

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2017-04-30 through 2017-05-06



Belgium

Br Rene Stockman FC (superior general of the Brothers of Charity, objected when the mostly lay board of directors of the psychiatric hospitals operated by his order voted to allow euthanasia, said “We deplore this new vision...as general superior we cannot accept this decision, because it is going totally against our charism of the charity...Yes, there was a lot of pressure, but pressure doesn’t mean that we have to capitulate. All those who were against us are now singing that finally the group of the Brothers of Charity capitulated and came into their camp...[secularization is] poisoning the congregation”)

Date: April 28, 2017

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/religious-brothers-push-back-on-euthanasia-directive-for-catholic-hospitals-51607/>



Central African Republic

Pastor Enza (refugee camp resident, said "Life for Christians in ex-Seleka-controlled parts of the country is uncertain, and filled with fear and pressure. Quite a few Christians do not yet live in camps like this. They can stay in their own houses. But you keep your head down and live your life in silence, hoping not to cause trouble for yourself or other Christians")

Pastor Paul (refugee camp resident, said "I used to be a teacher at a local Bible college. On 12 October [2016] we had our morning break at nine. That’s when we saw ex-Seleka fighters rush onto school premises. We dropped everything and ran to safety. They came in two groups, one chased us away and the other, on motorcycles, looted everything. They stole our things and destroyed my house, where we had the library and the accounts...But I’m not discouraged. Why would I build this church [a thatched hut in the camp] if I was discouraged? I encourage students to continue studying. In the Bible it says that God sifts His people in dark times. I teach my students when we come together in this church to continue the school year, and that they have to endure. They must stay true to their faith. And, yes, they must be forgiving. God’s word does not teach us to pray that God kills our enemies but that He will change their hearts")

Aline (widow, refugee camp resident, said "We ran and ran and finally arrived in this camp. But when we fled we didn't have time to grab clothes for our children. After some hours my husband told me the shooting had calmed down and that we should go home and get their clothes. We found ex-Seleka fighters in our house. My husband went in first and they grabbed him...I saw them slaughter him. He could not fight back because four of them were sitting on top of him. I am worried. I don't know how to feed my children")

Yvette (refugee camp resident, said "On 12 October last year [2016] my old lame mother was killed in our house. When the shooting began, I took the little children and ran to safety in the woods. When I came back I found her beaten to death. I don't understand how you can possibly kill an old lame woman. How can you just beat her until she dies?")

Date reported: May 4, 2017

Location: Kaga Bandoro

Nathan (Open Doors relief worker, described conditions in areas controlled by ex-Seleka fighters "A local radio station, funded by the EU and handed to the Ndele community, blocks Christian radio programs despite the fact that most of the staff are Christian. When we last visited we found that only the Muslims were getting paid...Muslims have prevented Christians from trading at the local market. Christians cannot even get land to start income-generating activities. In the hope of alleviating their economic strife, I know of at least 49 Christians who have converted to Islam over the past few years")

Date reported: May 4, 2017

Location: Ndele

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/05/car-simple-survival-rule-in-idp-camp-if-you-walk-out-you-might-be-killed/>



China

Pastor Guo Pingxi (**UPDATE:** hosted a 'Unity in Christianity' meeting for 40 pastors that was raided by police, three pastors were taken away, accused of belonging to a foreign anti-China group)

Date: April 26, 2017

Location: Liaoning province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/05/meeting-of-christian-leaders-raided-in.html>



Ethiopia

Event: Three Protestants had been convicted in [Gulema Iyesus](#) on [October 28, 2014](#) and sentenced to 9 years' imprisonment for an arson attack on an Orthodox church; acquitted on [January 13, 2017](#), were still awaiting acquittal of the order to pay the church

compensation; **UPDATE: acquitted of civil responsibility to pay for the church damages**

Belete Tilahun

Dawit Jemberu

Tibebu Mekuria (husband, kiosk owner)

Date: May 2, 2017

Location: Addis Ababa

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/05/ethiopians-dont-have-to-pay-for-church-they-didnt-destroy/>



India

Fr Nigel Barrett (**UPDATE:** reported on the illegal demolition of a 122 year old Cross on private land by the municipal government)

Nicholas Almeida (said the Cross destruction "hurt our religious sentiments")

Date: April 29, 2017

Location: Bandra district, Mumbai

Fr Donald Rorigues (reported on the illegal demolition of a Cross by the municipal government)

Date: May 3, 2017

Location: Kalina, Mumbai

Source: [http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mumbai-Christians-hold-silent-protest-over-demolished-cross-\(Photo\)-40630.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mumbai-Christians-hold-silent-protest-over-demolished-cross-(Photo)-40630.html)
and <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/christians-protest-demolition-of-holy-cross/1/944384.html>

Pastor Mahesh Chand (accused of forced conversions while attending a birthday party, attacked by a mob along with five other Christians, arrested, held until midnight)

Date: March 29, 2017

Location: Shamshabad, Uttar Pradesh state

Pastor Ramesh (church service in a school interrupted by Hindu radicals, police ordered him to stop such activities, home invaded and wife attacked resulting in her hand being broken)

Date reported: May 3, 2017

Location: Dubkia village, Shamshabad, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2017/05/03/christians-in-uttar-pradesh-endure-spike-in-persecution-following-bjp-victory/>

