

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

**Weekly Report – 2017-03-26 through 2017-04-01**



## **Bangladesh**

Biren Benjamin Gomes (described a raid by four plainclothes police on a Christian village: "When asked what they were doing, they claimed they were policemen but failed to show IDs", the officers stole US\$63 from one house, then "Women started screaming 'robbers, robbers' and hundreds of neighbors rushed to help. They beat up the intruders before elderly men stopped them", following this 35 riot police attacked the village, 25 were injured, 5 seriously)

Nirmal Rozario (**UPDATE:** said "Police have been arresting Catholics arbitrarily and extorting large sums of money")

Date: March 25, 2017

Location: Doripara, Gazipur district

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/police-accused-of-assaulting-bangladeshi-catholics/78775>



## **Belgium**

Stephane Mercier (professor of philosophy, suspended from an official Catholic university after a campus feminist group condemned his questioning of the 'right to choose [i.e. abortion]', said "The worldly powers that be, and the spiritual powers of darkness, are at war with everything truly Christian. So we're fighting for life and for the Lord's commandments against evil powers")

Date reported: March 30, 2017

Location: Louvain

Source: <http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2017/03/30/catholic-university-suspends-lecturer-for-opposing-abortion/>



## China

Pastor Li Guozhi aka Yang Hua (husband of Wang Hongwu, detained on [December 9, 2015](#) for ‘illegally holding state secrets’; sentenced in [Guiyang, Guizhou province on January 5, 2017](#) to two and a half years imprisonment; **UPDATE**: attorney reported that he had to be carried by prison guards to their meeting, leg ulcerated, has been in great pain, treated as a hospital outpatient)

Dates: [March 20 & 24, 2017](#)

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/03/china-change-jailed-living-stone-house.html>

Rev John Cao San Qiang (husband of Jamie Powell, father of two sons, minister to Myanmar Christians, arrested at the Myanmar border with China and charged with illegal border crossing)

Date: [March 5, 2017](#)

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/03/help-free-imprisoned-pastor.html>

Shi Xinhong (detained on [March 5, 2017](#) for praying for the National People’s Congress and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference in [Beijing](#), deported to her home province; **UPDATE**: sentenced to 8 days' administrative detention, upon the end of her detention was criminally detained)

Dates: [March 6 and March 14, 2016](#)

Location: [Guzhen county, Anhui province](#)

Chang Shulan (detained on [March 5, 2017](#) in [Beijing](#), deported to her home province, sentenced to administrative detention, upon the end of her detention was criminally detained)

Date: [March 16, 2016](#)

Location: [Jilin](#)

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/03/2-christians-criminally-detained-for.html>



## Egypt

Mary Jamil (sexually harassed by a Muslim on a busy public street, dragged on the street and stabbed in the neck, hospitalized)

Date reported: [March 30, 2017](#)

Location: [Cairo](#)

Source [warning - graphic]: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1868&A=30182>

and <http://raymondibrahim.com/2017/03/30/egypt-muslim-man-sexually-harasses-tries-slaughter-christian-woman/>



## India

Pastor Ajay Kumar (husband, father of a 3 year old daughter, beaten by a Bajrang Dal [the RSS paramilitary youth wing] mob, kicked in the face, ear, and abdomen, arrested on offending religious sensibilities charges, released, suffered pain from internal injuries including his ear)

Assaryav (Bible college student, beaten by a Bajrang Dal [the RSS paramilitary youth wing] mob, arrested on offending religious sensibilities charges, released)

Date: March 17, 2017

Location: Begusarai, Bihar state

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/03/police-compliant-hindu-extremist-attacks-bihar-state-india/>

Rev Mohan (arrested for speaking out against the use of Hindu terminology in compulsory yoga classes in schools while praising the general benefits of yoga)

Date reported: March 31, 2017

Location: Uttar Pradesh state

Rev Mahesh Chand (arrested along with five other church members without charge, released)

Date reported: March 31, 2017

Location: Agra, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Pentecostal-pastor-arrested-in-Tamil-Nadu-for-criticising-compulsory-yoga-in-schools-40350.html>



## Mexico

Fr Felipe Carrillo Altamirano (killed during an apparent robbery)

