

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2017-11-12 through 2017-11-18



Australia

Archbishop Denis J Hart (**UPDATE**: stated after a government postal survey showed 61% of voters in favor of same sex marriage “Parliamentarians must recognize and respect the concerns of the more than 4.8 million Australians who opposed a change to the definition of marriage by putting in place strong conscience and religious freedom protections. These protections must ensure that Australians can continue to express their views on marriage, that faith-based schools can continue to teach the traditional understandings of marriage and that organizations can continue to operate in a manner that is consistent with those values”)

Date: November 15, 2017

Location: Melbourne

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/australian-bishops-dont-let-same-sex-marriage-limit-religious-freedom-28397>



China

Bishop Lucas Li Jingfeng (aged 95, arrested and sentenced to forced labor in 1959; released in 1980; disappeared for a few weeks in November 2001, forced to attend indoctrination classes on government regulations on religion; **UPDATE**: died of natural causes)

Date: November 17, 2017

Location: Fengxiang, Shaanxi province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Msgr.-Lucas-Li-Jingfeng-has-died.-The-memory-of-a-young-Catholic-42344.html>

Pastor Li Wanhua (**UPDATE**: home invaded by police, religious items and poetry seized, detained for 4 hours, interrogated, ordered to close his church and threatened with arrest if he refused, said “At the very beginning they were fierce and did not disclose which police station they came, their names were not clearly stated, and they did not show their identification cards. When they wrote the statement, they did not let me change it. I disagreed and said that when they interrogate me, they should turn on the recorder to monitor the situation according to the law. I said, ‘You are not following the law like

this.’ Afterwards, they turned on the law enforcing recorder, and we wrote the interrogation transcript”)

Date: November 9, 2017

Location: Jiangmen, Guangdong province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/11/pastor-interrogated-home-raided.html>



Egypt

Bishop Marcos (**UPDATE**: requested that Christians end a vigil and vacate an unlicensed and uncompleted church after local Muslims threatened to attack it, the police have been suspected of plans to close the church in response to the threats and have gut off electricity to the church)

Date: November 9, 2017

Location: Shubral-Kheima, Qalyubiya district, north Cairo

Source: <https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/11/11/11014/>

Fr Makari Yunan (accused of contempt of Islam on or before [May 23, 2017](#) after he responded to an Islamic scholar who called Christianity corrupt by saying Islam was spread by the sword, may be indicted; reported on [July 26, 2017](#) to have been arrested, charged with contempt of Islam, spreading hatred, and inciting sedition; **UPDATE**: acquitted)

Date reported: November 13, 2017

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=2024&A=32981>



India

Event UPDATE: Two Christians were beaten by Hindu radicals and arrested at a railway station on forced conversion charges of minors, the Christian children in their care were detained, the children's parents were also beaten when they attempted to recover their children

Anita Joseph (aged 50, mother of Sophia Francis, retired teacher, beaten and arrested)

Amrit Kumar Matera (aged 51, father of Alex Matera, parochial school teacher, beaten and arrested, **UPDATE**: said “I am shocked at the way the Hindu extremists take law into their hands with impunity knowing that the government is theirs...Three men caught me from behind and started to hit me with their legs and boots. I could not even see who was holding me and what they were beating me with. They beat me all the way through, while they dragged me to the GRP [Government Railway Police] police station from the platform. There was a mob waiting at the platform with media persons clicking pictures, recording videos and asking all kinds of questions. The presence of the media and the

crowd was evidence enough that the Christians were ambushed with a well-planned strategy...They tried to force us to hail Hindu gods, and when we did not, they beat us. They intimidated the children to repeat the slogans or else face the beating. The 5-year-old boy and girl were made to chant the slogan, 'Hail lord Ram' repeatedly. We felt so helpless as they intimidated the little children before our eyes, and we could do nothing to help them")

Sophia Francis (aged 19, forced off the train, detained, released that evening)

Alex Matera (aged 19, son of Amrit Kumar Matera, nephew of Anita Joseph, beaten, detained, released that evening, said "They interrogated us as if they were from the Crime Branch and recorded the entire episode on their mobile phones. They gathered the children from where they were seated and collected them all at one place, interrogating and intimidating Anita without even giving her the chance to reply. The children were pushed and pulled in the most ruthless manner...We were astonished. We don't know how these people got to know about the travel plans. They alleged we convert children forcibly. The tickets were pre-booked for return journey on Oct. 26 from Mumbai to Indore. That was not enough to convince them")

Dennis Micheal (father of three of the children on the train, severely beaten by the Hindu radicals when he went to the police station following the arrest of Anita Joseph and Amrit Kumar, later filed a habeas corpus petition for their release but the court took a week to hear and grant the petition)