Auxiliary Bishop Telesphore Billung (criticized the Hindu nationalist BJP party for advocating a new forced conversion law "The party has used the media to carry false news of

conversion from Hinduism and reconversion to Hinduism to prepare the ground for an anti-conversion law")

Bishop Vincent Barwa (said the BJP proposal is a "game to divert the attention of people from real issues")

Date: May 4, 2017

Location: Jharkhand state

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/hindu-party-pushes-anti-conversion-law-in-indian-state/79124>



Kazakhstan

Teymur Sultan ogly Akhmedov (aged 60, husband, father of three sons, retired bus driver, arrested on **January 18, 2017** for sharing his religious beliefs with KNB secret police informants, held in pre-trial detention, denied cancer treatment, reportedly has been beaten in prison, can barely walk; **UPDATE**: sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment followed by 3 years' prohibition on preaching, said he will appeal)

Date: May 2, 2017

Location: Astana

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2277



Pakistan

Shahzad Francis (complained of government inaction regarding desecration of a Christian cemetery that was now occupied by drug users)

Cecil Paul (said the cemetery problem developed after a wall collapsed and a gate was stolen and not replaced)

Daniel Sardar (said that locals began to throw their trash in the Christian cemetery after the gate was stolen)

Date: May 2, 2017

Location: Khurram Pura neighborhood, Khanewal

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/khanewal-christians-annoyed-by-local-authorities-inaction-and-neglectfulness/>

Sumbai Arif (aged 14, daughter of Elizabeth Arif, abducted by a policeman on **December 6, 2016** and forced to convert to Islam and to live with him; **UPDATE**: freed by a court order, returned home)

Elizabeth Arif (widow, mother of Sumbai Arif, said that after her abduction “One day, when Munir [the abductor] was not home, I succeeded in bringing Sumbal back to my house, but as soon as the ASI returned, he came to our house and forcibly took her away with him, claiming that she was a Muslim now and cannot live with a Christian family. He also beat up my young sons when they tried to stop him from taking away Sumbal...The accused used to force her to do household work and had restricted her from leaving the house. It was during her detention there that Sumbal came to know that the police official and his wife were in the business of selling girls for over 10 years. They told her that apostates are liable to be killed, and my poor daughter had started believing that she would not be able to return to us as she would be guilty of apostasy”)

Fr Mushtaq Piyara (**UPDATE**: attempted to secure the freedom of Sumbai Arif)

Date: April 26, 2017

Location: Hafizabad district, Punjab province

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/05/girl-14-rescued-muslim-pakistan-accused-forcibly-converting/>

Zafar Bhatti (aged 45, unemployed due to health reasons, illiterate, arrested on blasphemy charges on July 23, 2012 for allegedly sending 3 blasphemous text messages to extremist Islamic cleric Molvi Abrar Ahmed; **UPDATE**: convicted, sentenced to life imprisonment)

Date: May 3, 2017

Location: Rawalpindi

Source: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue28101.html>

and <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/travesty-of-justice-blasphemy-accused-christian-sentenced-to-lifelong-incarceration/>

and <http://www.fides.org/en/news/62216->

[ASIA PAKISTAN Pakistani Christian condemned to jail for blasphemy#.WQyKTfkrKM8](#)

and <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6431>

Pastor Shahid Masih (attempted to file a police report after parishioners were threatened with dire consequences on April 9, 2017 if they engaged in a religious procession, some parishioners were beaten, police arrived two hours too late; **UPDATE**: tensions have continued to grow after a Christian girl eloped with a Muslim boy, Christians have been told to convert or leave)

Date: May 4, 2017

Location: Salik Town, Faisalabad

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/convert-or-leave-human-rights-and-minorities-affairs-department-succors-unnerved-christians/>

Shakil Masih (hospital janitor, publicly beaten by the armed bodyguard of a commissioner who objected to the hygiene at the hospital)

Date: May 1, 2017

Location: Khanewal

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/jahanian-dc-khanewal-scornfully-abuses-christian-janitor/>



Palestine

Sr Maria Ramsis (assaulted along with her driver over a land dispute regarding her monastery)

Date: May 4, 2017

Location: Jerusalem

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1892&A=30611>



United States - Rhode Island

Dr Anthony Esolen (professor at Providence College, as of [November 3, 2016](#) has been under pressure to resign after publishing two articles on the existence of “the Totalitarian Diversity Cult”[the phrase was his publisher’s, not his] at the college, has been charged with making 'racist, xenophobic, misogynist, homophobic, and religiously chauvinist statements'; **UPDATE:** resigned, took a position at Thomas More College in New Hampshire, said "...to live at a used-to-be-Catholic school no longer committed to the humanities, where all the big decisions are basically secular in their inspiration and their aim, on a campus that is highly politicized and therefore treacherous — no, that’s not for someone of my years. I wrote, 10 years ago, that we had never really lost our identity, and what we had lost we were well on the way to recover. I could not write those words now...And what can you do against slander and detraction? Stand on a stump and shout your innocence to all passersby?"

Date reported: May 4, 2017

Location: Providence

Source: <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/pjsmith/anthony-esolen-in-his-own-words-why-i-left-providence-college-for-thomas-mo>



Vietnam

Khanh (aged 28, convert, husband, father, pressured by his village leaders to abandon his faith, beaten by his brother along with his daughter, he and family have relocated to a pastor's house)

Date: March 28, 2017

Source: <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/take-action/pray/believer-northern-vietnam-sustains-injuries-refusing-deny-jesus/>

Today's Martyrs

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

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