Date: March 26, 2017

Location: El Nayar, Jesus Maria del Nayar prelatore, Nayarit state

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/62008-AMERICA\\_MEXICO\\_Another\\_priest\\_killed\\_because\\_of\\_crime#.WNpt1W8rKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62008-AMERICA_MEXICO_Another_priest_killed_because_of_crime#.WNpt1W8rKM8)

Fr Oscar Lopez Navarro (aged 40, abducted for ransom, released)

Dates: March 28 and 30, 2017

Location: Tampico

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/03/30/days-after-a-priest-in-mexico-is-shot-dead-another-is-kidnapped/>

and <http://www.fides.org/en/news/62034->

[AMERICA MEXICO Priest kidnapped in Tamaulipas has been released#.WN5mqG8rKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62034-AMERICA_MEXICO_Priest_kidnapped_in_Tamaulipas_has_been_released#.WN5mqG8rKM8)



## Nigeria

Fr Maurice Kweirang (**UPDATE:** said of the worsening refugee problem: The Church is not able to feed them because we have limited capabilities and we cannot extend our support to all the IDPs outside the camp. We provide food once a week to those living in host communities, and others living on their own. 3856 households are receiving our weekly food distribution, regardless of their religious background. I alerted some humanitarian organizations asking if they could assist. But they said they have moved away from 'emergency support' to 'livelihood' in neighboring Borno State...Our team went out recently to assess the situation. They visited some IDPs who returned back to their communities, but only found that most of them are emaciated and looking unwell. Both adults and children show acute signs of acute malnutrition. We brought some of them to our clinics for medical treatment, but we couldn't keep them. They are living with relations in Yola and in surrounding communities. The church has written to donors for support. But for now we haven't yet received any response", also spoke of Nigerian refugees being expelled from Cameroon: "It's difficult to give an exact figure of those 'returnees'. I only saw the first batch: they are about 10,000. The second batch is yet to be confirmed but it will be higher than 10,000. There are still others – over 60,000 – trapped in northern Cameroon")

Date reported: March 27, 2017

Location: Yola, Adamawa state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/03/ne-nigeria-greatest-crisis-on-the-african-continent-says-un/>

Archbishop Ignatius Ayau Kaigama (**UPDATE:** said "We are particularly saddened by the constant and wanton destruction of lives and properties. Yesterday, it was Southern Kaduna; recently, it was Zaki-Biam in Benue State and the other day, it was Ile-Ife in Oyo State...no one knows which community will be the next victim")

Bishop Joseph Bagobiri (**UPDATE:** said "The crisis here has persisted because of the way and manner the Federal and State governments, as well as the Security Agents are handling it...It is important to put on record that the insecurity situation we experience as a Diocese in Kafanchan and Southern Kaduna has not stopped despite the presence of Security Agents. Many of us are disappointed to see that our political leaders are taking sides and known to be supporting directly or indirectly the Fulanis themselves and that is why they are fast losing the support and trust of the people")

Date reported: March 28, 2017

Location: Kafanchan, Kaduna state

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/62016-AFRICA NIGERIA The Bishop of Kafanchan denounces The violence of the Fulani fueled by government complicity#.WNpsT28rKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62016-AFRICA_NIGERIA_The_Bishop_of_Kafanchan_denounces_The_violence_of_the_Fulani_fueled_by_government_complicity#.WNpsT28rKM8)  
and <https://cruxnow.com/global-church/2017/03/28/nigerian-archbishop-calls-government-protect-christians/>

Ittah (described a Fulani Muslim attack “The attack on our village occurred this morning while we were in the church. Our village head and one other person died, and many were injured. The sad thing is that these Fulanis have been attacking our communities, and no one is doing anything about it”)

Date: March 19, 2017

Location: Oshugu village, Nasarawa state

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/03/200-people-killed-christian-areas-nasarawa-nigeria-year-group-says/>



## Pakistan

Joseph Francis (human rights activist; **UPDATE** said that the 42 Christians still in detention for suspected involvement in the lynching of 2 suspected Muslim terrorists following the March 15, 2015 church bombings in Youhanabad were offered their freedom by the prosecutor if they embraced Islam)

