

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2017-04-09 through 2017-04-15



China

Bishop Vincent Guo Xijin (aged 59, imprisoned in 1990; released in 1992; imprisoned in 1993, released in 1994; imprisoned and released in 1996; **UPDATE**: detained for 20 days to 'to study and learn')

Date: April 6, 2017

Location: Fuan

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Underground-Mindong-Bishop-Guo-Xijin-missing-for-four-days-40436.html>

Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin (**UPDATE**: detained by police, whereabouts unknown)

Date: April 12, 2017

Location: Wezhou

Source: [http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Msgr.-Peter-Shao-Zhumin,-bishop-of-Wenzhou-\(underground\)-seized-by-police-40473.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Msgr.-Peter-Shao-Zhumin,-bishop-of-Wenzhou-(underground)-seized-by-police-40473.html)



Egypt

Event: A suicide bomber attacked a church during the Divine Liturgy, killing 30 and wounding 78

Fr Bishoy Wadie (**killed**)

Fr Daniel Maher (father of Deacon Beshoy Maher, said “In just seconds, the entire church was filled with smoke, fire, blood, and screams...He was like an angel, standing in the middle of the deacons singing”)

Deacon Beshoy Maher (aged 23, son of Fr Daniel Maher, **killed**)

Emil Edward (brother of Edmond Edward, wounded in the head, hospitalized)

Wahby Lamie (one nephew was killed in the bombing and one injured, said “How much longer are we going to be this divided? Anyone who’s different from them now is an infidel, whether they’re Muslim or Christian. They see them as infidels. How much longer are these people going to exist?”)

Madeleine (housewife, said "I saw a blue light on the belt of a person who was next to the deacons, then the explosion took place")

Edmond Edward (brother of Emil, said "After the explosion, everything became dark from the smoke. There was a clear lapse in security, which must be tightened from now on to save lives")

Susan Mikhail (apartment across the street shaken in the blast, said "Deacons were the first to run out of the church. Many of them had blood on their white robes")

Deacon Magdy George Youssef (aged 58, thrown under a pew by the explosion, said "All I could think of was to find my wife, and all I could see was smoke, blood and completely charred bodies", later found his wife at home with burns on her face)

Deacon Rafet Habshy (cousin of Hany Ezat, injured)

Hany Ezat (cousin of Deacon Rafet Habshy, said after the explosion "As a Coptic Christian, I no longer feel safe in Egypt")

Vivian Fareeg (said "There was a huge explosion in the hall. Fire and smoke filled the room and the injuries were extremely severe")

Fr Youssef Sabry (said "How did this suicide bomber reach the nave? Where were the security forces who were guarding the church? How did they allow a person wearing a suicide vest to enter the church without searching him?")

Deacon Michael Nabil Ragheb (aged 29, pharmacist, husband of Dr Sara Fekry, father of Priscilla, son of Nabil Ragheb, **killed**)

Dr Sara Fekry (widow of Michael Nabil Ragheb, said "On Palm Sunday he was actually one of those responsible for the hymns, so on Sunday morning the three of us went to the church to attend the Liturgy and celebrate the feast of Palm Sunday. Michael asked me not to sit in the front row of benches, but to sit in the back of the church and wait for him there until after the celebration. He then got dressed in his deacon clothes and started with the service. I didn't know why he asked me to do sit in the back of the church, but it was God's will, as in the middle of the service, at about 9.10am, the explosion took place. I heard the sound of a very huge explosion and the whole church shook like it was struck by a violent earthquake. Then it became dark in the building and people started to scream. For a moment, I thought it was Judgment Day, but then I got up and rushed to the front of the church, where the choir of deacons had been standing. When I got there, I saw many bodies and body parts lying in a pool of blood. It was like a massacre and I got a very big shock when I found Michael, lying on the ground in a pool of blood...My husband lived the life of heaven on the earth. He continuously prayed and read the Bible. I'm very happy for him as I know he is in a good place, with Jesus in heaven")

