

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2017-08-06 through 2017-08-12



Brazil

Archbishop Antonio Muniz (robbed at gunpoint while leaving his residence to say Mass)

Deacon Inaldo Pitta (witnessed the robbery)

Date: August 5, 2017

Location: Maceio

Source: <http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2017/08/09/brazilian-archbishop-robbed-at-gunpoint/>



Central African Republic

Bishop Juan Jose Aguirre Munos MCCJ (Spanish citizen; **UPDATE:** wrote “The massacre in Central Africa Republic in Gambo, a village 70 km from Bangassou, was even mentioned yesterday by the Holy Father...Several tens of people were shot dead in Gambo on 4 and 5 August. It all began when Anti Balaka militia attacked Gambo, which for the past four years has been in the hands of so called ex-Seleka [Muslim militia]. More recently the Seleka increased attacks on the local people, women in particular, many abducted from their homes in front of their husbands and later raped. On 4 August Anti Balaka entered Gambo to oust the Seleka. From what I have been told as soon as the Anti Balaka arrived, troops of the MINUSCA UN Mission there immediately opened fire. Reportedly the Anti Balaka then opened fire on the UN military who in turn in an exaggerated reaction, fired wildly hitting civilians as well. The Anti Balaka were forced to take cover in the forest, while the Seleka, back in Gambo finding a Red Cross Team in the hospital holding a meeting, preceded to slit the throats of all present, men women and children...So the massacre, by the Seleka, was triggered by the reaction out of all proportion of the MINUSCA UN troops who when attacked usually do have a violent reaction. They are trigger-happy. I know of a young seminarian and his father killed by stray bullets coming from MINUSCA mission soldiers. This is all deeply saddening...Then I ask myself why, once Gambo had been saved from the Anti Balaka, did the UN MINUSCA leave the people in the hands of the Seleka? These so called Peace Keeping Troops whose job is to disarm all the factions in the country, did forcefully disarm the Anti Balaka but not the

Seleka who appear more heavily armed than ever. Here is a sense of complicity which we fail to understand”)

Date: August 10, 2017

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/62776-AFRICA_CENTRAL_AFRICAN_REPUBLIC_Massacre_in_Bangassou_denounced_by_the_Pope_local_Bishop_condemns_trigger_happy_UN_troops#.WYxty1WGOM8



China

Deacon Zhang Xiuhong (church board chairwoman, detained in late July 2015, church bank accounts totaling US\$15,660 frozen; formally arrested on September 1, 2015 on 'illegal business operations' charges; sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment on January 23, 2017, later reduced to 3 years on appeal; **UPDATE**: released, said her faith had become stronger and that she had shared her faith with many prisoners)

Date reported: August 7, 2017

Location: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/08/falsely-accused-christian-emerges-from.html>

Howard Lam Tsz-kin (politician, abducted by two men, beaten, had 10 crosses stapled into his thighs, asked "Why don't you love your country and religion?" which is a version of a government slogan regarding state control of churches, released)

Date: August 10, 2017

Location: Hong Kong

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/hong-kong-protestant-tortured-for-showing-concern-for-liu-xia/79987>

Pastor Huang Yizi (aged 43, **UPDATE**: called to a police station for interrogation, released that night, later wrote "Thank God. Thank you all for praying for me. After being kept by the government by all sorts of excuses, I finally gained temporary freedom at 9 p.m. yesterday. Although the government claims that the [bail] enforcement measures have been removed, the case itself is not finished. I know who is in charge of the future. Our hearts will always be at peace, because Jesus resides there. God bless this era and the pastors and the lawyers who are suffering for the name of God. Thank you for your likes and comments in Moments ["Moments" is a feature of the Chinese social media platform WeChat that allows users to access updates from their friends]. Although I cannot reply to them all, I read every comment carefully. There is only one thing I want to say: thank you all. I wouldn't be so safe without your prayers, your attention, and your reposts of my message in your Moments and group chats. I am deeply moved. Your actions ensured my safety. It is so nice to have you. God bless you all")

Date: August 2, 2017

Location: Wenzhou, Zhejiang province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/08/police-interrogate-zhejiang-pastor-lift.html>



