

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2017-07-16 through 2017-07-22



China

Xu Zhiyong (aged 44, attorney, new father, sentenced to 4 years' imprisonment in [Beijing](#) on [January 19, 2014](#), said ‘...I believe in the power of faith, and in the power of the truth, compassion and beauty that exists in the depths of the human soul...’; **UPDATE:** released from prison)

Date: July 15, 2017

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/china-releases-christian-human-rights-activist-prison-xu-zhiyong-192088/>

Pastor Li Wanhua (detained on [June 14, 2017](#), accused of cult activity; **UPDATE:** released on bail for one year, under travel restrictions)

Ruan Haonan (husband of Luo Caiyan, detained on [June 12, 2017](#), accused of cult activity; **UPDATE:** released on bail for one year, under travel restrictions)

Date: July 20, 2017

Location: Jiangmen, Guangdong province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/07/wrongly-charged-christians-released-on.html>

Zhang (said “For a long time, teenagers and students have not been allowed to participate in religious activities. However, the Three-Self [official] Churches and [underground] house churches would usually hold summer camps during the summer vacation. The government then emphasized...that even the Sunday schools would be closed down. The government’s major intention is to shut down the Sunday schools...he government is trying to control ideology. During [Chinese Presidents] Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao’s time, the government was tolerant toward preaching and missionary work. After Xi Jinping came into power, the government’s grip on religion has strengthened”)

Date reported: July 21, 2017

Location: Hangzhou, Zhejiang province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/07/provinces-seek-to-eradicate-sunday.html>



Congo, Democratic Republic

Fr Pierre Akilimali (abducted by persons unknown)

Fr Charles Kipasa (abducted by persons unknown)

Date: July 17, 2017

Location: Bunyuka, North-Kivu province

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/62655->

[AFRICA DR CONGO Two priests kidnapped The Bishops condemnation Hurting them means harming the community they serve#.WW4N5oTyuM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62655-)



Egypt

Jamal Kamal Aweidah (aged over 40, arrested on fraud charges, **died in police custody** after having likely been tortured)

Date: July 19, 2017

Location: Cairo

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/62680->

[AFRICA EGYPT A Copt dies while being detained in a police station Relatives and friends he was tortured to death#.WXH8soTyuM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62680-)

Mina Zakhary (church security guard, stabbed while at the church, hospitalized)

Date: July 15, 2017

Location: Alexandria

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1943&A=31561>

and <https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/07/16/muslim-knifeman-attacks-egypt-church-guard/>



Eritrea

Patriarch Abune Antonios (disappeared in 2007; as of **May 27, 2017** has passed 10 years' in house arrest; **UPDATE:** allowed to attend a public Divine Liturgy at the cathedral, returned to house arrest)

Date: July 16, 2017

Location: Asmara

Source: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/32999>

and: <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/patriarch-abune-antonios-of-eritrea-detained-again/>

and <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/eritrean-synod-organises-a-sham-reconciliation/>



Greece

Haroon Maqbool (father of two, Pakistani refugee, arrived on Lesbos in August 2016, along with other Christians was threatened by Muslims, all did not complete registration due to fear and left the refugee camp; **UPDATE**: homeless on the Greek mainland, denied UN refugee status due to having left the Lesbos refugee camp)

Date reported: July 17, 2017

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/christians-barred-asylum-leaving-refugee-camp-harassment-muslim-migrants-192257/>



India

Pastor Sultan Masih (husband of Sarbjit, father of Anoop, Ali Shah and Hanok, brother of Raj Kamal Masih, **shot dead** by two assailants on motorcycles outside his church, had no known enemies, police initially refused to perform a full investigation)

Sarbjit (widow of Pastor Sultan Masih)

Ali Shah (aged 26, son of Pastor Sultan Masih)

Hanok (aged 18, daughter of Pastor Sultan Masih)

Anoop Masih (son of Pastor Sultan Masih, discovered his body)

Pastor Vishnu Dev (**UPDATE**: said after the murder of Pastor Sultan Masih “He and his family are serving Christ for decades and they are at peace with everyone. But four days before he was shot, I met him, and he told me, “Please pray for us, as we continue standing for Christ, many enemies are standing up against us. Please pray for us”)

Raj Kamal Masih (brother of Pastor Sultan Masih, said “Anoop Masih heard the noise of shooting and came out of his room on the first floor. Seeing his dad lying on the road, he screamed and alerted everyone in the church building...My brother was a peace loving man. We don’t have any enmity towards anyone. Since over two decades my brother is serving Christ”)

