippines

Fr Jerome Secillano (**UPDATE:** said of upcoming Holy Week security threats "There are always threats, but Filipinos are not deterred from doing their spiritual activities. It has always been like that", added that during such times people are "more inclined to pray for security from God")

Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo (**UPDATE:** said "Let the police do their work while we continue to lead the people in their faith")

Date: March 23, 2017

Location: Manila

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/filipinos-told-to-be-vigilant-during-holy-week/78735>



Turkey

Andrew Brunson (husband of Norine Brunson, detained in Izmir as a 'national security risk' on [October 7, 2016](#), denied access to U.S. diplomats, attorneys, and fellow parishioners, told he would be deported; ordered held on [December 9, 2016](#) on 'terrorism' allegations from a 'secret informant', attorney denied access to the allegations; **UPDATE:** government officials have stated that his trial may be 'sped up' and implicitly linked his case to the U.S. refusal to extradite Sufi cleric Fethullah Gulen)

Date reported: March 16, 2017

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/03/turkish-prime-minister-we-could-accelerate-us-pastors-trial/>



Uganda

Hassan Muwanguzi (convert, abandoned by his family, beaten, and fired from his teaching position for converting to Christianity; arrested on abduction and human sacrifice charges on [February 26, 2017](#) after a convert from Islam [Namusisi Budadu Birye] took refuge with him in 2015 after her father beat her; released on bail on [March 3, 2017](#), received death threats; **UPDATE**: charges dismissed after the complainant twice failed to appear in court)

Date: [March 13, 2017](#)

Location: Tirinyi, Kibuku district

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/03/court-drops-charges-kidnapping-human-sacrifice-evangelist-uganda/>



Ukraine

Igor Kozlovsky (religious scholar, has been held hostage for a year by a pro-Russian militia)

Date: [March 21, 2017](#)

Location: near Donetsk

Source: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue28013.html>



United States - California

Pastor Rudy Trujillo (attacked and beaten by a former parishioner, hospitalized, underwent surgery)

Date: [March 23, 2017](#)

Location: San Fernando

Source: <http://www.charismanews.com/us/63833-former-congregant-attacks-pastor-leaving-him-bruised-and-bloodied>

Today's Martyrs

For more information please visit our web site at <http://todayismartyrs.org/>

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