Cuba

Pastor Ramon Rigal (sentenced on [April 25, 2017](#) to one year at hard labor for removing his children from government schools to avoid anti-Christian teaching; sentence reduced to home arrest on [July 6, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: told that he may no longer work as a church leader and that he will now work as a mosquito inspector)

Date: [July 31, 2017](#)

Location: Guantanamo

Source:

<http://www.cswusa.org/files/Documents/News/Cuba/20170804%20CUBA%20Pastor%20Barred%20From%20Working%20as%20Church%20Leader.pdf>

Pastor Ramon Rigal (husband of Adya Rigal, sentenced on [April 25, 2017](#) to one year at hard labor for removing his children from government schools to avoid anti-Christian teaching; sentence reduced to home arrest on [July 6, 2017](#); told on [July 31, 2017](#) that he may no longer work as a church leader and that he will now work as a mosquito inspector; **UPDATE**: told he may work as a church leader but not leave his home)

Adya Rigal (wife of Pastor Ramon Rigal, sentenced on [April 25, 2017](#) to house arrest for one year for removing her children from government schools to avoid anti-Christian teaching)

Date: [August 8, 2017](#)

Location: Guantanamo

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/cuban-pastor-jailed-homeschooling-kids-told-he-can-resume-work-church-leader-but-cant-leave-house-195053/>



Egypt

Fr Sharobim (reported on the destruction of a 4th century monastery for a tourist resort)

Date: [August 10, 2017](#)

Location: Abul-Darag monastery, Ain al-Sukhna, Suez region

Source: <https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/08/10/fourth-century-abul-darag-monastery-destroyed-by-antiquities-officials/>

Dr Naguib Gibrael (attorney for the Coptic Church, head of the Egyptian Federation for Human Rights; **UPDATE**: filed a complaint against a mosque for effectively preventing Christian girls from attending a nearby school)

Date reported: [August 11, 2017](#)

Location: Awqaf

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1958&A=31817>



India

Event: Over 100 Christians signed *An Open Letter to the Heads of all Churches and other Christian Leaders* concerning Hindu nationalism "We, as Indian Christians, are concerned at the steady shift we see in our country from a pluralist, secular, democracy to a Hindu Rashtra [the supremacist Land of the Hindus]. What used to be fringe, has now become mainstream. There is a systematic design to undermine the Constitution. Official machinery often seems working in tandem with the 'vigilantes'. Street lynching, victims charged as accused, stage-managed trials, all on the basis of one's religious and caste identities. Media seems mute, silent in self-censorship, coerced by the state, or leashed by its corporate ownership...In unison with members of all faiths, ideologies, we should marshal India's tremendous spiritual resources in consolidating peace, resolving conflicts and infusing a sense of values in the body politic"

A C Michael (former Delhi Minorities Commission member; **UPDATE:** signatory, said that while the letter was sent to church leaders it was meant as a call to every Christian to unite for justice)

Fr Ajaya Kumar Singh (director of the Odisha Forum for Social Action [OROSA]; **UPDATE:** signatory, said that the letter was meant to encourage Christians to better coordinate their responses to persecution)

Fr Cedric Prakash SJ (**UPDATE:** signatory)

Fr Denzil Fernandes SJ (Executive Director of the Indian Social Institute; **UPDATE:** signatory)

Fr Dominic Emmanuel (**UPDATE:** signatory)

Franklin Caesar (**UPDATE:** signatory)

Jenis Francis (attorney; **UPDATE:** signatory)

Dr John Dayal (**UPDATE:** signatory)

P B M Basaiawmoit (National Council of Churches; **UPDATE:** signatory)

Pramod Singh (attorney, president of the Christian Lawyers Association; **UPDATE:** signatory)

Shibu Thomas (founder of Persecution Relief; **UPDATE:** signatory)

Rev Vijayesh Lal (Religious Liberty Commission national director; **UPDATE:** signatory)

Date: August 4, 2017

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/christian-leaders-call-on-community-to-resist-attacks/79955>

and <http://www.ecumenicalnews.com/article/indian-christians-alarmed-at-violence-against-religious-minorities/60396.htm>

and <http://todaysmartyrs.org/pdf/Documents/2017-08-04%20An%20Open%20Letter%20to%20the%20Heads%20of%20all%20Churches%20and%20other%20Christian%20Leaders.pdf>

Event: Christians again protested the government's 1950 order that removed legal protections for Christian [and Muslim] untouchables