Pastor Balwinder Kumar (said that Pastor Sultan Masih may have been targeted for a public celebration of the church's 25th anniversary “RSS [paramilitary] activists arrived there and started accusing the pastor of forced conversions. They came to him to quarrel twice after the event, too. The feud was not so very serious that he had to be killed like this. The RSS activists accused him that, ‘You Christians get paid for converting people. How much do you pay the converted?’ They were stiff and were not listening when Pastor Masih tried to explain it is not true”)

Pastor Paul Tamizharasan (said "Pastor Sultan Masih was my neighbor and my friend" after his assassination, added "The state of Punjab is very safe in India for Christians. There are Sikhs living here – they are also a religious minority in India. We are also a minority, but never before have we had any threats. But unfortunately this has happened and we are all shocked about how this is possible")

Date: July 15, 2017

Location: Salem Tabri, Punjab state

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/pastor-shot-dead-outside-church-in-india> and <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/07/pastor-punjab-state-india-shot-dead/>

and: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/07/india-christians-shock-pastor-shot-dead-safe-punjab/>

Sajan K George (**UPDATE**: commented on the recent cemetery desecration "In June, the All India Hindu Convention met in Goa. The result was desecration and insecurity for the minority. During the meeting, Sadhvi Saraswati, president of Sanatan Dharma Prachar Seva Summit, said those who eat cow should be hanged in public, and said 'I ask Hindus to take up arms to defend our cow, our mother'")

Date: July 10, 2017

Location: Goa

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Crosses-broken-and-cemetery-desecrated-in-Goa-due-to-religious-hatred,-Mgr-Neri-Ferrao-says-41301.html>

Bishop Dominic Lumon (said after the Supreme Court ordered an investigation into extrajudicial killings by the police and military "We welcome the decision and hope the probe will be impartial, devoid of political goals, and bring justice to the victims")

Date: July 20, 2017

Location: Imphal, Manipur state

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-bishop-welcomes-extra-judicial-killings-probe/79798>



Iran

Ebrahim Firouzi (convert, aged 32, welder, reported on [May 1, 2015](#) to have been sentenced to five additional years' imprisonment for "action against national security through collusion and gathering", the gathering in question was a meeting where he met with friends to say goodbye before the beginning of his original prison term; **UPDATE**: had begun another hunger strike, wrote "Following the mistreatment of new Christian believers and converts by the judicial authorities, refusing Christian prisoners access to Christian literature, and issuing unjust and hefty verdicts and sentences against new Christian believers and converts to the point that in the recent months tens of Christians have been sentenced to long years of imprisonment, I hereby announce going on hunger strike, commencing on 17 July 2017, for a period of 10 days, in support of the rights of fellow Christians")

Date: July 17, 2017

Location: Rajaei-Shahr prison, Karaj, Alborz province

Source: <http://www.meconcern.org/2017/07/21/iranian-christian-on-hunger-strike/>



Iraq

Event: The first Christian family has returned to their home town after the defeat of ISIL, had been refugees since August 2014

Labib Rammo (aged 55, husband of Nedal Yousif, father, said "The time of exile was difficult, without a home, with broken affections and ties, a part of the family distant. Our routines and customs were upset, all this has created difficulties and made us feel like foreigners in our land. We have cultivated a vegetable garden. We have found our home, we want to add a room, our young children are growing up and are now have marriages of their own...We have to feel that this is our land and this is the place to witness the Christian faith today more ever...We have lost homes and property, but our faith has remained")

Nedal Yousif (aged 46, wife of Labib Rammo, mother)

Taher (aged 24)

Maher (aged 23)

Myron (aged 22)

Marsen (aged 21)

Firas (aged 15)

Barbara (aged 14)

Merna Rammo (aged 4 months)

Date reported: July 22, 2017

Location: Karamles

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Karamles,-welcomes-home-first-Christian-family,-after-Isis:-Like-letting-go-of-a-heavy-weight.-41352.html>

Haitham Behnam (aged 34, said he will not return to his home in Mosul "There's no security, no protection for Christians back there. It's better for us to stay here and keep our mouths shut")

Date reported: July 21, 2017

Location: Erbil, Kurdistan

Source: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/no-security-no-protection-for-mosuls-christians-after-islamic-state/>



Nepal

Santosh Khadka (shot while returning home from church, underwent surgery, has had lingering fears but has hopes they will pass)

Date: April 16, 2017

Location: Kathmandu

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/07/nepals-christian-worker-who-was-shot-at-on-easter-says-hes-still-fearful/>