Irfan Masih (detained suspect in the March 15, 2015 lynching, told the prosecutor he would rather be hanged than embrace Islam)

Wilson Chowdhry (**UPDATE**: speaking from London said "Here is evidence that the Judiciary in Pakistan is not independent and free from bias. The fact that Christian men could be spared a death penalty by simply renouncing their Christian faith and accepting Islam is a clear indication that either extremists have infiltrated the Justice system of Pakistan, or that the nation is full of zealots that will stop at nothing to convert 'kaffir' [infidels]. For a major Pakistani newspaper to cover this story there must be some truth in this revelation. The Express Tribune even went as far as interviewing the prosecutor Mr Syed Anees Shah, who admitted offering the choice, before terminating the call abruptly. This whole fiasco has only served to heighten my concerns for Christians and other minorities in Pakistan, who are clearly in the middle of a cultural genocide, which inexorably will lead to more pain and anguish")

Rev Arshad Ashknaz (**UPDATE**: said “It is really bad to lead people astray. This will give a bad image to the court and the whole legal fraternity. The public prosecutor can be sued for this prejudiced action. We plan to meet him soon. The government should reject this...There is no religious freedom. The whole system supports Christian women who marry their Muslim spouses, but it is a torment for Christian men who do the same. Their families suffer and their houses are burnt”)

Date reported: March 30, 2017

Location: Lahore

Source [warning - graphic]: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-suspects-charged-for-lynching-two-muslims-after-lahore-twin-bomb-attack-offered-freedom-if> and <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Jailed-Christians-forced-to-convert-to-Islam,-a-disgrace-on-the-justice-system-says-Pakistani-Church-40341.html>

Noman Munir Masih (aged 20, son of Khalida Bibi, sanitation worker, sole financial supporter for his family, **shot dead** after refusing an order to clean an outhouse on the previous Sunday)

Khalida Bibi (widow, mother of Noman Munir Masih)

Riaz Masih Bhatti (sanitation workers' union president, said “The sanitation department comprises mostly Christian staff, while Muslims are hired for other departments. There have been frequent incidents of prejudice against Christian sanitary workers, but Noman’s murder in a brazen attack in broad daylight has sent a wave of shock and panic in the entire community...Some elders of the Chaddar clan visited Noman’s house two days ago and sought reconciliation, but we told them that we will not stop pursuing the case until the murderers are arrested and brought to justice. We may be weak, but we will not let them get away with murder. Today it was Noman, tomorrow it may be some other poor Christian, so we will have to remain steadfast in order to secure our community”)

Napolean Qayyum (rights activist, **UPDATE**: said “It’s no hidden secret that Muslims want to keep Christians in this degrading occupation. Several job advertisements from government departments for posts of sweepers clearly state that the candidates must be non-Muslim; some even specify that they must be Christians...Many Muslims find it hard to accept refusal by a ‘lowly’ Christian. This is not the first time a Christian sanitary worker has been killed or subjected to violence for refusing to comply with unjust demands of persons from the Muslim majority. The situation won’t change for the better for Christian street sweepers and sanitation workers until the state realizes its responsibility toward all citizens regardless of their faith, caste and creed”)

Date: March 20, 2017

Location: Sheikhpura, Punjab province

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/03/young-christian-shot-dead-streets-sheikhpura-pakistan/>



**Sudan**

**Event: Twelve staff members of a church school were arrested in an attempt to aid seizure of the school by a Muslim businessman, the following day the remaining staff were confined to the school by police**

Rev Idris Karntina (arrested along with 11 other school staff)

Date: March 27, 2017

Location: Omdurman

Rev Yahia Abdelrahim Nalu (**UPDATE**: confined in the school by police along with school staff, said “We expect the arrests to continue”)

Date: March 28, 2017

Location: Omdurman

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/03/police-sudan-arrest-christians-school-prevent-others-leaving/>



## United Kingdom

**Event: Terror attack on Westminster Bridge and Parliament kills five and injures dozens**

Kurt Cochran (U.S. citizen, husband of Melissa Payne Cochran, father of Melissa, recording studio owner, **killed**)

Melissa Payne Cochran (U.S. citizen, wife of Kurt Cochran, mother of Melissa, recording studio owner, injured)