Dr John Dayal (**UPDATE:** said "This law is the biggest violator of religious freedom because it denies 150 million or more low caste individuals the right to choose their faith. They have to be Hindus or they have to be of a faith which deemed to be Hindu, like Buddhism or Sikhism...In effect, the 1950 Presidential Order has acted as a powerful anti-conversion law because the law has punitive consequences for anyone to change from Hinduism to Christianity or Islam. It effectively denies Hindus of low caste origin the freedom of faith which is the birth right of every Indian citizen")

Fr Savarimuthu Shankar (**UPDATE:** said "It's a discrimination based on one's religion and it's unconstitutional. The State has denied and deprived Christians of their rights and privileges enshrined in the constitution")

Arun (aged 19, son of Ratnam, Mudugula caste member, denied an engineering scholarship)

Ratnam (father of Arun, Mudugula caste member, said "We dreamed of my son doing a dignified job and thought our fate of doing menial job is over forever. But, my son did not get the admission to study engineering as we cannot afford to pay without the help of the government. We are denied this help because we follow the Christian faith")

Naresh (alias, government employee, said "Sometimes I have to participate [in] customs and rituals to prove that I am a Hindu to protect my job. I do not know how long I need to live this double life")

Date: August 10, 2017

Location: New Delhi

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2017/08/10/low-caste-christians-mark-67-years-of-discrimination-and-injustice-under-indias-scheduled-caste-system/>

Sajan K George (**UPDATE:** reported on the detention of two unnamed Nepalese couples on forced conversion charges)

Date: August 1, 2017

Location: Ahodia

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Two-Nepali-Christian-couples-detained-for-%E2%80%9Cforced-conversions%E2%80%9D-in-Bihar-41511.html>



Indonesia

Bishop John Philip Saklil (**UPDATE:** called for accountability after police shot into a crowd, killing one and injuring seven including two children, said "With similar cases that occur continuously and those that are not resolved professionally, it only creates a bad

impression that both the police and military are not the protector of the people but the protectors of immoral criminals")

Date: August 1, 2017

Location: Deyiai district, Papua

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/papuan-bishop-calls-for-police-accountability-over-shooting/79942>

Viktor Bungtilu Laiskodat (aged 52, member of parliament, accused of blasphemy after saying that Islamic political parties wanted to form a caliphate)

Date: August 1, 2017

Location: East Nusa Tenggara province

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/indonesian-muslims-accuse-christian-lawmaker-of-blasphemy/79988>



Iran

Maryam Naghash-Zargaran aka Nasim (aged 39, began serving four years imprisonment on July 15, 2013; released from prison; **UPDATE**: during her release was accused before the prison court of abusing prison medical staff, family concerned another prosecution will be started against her)

Date: August 1, 2017

Location: Evin prison, Tehran

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3655>



Iraq

Shushan (elderly woman, beaten and robbed during a home invasion)

Date reported: August 6, 2017

Location: Doura district, Bagdad

Source [warning - graphic]: <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/6b4c8943-04e0-4d30-abc4-7ad6fec3b6d9>

Archbishop Yohanna Petros Moshe (**UPDATE**: said that over 600 Christian families had returned home to the Mosul area: "Some have found work or started restaurants, shops and trade businesses. It takes a lot of courage to start from scratch again...We have to be able to live together. We are all sick of war. Wars have been fought in Iraq off and on since 1958")

Date reported: July 27, 2017

Source: <http://members4.boardhost.com/acnaus/msg/1501113370.html>
and <http://www.aina.org/news/20170811204713.htm>



Italy

Event: Christians voiced opposition to the appearance of abortionist and Radical Party member Emma Bonino at a Catholic church to speak on immigration issues

Alberto Cerutti (entrepreneur, pro-life activist, attempted to interrupt her speech, said “I merely said out loud that, with her abortion choices, she is among those responsible for the population decline, at which point I was forcibly escorted out of the church...[her acceptance of immigrants was] absurd [because it was] from someone who does not accept our children”)

Dr Leandro Aletti (gynecologist, attempted to interrupt her speech, booed)

Giorgio Celsi (member of the pro-life group Ora et Labora, attempted to interrupt her speech, booed)

Date: July 26, 2017

Location: Biella

Source: <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/famous-italian-pro-abortionist-speaks-in-church-catholics-ejected-silenced>