Nigeria

Fr Gideon Obasogie (**UPDATE:** said following recent suicide bombings "Boko Haram is an enemy of humanity and does not hesitate to kill faithful Muslims. Its tactics is to commit atrocities against innocent civilians in order to maximize the terrorist impact on the population...Over the last few months, Boko Haram attacked crowded places of Maiduguri and its suburbs, such as markets and hospitals. The jihadist group attacks civilians also because the latter have organized self-defense militias to try to limit their assaults...Unfortunately, some politicians are involved in the phenomenon of Boko Haram. If there were no political interests, Boko Haram would no longer be a problem")

Date: July 17, 2017

Location: Maiduguri, Borno state

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/62650->

[AFRICA NIGERIA Boko Haram attacks a mosque It is an enemy of humanity says the Social Communications Director of the Diocese of Maiduguri#.WWzAVoTyuM8](#)

Ambore Gideon Todi (aged 21, college physics student, son of Williams Abba Todi, **killed** in a suicide bombing)

Joseph Kamida Cham (**UPDATE:** said "When Ambore [Gideon Todi]'s friend returned from his trip and could not find him during the student ministry fellowship, that made him to start asking questions. It was later disclosed that Ambore was mistaken for one of the suicide bombers that died...He was [the only male child and] the only child of the family who went beyond secondary school. He was in Physics Department and in his 100 level...It is believed that he was not the only one affected by the bomb blast, as there were others involved and were in their fellowship program. The authorities did not say anything about their demise till after nine days. We knew of his death because he is from my state")

Williams Abba Todi (father of Ambore Gideon Todi, wrote on Facebook "KILLED BY BOKO HARAM. The management of the University of Maiduguri has today officially informed us of the death of our son AMBORE GIDEON TODI killed in the suicide bombing.

Ambore rest in the LORD as you were killed in the Church on active service give us consolation you are on the right hand of GOD”)

Date reported: May 11, 2017

Location: Maiduguri, Borno state

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/07/christian-student-killed-spate-boko-haram-attacks-northeast-nigeria/>



Pakistan

Shahzad Masih (aged 17, son of Hina Shafaqat and Shafaqat Masih, hospital janitor, **UPDATE:** abducted and taken to a madrassa [Islamic school] for questioning after a blasphemy allegation had been made against him, arrested, whereabouts unknown)

Shafaqat Masih (builder, husband of Hina Shafaqat , father of Shahzad Masih, in hiding after his son was arrested on blasphemy charges, said "We left the city same evening the clerics captured him. I switched off my phone fearing they will trace my family...We are poor people and I am out of work now. The clerics did not listen to our please, they will kill my son")

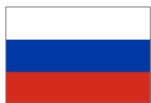
Hina Shafaqat (mother of Shahzad Masih)

Date: July 14, 2017

Location: Dinga town, Gujrat District, Punjab Province

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/07/islamists-pakistan-accuse-christian-minor-blaspheming-islams-prophet/>

and: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistani-catholic-family-flees-following-blasphemy-allegation/79776>



Russia

Avel Lukin (aged 18, conscientious objector, denied alternative civilian service by a [Chuvash Republic](#) military conscription office on [May 12, 2017](#), ordered to serve in the nuclear missile forces; **UPDATE:** appeal denied)

Date: July 4, 2017

Location: Shumerlya, Chuvash Republic

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2297



South Africa

Archbishop Stephen Brislin (aged 60, said "The recommendation that new laws be introduced to enforce registration of pastors and ministers is overkill and a response that one would expect more from a totalitarian state than a constitutional democracy...We fully understand and share government's unhappiness with certain practices done in the name of religion, such as requiring adherents to drink petrol or eat grass. However, we believe that there is sufficient existing legislation that can be evoked to deal with most of these harmful practices")

Date: July 20, 2017

Location: Capetown

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/62677->

[AFRICA SOUTH AFRICA The Bishops No to the registration of pastors and ministers of religion#.WXH MITyuM8](#)



Tajikistan

Pastor Bakhrom Kholmatov (aged 42, husband, father of three, arrested on [April 10, 2017](#) by the NSC secret police on charges of 'extremism'; **UPDATE**: sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment for 'singing extremist songs in church and so inciting religious hatred', friends and family threatened with arrest if they disclose details of the trial)

Date reported: July 14, 2017

Location: Khujand

Pastor Pyotr Plett (church raided by NSC secret police, later said the authorities "left us alone after the incident")