Tanna Machado (called to the train station, said "The 13-year-old boy was hit on his back and on his leg so severely that he developed swelling on his leg...The Hindu Jagran Manch [an affiliate of the RSS paramilitary organization] workers assaulted the Christian men in the presence of the police staff, who stood there as mere spectators. I along with another girl tried to rescue the men but to no success...What was inhuman was that the children were not allowed to use the restrooms since the time they were detained until 7 p.m. at night. They were neither given anything to eat until late night")

Aman Chauhan (father of a 5 year old boy on the train, beaten, accused of changing his religion)

Rev Vijayesh Lal (**UPDATE**: said "[Law enforcement agencies are working under pressure from non-state political actors] and go the extra mile to placate them, while Christians pay the price. This must stop, and the chief minister [governor] must intervene to restore confidence among the Christian community, which has been unnecessarily targeted by the abuse of the so-called Freedom of Religion Law as an excuse")

Date: [October 23, 2017](#)

Location: [Indore, Madhya Pradesh state](#)

Anita Joseph (aged 50, mother of Sophia Francis, retired teacher, beaten and arrested on [October 23, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: released on bail)

Amrit Kumar Matera (aged 51, father of Alex Matera, parochial school teacher, beaten and arrested on [October 23, 2017](#), **UPDATE**: released on bail, said "We have become stronger in faith. It's a battle, and in the end Jesus Christ will come out victorious. Whatever has happened to us is for the glory of God. We want Him to be glorified")

Date: [November 3, 2017](#)

Location: Indore, Madhya Pradesh state

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2017/11/christians-charged-serious-crimes-hindu-extremists-police-detain-children-india/>

Bishop Anthony Chirayath (**UPDATE**: voiced opposition to the Hindu nationalist group Dharam Jagaran Samanwaya Samiti [religious awakening co-ordination committee] torchlit march in which it called for the closure of a church owned boarding school, said "We are under tremendous pressure...We are afraid, we can be attacked at any time. Our schools, institutions and orphanages can be harmed. Help us!...Our number has not grown in years, still we are accused of converting people...[in a] false and malicious [media] campaign [that is] creating an atmosphere of hostility against us, spreading fake news through newspapers, television channels, brainwashing")

Date: November 10, 2017

Location: Sagar district, Madhya Pradesh state

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/christians-call-for-protection-after-fiery-protest/80781> and <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/%E2%80%9CHindu-radicals-want-to-eliminate-us.-Help-us,%E2%80%9D-says-the-bishop-of-Sagar-42340.html>

Pastor Suresh Kumar (church attacked on [May 7, 2017](#) with a planted explosive device, said "We were terrified when we found a petrol bomb on the church premises. We thank God that we noticed before it could explode and have massive damage as that day was a Sunday. We don't know who planted the bomb. But we did know that prior to the planting of the bomb in our church, there was a brutal attack on an Assemblies of God Church by the members of the Hindu Munnani in the same suburb of Arasur"; church ordered closed on [September 3, 2017](#) by the local revenue office, said an officer from the revenue department came and told us that the revenue office received a complaint from Mr Murgeshan [a leader of the Hindu Munnani] regarding our church. He said I had to stop worship and close down the church. Despite this, we continued our worship as we did not get anything in writing from the officer concerned"; church closed on [September 27, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: said "To my surprise, more than 50 police personnel were deployed to the church for three Sundays following the [September 27, 2017] letter. Members of my church couldn't visit me in my house as police did not allow anyone to come in. When I asked the inspector why people cannot come to my house, the inspector threatened that he would file an FIR and send me to jail. They had video cameras with them to get footage if anyone came to my house. Even some police followed me wherever I went making sure I didn't conduct prayers in any other place", obtained a four week stay from the state High Court at a cost of US\$240, said "I praise God that I could resume the worship in my church again. But, I am still worried that I can only have worship for two more weeks, as the stay expires soon", cannot afford more interim stays)

Date reported: November 16, 2017

Location: Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu state

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2017/11/16/a-new-and-dangerous-threat-for-house-churches-in-southern-india/>



Indonesia

Bishop John Philip Saklil (**UPDATE**: expressed concern after a policeman was killed by rebels and asked the rebels to reopen a road to villages in the mountains near a gold mine)

Date: November 15, 2017

Location: Timika district, Paupa

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/tensions-threaten-to-boil-over-in-papua/80806>