Kazakhstan

Pastor Marat Tlegenov (fined US\$680 for performing an outdoor baptism)

Pastor Hae Taik Kim (Canadian citizen, fined US\$680 for attending an outdoor baptism, ordered deported)

Myungsoon Bae (South Korean citizen, fined US\$340 for attending an outdoor baptism, banned from activities for 3 months)

Byung Jin Ahn (South Korean citizen, fined US\$340 for attending an outdoor baptism, banned from activities for 3 months)

Samantha Sun Yu Leist (U.S. citizen, fined US\$340 for attending an outdoor baptism, banned from activities for 3 months)

Sung Chun Park (U.S. citizen, fined US\$340 for attending an outdoor baptism, banned from activities for 3 months)

Date: July 10, 2017

Location: Uighur district

Pastor Aleksandr Gorbunov (Bible meeting in [Astrakhanka village](#), [Akmola region](#) interrupted by police on [May 24, 2017](#); fined US\$728 on [May 25, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: conviction overturned on appeal)

Date: [June 23, 2017](#)

Location: [Astrakhanka district](#)

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2303



Nigeria

Chukwuma Emeka (described a church attack by gunmen which killed 12 and wounded dozens "When the chaos subsided I went inside, I saw my fellow church members dead in a pool of their own blood and many others were screaming in pain")

Uche Nonosob (parishioner, reported that more than 15 were killed by two gunmen)

Date: [August 6, 2017](#)

Location: [Ozubulu, Anambra state](#)

Source: <http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2017/08/06/530902/Nigeria-mass-shooting-church-Ozubulu-Boko-Haram>

and <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/08/07/gunman-kills-11-in-attack-on-church-in-nigeria/>

Rev Jen Tivkaa Moses (church national education director, abducted by Fulani tribesmen, US\$275,000 ransom demanded)

Yohanna Maina (driver, shot in the thigh, abducted and released, hospitalized, said "I am glad I survived this ordeal, and I pray that Rev Moses comes out alive. I am saying this as, while the gunmen led us into the bush, Rev Moses was praying very loud, and they disliked this so they were beating and threatening to kill him...Rev Moses is a man of prayer and strong faith, and I am convinced that God will see him through this terrible ordeal")

Rev Yunusa Nmadu (**UPDATE**: confirmed the abduction)

Date: [August 4, 2017](#)

Location: [near Jere village](#)

Source: <http://www.pulse.ng/gist/alleged-fulani-herdsmen-kidnap-ecwa-education-director-id7108738.html>

and <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/fulani-herdsmen-kidnap-pastor-plateau-state-central-nigeria/>

Rev Jen Tivkaa Moses (husband, church national education director, abducted by Fulani tribesmen, US\$275,000 ransom demanded; **UPDATE**: released)

Rev Ishaku Yaro (announced the release on Facebook: "Praise God we arrived in Jos safely with our CE [Christian Education] Director at about 1 a.m. on the 9th August 2017. Special prayers took place at the ECWA GS house, and he was reunited with his wife. Please

allow him to rest...Presently, he will be somewhere resting for at least 3 days before coming back home”)

Rev Dr Jeremiah Gado (wrote “Considering the short distance between the police checkpoint and the spot in which the pastor and other passengers were attacked by the kidnappers, one would have expected a swift response by the police to rescue them, but unfortunately they were helplessly abandoned in the hands of the kidnappers. This scenario, like many others as have been attested to by many residents along Abuja-Kaduna road, lends credence to the possible collaboration of some bad egg police and other security personnel in the increasing crime of kidnapping and armed robbery along that highway, or how do you explain the fact that for all the period our pastor was in the hands of the kidnappers, they neither changed position nor mobile number, and yet the security agents were not able to apprehend or track them...Very recently, one of our pastors who had just regained his freedom was held hostage for 5 days by some daredevil young Fulani kidnappers who seized him along Jere-Bwari road, just 200 meters away from a major police checkpoint on the curve bridge after shooting the driver of the vehicle in which he was travelling. We therefore use this opportunity to call on the federal government to do the needful in strengthening security of lives and property in the country, especially in the country’s highways, through which many Nigerians ply in search of their daily bread...The Evangelical Church Winning All is seriously worried about the growing spate of insecurity and criminality in Nigeria which appears to have overwhelmed the government and its security agencies, as nowhere, either in home, marketplaces, workplaces, worship places and our highways, are now safe. Like many other Nigerians, members of the ECWA are suffering the brunt of insecurity on our highways, which have been taken over by armed robbers and kidnappers who kill, maim, torture, rape, steal and extort outrageous ransoms from their helpless poor victims while security agents look away. The federal government should do more to closely monitor the activities of security personnel on the highways and fish out bad eggs among them who metamorphose into criminals on the roads”)