Priscilla (aged 3, daughter of Michael Nabil Ragheb and Dr Sara Fekry, granddaughter of Nabil Ragheb, present in the church during the explosion, no reported injuries)

Nabil Ragheb (father of Michael Nabil Ragheb and Kerolos Nabil Ragheb, said ""On Sunday morning I was surprised by one of my neighbors, who was knocking on the door of my flat, asking me where Michael and his wife were. I told her they went to Mar Girgis. She then told me that she heard about an explosion that had taken place at Mar Girgis. I immediately rushed to the church. When I arrived the street was filled with a great

number of people, including police and ambulance personnel. I saw one of Michael's friends and when I asked him if he knew where Michael was, he told me that he had gone to heaven. Then I went in to the church and found my son drenched in blood...Michael was a very kind person. He had a very strong relationship with God and is now in a very good place, in heaven, where he will celebrate Easter with Christ")

Kerolos Nabil Ragheb (brother of Michael Nabil Ragheb, said "The parting of my brother is very difficult for us. At the same time, however, we are very happy for him because he met his fate and went to heaven. We, on the other hand, are still struggling in this mortal life, and our fate isn't known yet. I love him so much and I hope to be with him soon. I'm sure that he is in very good place in heaven, with the others who died because of their faith and with the Saints. I envy him. I want to say to my martyred brother: 'I love you so much and I want to be like you'. I also want to say something to ISIL: 'I'm ready to die for my faith, like my brother. It's my desire to follow him in this. I'm waiting for you, so don't delay and please tell me which church you will bomb next so I can wait for you there. I look forward to meet Jesus, so please don't delay, as I wait for you")

Fr Ishak Habib (uncle of Michael Nabil Ragheb, said "Michael was very diligent. He was top of his class in university, where he graduated from the Faculty of Pharmacy with distinction. He was also a graduate from the Coptic Theological College. He was successful, both in his working life and spiritual life. He was a son of the Church from childhood onwards and was a very obedient, humble and honest person. Since 2006 he served at Mar Girgis as a deacon, teaching the children in Sunday school. We are sure that he has gone to a good place, to heaven, and that comforts us")

Date: April 9, 2017

Location: Tanta

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Attacks-on-Egypt%E2%80%99s-churches,-what-really-happened-40431.html>

and <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/04/09/death-toll-rises-following-cairo-church-bombing-on-palm-sunday/>

and <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/04/10/priest-mourns-deacon-son-killed-in-egypt-terrorist-attacks/>

and <http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/04/09/how-much-longer-will-security-be-this-incompetent-says-survivor-of-egypt-church-attacks/>

and <http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/04/09/bombings-at-egyptian-coptic-churches-kill-36-injure-more-than-100/>

and <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/04/16492/>

and <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/04/real-toll-egypts-palm-sunday-attacks-devastated-lives/>

Event: A suicide bomber attacked the cathedral but did not get through the security checkpoint, 17 were killed and 41 wounded

Pope Tawadros II (**UPDATE:** was finishing the Divine Liturgy when the attack occurred)

Rezk Helmy Kelnton (said "I saw blood stains on the church roof, 30 meters high. And I saw a man with his intestines pouring out of his body. Hands and feet scattered everywhere")

Sameh Fahim (said “I walked just 20 meters out of the church and heard the sound of a huge explosion. White dust filled the place, body parts were flying through the air, people were screaming and running in the street. One was screaming, ‘My son!’, another was screaming, ‘My wife!’, and another was screaming, ‘My grandson!’, as they searched for their loved ones. I saw body parts like a body without a head, it was a terrifying sight”)

Fr Sergius (assistant to Pope Tawardos, said “The Church will celebrate Easter and the terrorism cannot prevent it from doing that. We will not...let them break our joy”)

Date: April 9, 2017

Location: Alexandra

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Attacks-on-Egypt%E2%80%99s-churches,-what-really-happened-40431.html>
and <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/04/16492/>