Date: March 22, 2017

Location: London

Source: [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/23/world/europe/london-attack-victims-westminster-parliament.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/23/world/europe/london-attack-victims-westminster-parliament.html?_r=0)



## United States

Col Michael Madrid MD (subjected to a letter of admonishment by his new superior officer, that letter appears to be an attempt to overturn a 2014 investigation that cleared him of anti-homosexual allegations)

Date reported: March 29, 2017

Source: <http://www.charismanews.com/politics/issues/63945-air-force-officer-punished-for-his-christian-beliefs>

## United States - California

**Event: Investigative journalists were indicted on 15 felony counts for having secretly recorded Planned Parenthood officials negotiating the illegal sale of tissue harvested from aborted children, despite the fact that the state never prosecuted animal rights groups and NBC for doing the same with other subjects [and in the NBC case a civil case resulted in their exoneration under the law]**

David Daleiden (home in **Orange county** and office raided on **April 5, 2016**, video recordings seized; **UPDATE**)

Sandra Merritt (office raided on [April 5, 2016](#), video recordings seized; **UPDATE**)

Date: [March 28, 2017](#)

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/breaking-california-charges-david-daleiden-with-15-crimes-for-exposing-pl>

### **United States - Florida**

Marshall Polston (suspended from college after he challenged a Muslim's professor's class statement that Christianity was false and a Muslim student's advocacy of Sharia punishment of homosexuals, said “He [the student] stated that a good punishment for gays, adulterers, and thieves was the removal of a certain body part, as determined by Sharia law. It took a few seconds for me to realize that he actually said that, especially after what this community has faced with the tragic loss of life at Pulse [the gay nightclub where 49 were killed by a jihadist in 2016]”)

Date: [March 24, 2017](#)

Location: Orlando

Source: <http://www.centralfloridapost.com/2017/03/25/rollins-college-suspends-student-after-he-challenged-radical-muslim-hate-speech/>

### **United States - Texas**

#### **Event: Thirteen retreatants were killed in a motor vehicle accident**

Howard Bryan Allen (aged 81, **died**)

Rhonda Barlow Allen (aged 61, **died**)

Harold Boyd Barber (aged 87, **died**)

Margaret Robinson Barber (aged 82, **died**)

Murray William Barrett (aged 67, **died**)

Mildred Goodlett Rosamond (aged 87, **died**)

Sue Wynn Tysdal (aged 76, **died**)

Dorothy Fern Vulliet (aged 84, **died**)

Martha Holcomb Walker (aged 84, **died**)

Avis Scholl Banks (aged 83, **died**)

Cristie Clare Moore (aged 68, **died**)

Donna Elizabeth Hawkins (aged 69, **died**)

Addie Maurine Schmeltekopf (aged 84, hospitalized, **died**)

Rose Mary Harris (aged 64, hospitalized in critical condition)

Date: [March 29, 2017](#)

Location: Concan

Source: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue28037.html>





## Uzbekistan

Konstantin Binkovsky (husband of Susanna Binkovsky, home raided without warrant for a pre-holiday 'security inspection', Christian literature including family Bible seized, taken to the police station for questioning, released, questioned again at his home after the first raid became known on the internet)

Susanna Binkovsky (wife of Konstantin Binkovsky, questioned by police in both incidents)

Dates: March 11 and 27, 2017

Location: Yashnobod district, Tashkent

Andrei Li (husband of Tursuna Li, home raided by police, Bibles and personal electronics seized)

Tursuna Li (wife of Andrei Li)

Date: February 28, 2017

Location: Uchtepe district, Tashkent

Zinaida Brislavsky (wife of Pyotr Brislavsky, home raided by police with a warrant to search for illegal drugs, CDs, DVDs, and religious literature including an 1895 book on Russian monasticism seized, no questions were asked about drugs)

Pyotr Brislavsky (husband of Zinaida Brislavsky)

Date: February 27, 2017

Location: Almalyk

Alijon Khatamov (husband of Natalya Khatamov, home raided by police, religious literature and hard drive seized)

Natalya Khatamov (wife of Alijon Khatamov)

Date: February 8, 2017

Location: Sergeli district, Tashkent

Source: [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2268](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2268)

## Today's Martyrs

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

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