Rev Yunusa S Nmadu (**UPDATE**: co-signed the statement by Rev Dr Jeremiah Gado)

Date: August 9, 2017

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/kidnapped-pastor-nigeria-released-five-days-captivity/>



North Korea

Pastor Lim Hyeon-Soo (aged 62, Canadian citizen, disappeared after his [January 31, 2015](#) entry to the country; sentenced in [Pyongyang](#) on [December 16, 2015](#) to life imprisonment at hard labor; **UPDATE**: released for health reasons)

Date: August 9, 2017

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/08/north-korea-frees-canadian-pastor-on-sick-bail/>



Portugal

Pope Francis aka Jorge Mario Bergoglio SJ (object of an assassination attempt that was detected and stopped by intelligence services, perpetrator was arrested and deported to Morocco)

Date: May 2017

Location: Fatima

Source: <http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/case/planned-attack-on-pope-in-fatima-foiled.html>



Spain

Archbishop Francisco Javier Martínez (criminal complaint filed after he spoke against gender theory in a [February 2017](#) homily “There is a pathology behind that. There is a short-sightedness and lack of intelligence...We are equal in dignity but we are not interchangeable”; **UPDATE**: complaint dismissed due to lack of evidence of criminal intent)

Date reported: August 9, 2017

Cardinal Antonio Canizares Llovera (aged 71, subject of a criminal investigation begun on [June 14, 2016](#) for homilies in which he criticized gender ideology; charges dismissed on free speech grounds in [September 2016](#); **UPDATE**: said in a homily “We have legislation contrary to the family, the acts of political and social forces, to which are added movements and acts by the gay empire, by ideologies such as radical feminism, or the most insidious of all, gender ideology”)

Date: May 13, 2017

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/08/09/spanish-prosecutor-dismisses-hate-crime-complaint-against-archbishop/>
and <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/spanish-court-throws-out-hate-crime-complaint-against-archbishop-95584/>



Syria

Event: Christians escaped from ISIL control

Matay (aged 22, Syriac Military Council member, said "We got a Christian family out yesterday... This is our goal in the campaign to liberate Raqqa")

Alexi Chamoun (Syriac Military Council member, said "ISIL are using civilians as human shields inside the city")

Sawsan Karabidian (aged 45, relative of Alexey, escaped with six others in her family, was able to take only her rosary and her two pet parrots, said "I didn't want to leave, but there was so much bombardment around us that we fled...When Raqqa was bombed, we would gather together to pray to the Lord so things would be calm. We have lived through the hardest moments these last three days because of the fierce bombing. I was terrified for my husband and my family...When ISIL entered they burned the churches, all the prayer books, the angels, the statue of the Virgin Mary and of Jesus the Messiah...They forced us to wear the headscarf and allowed us to reveal our faces to distinguish us from Muslims. We had to hide our faces to avoid insults")

Alexey (aged 50, relative of Sawsan Karapetyan, said "We used to celebrate our holidays in secret, spending them at home in fear," said Alexey, 50. "We would light a bit of incense just to feel that it was a religious holiday. We all left Raqqa and all of our things stayed behind. It's a painful feeling. We tried to stay but we couldn't take it anymore")

Karadij Karadjian (aged 50, said "I can't describe the feeling when we saw the Christian fighters welcoming us...We were forced to pay tribute by hand and we were humiliated and insulted, what a homeland that makes you pay an additional tax because you are different...ISIL blew up all of the churches, which devastated us. I haven't prayed inside a church since 2013. If we rebuild them, we will pray again in Raqqa")

Date: August 8, 2017

Location: Raqqa

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20170809234544.htm>
and <http://www.aina.org/news/20170809124950.htm>