Date: June 11, 2017

Location: Dushanbe

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2298



Tanzania

Event: Three Christians were arrested for cooking in a private home during Ramadan, released three days later

Emmanuel Yohana (husband of Katherine Emmanuel)

Katherine Emmanuel (wife of Emmanuel Yohana)

Khadija

Dates: June 16 and 19, 2017

Location: Zanzibar

Source: <http://www.csw.org.uk/2017/7/7/press/3627/article.htm>



United Kingdom

Tim Dieppe (wrote that a Foreign Office report "urges reinterpretation of scripture and the imposition of LGBTI ideology on evangelical Christians in the Global South... What this report advocates is a kind of neo-colonialism which imposes an ideology on other countries, regarding their existing morality as backwards. Whist blaming colonialism for the legacy of Biblical morality, the report sees no irony in seeking to impose an LGBT agenda on Global South nations in a patronizing manner. This is also done by British embassies which are being used to 'marry' same sex couples in countries where same sex marriage is illegal. Over the last year, more than 200 same sex 'weddings' took place in British embassies and consulates in countries where same sex 'marriage' is illegal. Imposing an ideology on evangelical Christians in the Global South appears to be the stated aim of the Foreign Office according to this report. This works against freedom of religion and human rights more generally. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office should immediately disassociate itself from this report and make clear that it does not represent UK government policy. The government should be working to promote freedom of religion around the world, not undermining it")

Date: July 21, 2017

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/freedom-of-speech/foreign-office-agency-says-biblical-morality-is-hateful>

Andrea Minichiello Williams (**UPDATE**: booed at the Church of England General Synod when she asked the delegates and bishops to consider the Bible in their deliberations on gender issues)

Rev Gavin Ashenden (**UPDATE**: said of the Church of England General Synod "One of the saddest moments was when our doughtiest public campaigner, Andrea Minichiello Williams, who is the director of Christian Concern, she stood up and invited people to consider the demands of Scripture. She wasn't listened to in respectful silence. She was booed. Well, when you have the Synod of the Church of England booing somebody who has an extraordinary reputation for standing up for the Gospel in the public space, who was inviting the Synod to consider the claims of Scripture, when someone like that was booed, you know that things have gone too far, there's been a sea change")

Date: July 7-11, 2017

Location: York

Source: https://youtu.be/ttHFDXH_BQE?t=245



United States - North Carolina

John Bailey Clark (aged 74, retiree, recluse, animal lover, **shot dead** in his sleep by an 18 year old neighbor who had pledged allegiance to ISIL aka the Islamic State)

Date: December 18, 2014

Location: Morganton

Source: <http://www.tributes.com/obituary/show/John-Bailey-Clark-102006541>
and <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/local/article161716598.html>

United States - California

David Daleiden (aged 29; investigative journalist, home in Orange county and office raided on **April 5, 2016**, video recordings seized; indicted on **March 28, 2017** 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]; all counts dismissed in San Francisco on **June 21, 2017**; **UPDATE**: found in contempt of court for having released videos of abortionists publicly discussing abortion details, fined over \$137,000, judge has connections to Planned Parenthood but refused to recuse himself)

Date: July 19, 2017

Location: San Francisco

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/judge-orders-daleiden-to-pay-137k-to-abortion-group-for-violating-gag-order>



Venezuela

Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino (**UPDATE**: mediated the safe exit of a crowd that had taken refuge in a church after armed civilian supporters of the government had fired on them, killing one)

Date: July 16, 2017

Location: Catia, outside Caracas

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/shots-fired-at-people-voting-outside-church-in-venezuela-24718/>
and http://www.fides.org/en/news/62654-AMERICA_VENEZUELA_Cardinal_Urosa_Savino_after_the_attack_in_the_parish_enough_violence_against_the_people#.WW4NdoTyuM8



Vietnam

Fr Truong Van Thuc (led about 1,000 Catholics in protest over the government's year long delay in disbursing compensation for an environmental disaster which had already been paid by the polluting corporation)

Date: July 17, 2017

Location: Quang Binh province

Source: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/catholic-villagers-in-vietnam-protest-lack-of-compensation-for-formosa-disaster-07032017144316.html>



Yemen

Fr Tom Uzhunnalil SDB (aged 58, Indian citizen, abducted when armed men attacked a nursing home in Aden on [March 4, 2016](#), killing 16 employees and residents including 4 nuns; **UPDATE:** confirmed to be still alive)

Date: July 12, 2017

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/07/church-relieved-as-yemen-confirms-kidnapped-indian-priest-is-alive/>

Today's Martyrs

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

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