Bishop Raphael (General Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church, announced in the aftermath of the April 9, 2017 double Palm Sunday church bombings that all celebration of Easter in the country will be cancelled)

Date reported: April 13, 2017

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1877&A=30357>

Bishop Makarios (**UPDATE:** said that the state of emergency declared after the double Palm Sunday church bombings will not help, added "We can consider ourselves in a wave of persecution, but the church has gone through a lot in 20 centuries")

Emad Aziz (aged 56, clothing salesman, said sales were down following the church bombings: "People are sad, and people buy new clothes when they are happy. The situation is really bad. Why would any Egyptian do this to his country? Is this loyalty to the country? Many people don't want Egypt to get better")

Date reported: April 14, 2017

Location: Minya

Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-violence-christians-idUSKBN17F1YG>



India

Pastor Yohannan Adam (church service of 150 worshippers including 11 U.S. tourists interrupted by Hindu radicals)

Dev Raj (parishioner, friend with the U.S. tourists, said "We were all shocked. My friends said: 'Is this what normally happens in India? That you visit a church and are mobbed by a group of men?'")

Date: April 7, 2017

Location: Dathauli area, Maharajganj district, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/62103-ASIA_INDIA_In_a_church_in_Uttar_Pradesh_Hindu_extremists_stop_prayers#.WOxAxPkrKM8
and <http://www.christianpost.com/news/christians-forced-stop-church-prayers-india-accusations-conversions-179919/>

Amarsingh (aged 35, arrested on illegal conversion charges)

Kishor Barela (aged 30, arrested on illegal conversion charges)

Prabhakar Barela (aged 39, arrested on illegal conversion charges)

Date: April 9, 2017

Location: Sitabedi village, Khandwa district, Madhya Pradesh

Source: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/three-christians-held-for-attempting-conversion-in-madhya-pradesh-4607223/>

Krishna Paul (beaten by a Hindu mob which then turned him over to police, released)

Date: April 9, 2017

Location: Jahanpur village, Ghazipur district, Uttar Pradesh state

Saji Mathew (arrested on false conversion charges along with seven parishioners, released)

Date: April 9, 2017

Location: Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan state

Gunasekaran (prayers with extended family in his home interrupted by government officials, told he required approval for his actions despite having led family prayers for 24 years)

Date: April 9, 2017

Location: Keeranur, Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/04/indias-churches-also-targeted-palm-sunday-modi-stays-silent/>

Sajan K George (**UPDATE**: condemned the desecration of a crucifix with a garland made of slippers)

Date: April 12, 2017

Location: Santacruz West, a suburb of Mumbai, Maharashtra state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Cross-desecrated-in-Mumbai:-garland-of-slippers-twisted-around-body-of-Christ-40470.html>



Iraq

Archbishop Nicodemus Daoud Sharaf (**UPDATE**: said "Those people [ISIL supporters in Europe] are the same ones who came here many years ago. And we accepted them. We are the original people in this land. We accepted them, we opened the doors for them, and they push us to be minorities in our land, then refugees in our land. And this will be with you if you don't wake up. If you don't wake up please tell us because we have caravans

[house trailers for refugees]. When we go back to our villages, we won't sell those caravans, we'll leave them for you when you become refugees from your [Western] country. Believe me, this will be")

Date: March 2017

Location: Erbil, Kurdistan

Source: <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/iraqi-orthodox-bishop-the-west-cares-more-about-frogs-than-us>



Mexico

Fr Omar Sotelo Aguilar (director of the Catholic Multimedia Center, received an award for his reporting on attacks on clergy and church workers)

Date: March 30, 2017

Source: <http://www.csw.org.uk/2017/04/05/news/3506/article.htm>



Pakistan

Ameen Masih (aged 45, husband of Rakhil Bibi, father of three, beaten in his home on [April 3, 2017](#) over a debt dispute; **UPDATE: burnt alive** in his home by his attackers)