Archbishop Jean Clement Jeanbart (**UPDATE:** said in St Louis, Missouri, USA "Dear friends, I am determined now, more than ever – and like I have never done before – to apply myself and to act in order to restore the Christian prestige of our ancestral city, Aleppo, pearl of the East and the West, cradle of the civilizations and Christianity, the birthplace of cultures. I am determined more than ever to stand by our young people in that devastated place to help them rebuild what was destroyed and recover what was lost")

Date: August 2, 2017

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/aleppos-melkite-archbishop-looks-to-rebuild-city-from-the-ashes-89864/>



Turkey

Aziz Dagein (**UPDATE:** church decided to three people, later said "We need to get permission from the landowners, not the state, to go to church and worship now...You take our lives, but we do not get our churches from us")

Date: May 23, 2017

Location: Surp Dirdad Monastery, Dogankoy aka Tortan, Kamah district, Erzincan

Source: <http://www.yeniozgurpolitika.org/index.php?rupel=nuce&id=74878> - with translation



United Kingdom

Rev Barry Trayhorn (prison gardener at [HMP Littlehey, Cambridgeshire](#), volunteer prison chaplain, resigned on [November 4, 2014](#) from his gardening position after being harassed following a [May 2014](#) homily; lost his claim for discrimination and constructive dismissal on [March 10, 2016](#); **UPDATE:** appeal denied, wrote "Prisoners need to hear God's word just as much as anyone else. If people come to a Christian chapel service, we cannot hold back the gospel truth that God forgives those who repent. In no way did my speaking from 1 Corinthians 6 intend to bully or mistreat anyone. I shared the Gospel with them because I am motivated by the love of Christ to tell them that they can find forgiveness. I told the prisoners I am the worst sinner I know...Christianity is under attack in this nation. I cannot help but wonder if other faiths would be given the same treatment")

Andrea Minichiello Williams (**UPDATE:** wrote "To say that quoting a verse from the Bible can be offensive, could have serious implications on the freedom of prison ministers to share the good news of the gospel. It should not be for the state to decide which parts of the Bible can and cannot be quoted during preaching, nor to dictate that verses that some may find unpalatable should be interpreted to fit with current social norms")

Date: August 2, 2017

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/prison-worker-banned-from-chapel-services-for-citing-bible-on-homosexuality-loses-appeal-194625/>

Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chief Executive of Christian Concerns; **UPDATE:** wrote "...The State is interfering with the gospel. It is mandating that the gospel be shrunk down to fit society's sensibilities. The judgment [against Rev Barry Trayhorn] implies that the Bible legitimizes hate and mistreatment – but in reality, it offers salvation and transformation to men who have committed horrific crimes. How long will the true Church stay silent in our land? What case is required to wake us up? How many more cases? Will the true Church wake up when I am arrested? Probably not. The bishops of the Church of England are in no danger of being arrested. Will the true Church wake up when a 'hate crime' is reported against a small, faithful evangelical church? Possibly not. How about a large one? Or a larger church network? Can we not see, in this case and others, that this country no longer honors God, and is banning His Word!...")

Date: August 10, 2017

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/freedom-of-speech/a-judicial-warning-shot-that-should-put-the-fear-of-god-into-us-andre>



Uzbekistan

Event: Police raided a June 18, 2017 worship service for 200 deaf Christians; UPDATE: the organizers were tried and convicted of unauthorized religious activity, the trial was televised

Viktor Toshpulatov (**UPDATE:** sentenced to 5 days' imprisonment, said "The whole trial was a show. Judge Khushvakhtov asked the Russian Orthodox priest whether Christians can practice their faith in Uzbekistan, and he answered 'Yes'. The priest told the Court that 'if a Church has official registration, then it can hold religious services without any problems'. After this the Judge turned to me and asked whether we asked any state organ for registration, and I answered, 'No'. He gave me a lecture on religious freedom in Uzbekistan and that we [Baptists] continually violate the Law. Meanwhile all the film crews were active, pointing their cameras everywhere")

Jahongir Shadmonov (fined US\$123)

Mikhail Balykbayev (**UPDATE:** sentenced to 5 days' imprisonment)

Munira Gaziyeva (**UPDATE:** fined US\$123)

Svetlana Andreychenko (**UPDATE:** fined US\$123)