Rakhil Bibi (widow of Ameen Masih, mother of three, is distraught at her husband's murder)

Date: April 4, 2017

Location: Uggoki Sialkot

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/sialkot-christian-viciously-burnt-alive-over-money-matter/>

and <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6392>

Event: Christian and Muslim leaders condemned the killing of 23 year old Muslim journalism student Mashal Khan on his campus by a mob comprised of hundreds of university students after he posted comments on Facebook favorable toward the Ahmadiyya branch of Islam

Bishop Jimmy Mathew (**UPDATE:** said "I spoke with some local young people who told me that clashes had occurred in the past. The blasphemy charge is only to cover up the crime. The government has ordered an investigation. What is needed is exemplary punishment for this mob violence")

Rojar Randhawa (Caritas manager; **UPDATE:** reposted the graphic video made by the killers to his social media, wrote "This shows that we have sown hatred in society and now we are

reaping the fruits of this hatred. This is not a new thing here. Religious extremism is at its peak in this part of the world")

Prof Anjum James Paul (**UPDATE**: said "When students at a higher education institute exhibit so much intolerance, what can we expect at the ground level?")

Date: April 13, 2017

Location: Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province

Source: [http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christians-and-activists-outraged-by-student-lynched-for-alleged-blasphemy-\(Video\)-40479.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christians-and-activists-outraged-by-student-lynched-for-alleged-blasphemy-(Video)-40479.html)



Russia

Vasily Kalin (elderly chairman of the Jehovah's Witness Administrative Center, Siberian exile survivor, testified at the Supreme Court hearing which will decide if the Witnesses are an extremist organization, showed the post-Soviet government certificate that listed him as a rehabilitated victim of political repression and asked "What kind of certification does the Ministry want to present to people whom it declares to be extremists?")

Date: April 7, 2017

Location: Moscow

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Experts-slam-baseless-charges-in-recessed-Jehovah's-Witnesses%E2%80%99-trial-40448.html>



Sweden

Ellinor Grimmark (aged 40, wife of Carl Johan, mother of two, refused employment as a midwife because she refused to perform abortions, as of **March 6, 2014** has filed a discrimination complaint; reported on **November 30, 2015** to have lost her employment appeal in a Swedish court, the court ruled in effect that her rights had been violated but that the maternity clinics' right to provide abortions superseded her rights, has been forced to work as a midwife in Norway; as of **April 15, 2016** has appealed the lower court decision, has been ordered to pay all court costs for the defendant - a municipal maternity clinic - which total approximately US\$100,000, will be forced to sell her home if her online fundraising fails; **UPDATE**: appeal denied by the Labor Court of Appeal, has not decided if she will appeal to the European Court of Human Rights)

Date: April 12, 2017

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/swedish-court-denies-pro-life-midwives-appeal-its-reasonable-for-employer-t>



Tanzania

Pastor Yahana Madai (church service disrupted by a 9 year old Muslim girl on [November 10, 2014](#); arrested on [November 11, 2014](#) after the girl's father alleged that he had touched her breast and removed her veil when he stopped her disruptions the previous night, released the next day, case closed a few days later due to lack of evidence; charges refiled in [early March 2017](#); **UPDATE**: charges dismissed, rearrested on unspecified charges while leaving the courthouse)

Date: [April 6, 2017](#)

Location: Zanzibar

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/04/muslims-zanzibar-tanzania-jail-pastor-child-abuse-allegation-scheme-group-says/>



United States - Ohio

Fr Joseph Klee (struck by an abortion supporter's motor vehicle after she fled the scene following her attempt to steal anti-abortion signs, hand injured, treated and released from the hospital)

Date: [April 8 or 9, 2017](#)

Location: Columbus

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/priest-injured-by-driver-at-pro-life-vigil-doesnt-resent-attacker>

Today's Martyrs

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

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