Fr Vladimir Skornyakov (forced to attend the trial, said "It was not my desire to attend the trial. The Judge called me and told me I must participate. When I tried to resist the invitation, he put pressure on me, saying that if I do not come it will not be good for the Church. [At trial he] asked me if we have religious freedoms and, as a representative of Christians, what we must do. I cited Apostle Paul, saying that we need to obey the authorities, since all authority is from God. I then added that unless that obedience goes against our conscience and moral principles...I want you to know that I have nothing against the Baptists")

Date: July 21, 2017

Location: Karshi

Event: Police raided a worship service in a private home, a children's Bible, sheet music, and cell phones seized, 20 adults and 7 children detained and taken by bus to the police station, women were strip searched down to their underwear

Ahmadjon Nazarov (husband of Yelena Nazarov, home raided)

Yelena Nazarov (wife of Ahmadjon Nazarov, home raided)

Date: July 23, 2017

Location: Urganch, Khorezm region

Event: Police raided the homes of four Christians, books and magazines seized

Pastor Aleksei Beryalev

Boris Kuznetsov

Sergei Stanislavsky

Yevgeniya Fedina

Date: July 1, 2017

Location: Fergana

Event: Christians were sentenced and fined for possession of religious materials and teaching without training or permission

Atamurat Tajimuratov (sentenced to 15 days' imprisonment)

Joldasbai Zhanabergenov (sentenced to 15 days' imprisonment)

Marat Mambetaliyev (sentenced to 15 days' imprisonment)

Salamat Biskeyev (sentenced to 15 days' imprisonment)

Barshyn Bazarbayeva (fined US\$1,624)

Sarbinaz Kaypbayeva (fined US\$1,624)

Yerkin Tansykbayev (fined US\$1,624)

Zamira Utemuratova (fined US\$1,624)

Zhamila Tajibayeva (fined US\$1,624)

Date: April 20, 2017

Location: Nukus

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2304



Venezuela

Bishop Jose Luis Azuaje Ayala (spoke on the results of the Constituent Assembly election that is intended by the government to impose a new constitution and the general situation: "On Sunday, 30 we could see with our eyes the small amount of participation of the people in the elections. In this way a direct, informal, but experiential audit was made. Before six o'clock in the afternoon, which was the official time of the closing of the tables, they sent to speak to one of the observers of the National Electoral Council to announce that there was an immense number of people remaining still in lines to vote, and the vote was extended for another hour. I looked at the school that is close to the diocesan see where there were several polling stations and it looked like a desert. They tried to make people believe that there were voters at that time. There's nothing more false. It was like the official announcement of fraud...before and during the electoral process for the Constituent Assembly, many people were coerced and threatened to attend to vote...There is large number of murders that, according to the national prosecution, number 121 deaths. Of these, 25 percent have been murdered by state security agencies and 40

percent by groups of armed civilians sympathetic to the regime. There are more than 1,500 wounded, with more than thousands of detainees, in little more than three months, give us a hellish picture that would make any person or institution worried about the lives of citizens at stake...[the economic collapse] is the result of dire governmental policies, of improvisation, of wanting to establish a socialism without humanist support, and in its place generating a permanent conflict plagued by corruption and violence...Whenever this government has been at a disadvantage, it has asked to dialogue, but it is always the same script: dialogue is used to gain time and advance in the hegemonic project of totalitarianism and greater power of domination”)

Date: July 30, 2017

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/venezuelan-bishop-confirms-fraudulence-of-national-elections-56646/>



Vietnam

Sr Doan Thi Chuyen (described the fire which destroyed her church and the lack of firefighter response)

Fr Joseph Nguyen Van Toanh (said the church fire may have been caused by an electrical short)

Date: August 6, 2017

Location: Trung Dong, Nam Dinh province

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/historic-church-in-vietnam-destroyed-by-fire/79947>

Nguyen Van Dai (attorney, arrested on [December 16, 2015](#) at his Hanoi home on charges of 'propaganda against the state', computers, Christian and human rights materials seized; **UPDATE:** formally charged with 'carrying out activities with the purpose of overthrowing the Peoples' administration')

Rev Nguyen Trung Ton (**UPDATE:** arrested, charged with 'carrying out activities with the purpose of overthrowing the Peoples' administration')

Date: July 30, 2017

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/christian-rights-activists-vietnam-charged-serious-crimes/>

Today's Martyrs

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

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