Lebanon

Ninar (analyst for the U.S. based group In Defense of Christians, wrote "Saudi Arabia appears eager to start another proxy war with Iran in the Middle East — one that will imperil millions of Christians and all Lebanese...On Saturday, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri said in a TV broadcast from Saudi Arabia that he was stepping down because of an alleged assassination plot, as well as Iranian involvement in the Lebanese government through its proxy militia-turned-political-party and U.S.-designated terrorist organization: Hezbollah...It is clear the Saudi government is moving to escalate its proxy war with Iran by using Lebanon as a battlefield. This is of particular concern for IDC and people of goodwill who have watched Saudi Arabia and Iran's proxy war lead multiple large scale humanitarian crises, such as in Syria and Yemen. In both countries, starvation, massive refugee crises, and disease has let thousands of children fend for themselves and led to hundreds of thousands of deaths")

Date: November 10, 2017

Source: <https://indefenseofchristians.org/saudi-iran-conflict-will-destroy-christianity-lebanon/>



Nigeria

Rev Samson Olasupo Ayokunle (**UPDATE**: said "Recently I went to a village called Ancha in Bassa local government of Plateau state where 21 Christians were killed overnight by herdsmen. My church in that village lost 20 members out of the 21 and we gave them a mass burial. It was a gory sight to behold. The most painful and baffling thing about it was that after that attack, [the herdsmen] came to the same area again and killed another 24 people – with none of them arrested by the enforcement agents. What a complicity! Why are the herdsmen devastating communities without being arrested? Why are they not prosecuted? Why was the source of their ammunition not investigated? Why do they roam about with guns without being arrested?")

Date: after September 8, 2017

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/10/northern-christians-condemn-killings-plateau-urge-nigeria-government-intervene/>

Christopher Dung (**killed**)

Bulus Dantoro (**killed**)

Gyang Dahoro (church elder, said “The two did not return to the village on Sunday evening. A search was organized, and their corpses were found in bushes the following morning with bullet wounds and machete cuts”)

Rev Dachollom Datiri (**UPDATE**: said “These armed Fulani herdsmen have continued with their attacks, and the church is at the receiving end. We have lost our members to these unprovoked attacks. We are on our knees praying for God’s mercy”)

Date: November 13, 2017

Location: Wereng village, Riyom local government area, Plateau state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/11/nigeria-fulani-christians-call-for-peace-as-violence-continues-in-plateau/>

and <https://morningstarnews.org/2017/11/five-christians-killed-five-others-missing-muslim-herdsmen-attacks-nigeria/>

Saater Kwaghdom (**killed** in a Fulani Muslim attack)

Hingir Akaa Azemgbe (abducted)

Doosul Nambo (abducted)

Ladi Mhbahme (abducted)

Date: November 2, 2017

Location: Gaambe-tiv village, Logo local government area, Benue state

Apesuu Uhula (**killed** in a Fulani Muslim attack)

Date: November 13, 2017

Location: Isho village, Guma local government area, Benue state

Ortse Kwaghdoo (**killed** in a Fulani Muslim attack)

Date: November 13, 2017

Location: Azdege village, Logo local government area, Benue state

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2017/11/five-christians-killed-five-others-missing-muslim-herdsmen-attacks-nigeria/>



Pakistan

Iqbal Masih (aged 65, husband of Rubina Iqbal, father Shamsa, Zafar Shamas, Bobby, Aster, Chanda, Guriya, Asshi, Heera, and Hina, mentally ill, went into a tirade after Bobby died on [November 4, 2017](#), abused a Muslim neighbor [the report is unclear how but it

appears to have been verbal], the neighbor accused him of blasphemy, arrested, up to 300 Muslim radicals attempted to burn the entire extended family to death as blasphemers but were stopped by Muslim neighbors; **UPDATE**: released on bail, entire family has been moved to a safe house)

Date: November 13, 2017

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6684>



Philippines

Fr Eliseo Mercado Jr OMI (**UPDATE**: condemned an arson attack on a chapel, called it "the work of few extremists that need to be rooted out" and compared it to the 1970s rebellion when "Muslim rebels respected places of worship in the area")

Date: November 10, 2017

Location: Labo-Labo village, Shariff Aguak town, Mindanao

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/vandalizing-of-chapel-in-mindanao-sparks-outrage/80764>



Russia

Event: Two church elders were each fined approximately US\$166 for improper use of a building, the building in question was their church, the building was ordered closed

Olga Astakhova (church elder, pensioner, fined)

Ljubov Bogdanova (church elder, pensioner, fined)

Date: end of August 2017

Location: Tula

Pastor Dmitry Berdnikov (fined US\$249 for videotaping a catechesis meeting)

Date: August 4, 2017

Location: Brjansk region

Pastor Pavel Shpak (fined US\$167)

Date: July 26, 2017

Location: Brjansk region

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Russian-Baptist-Christians-targeted-in-latest-persecutions-42323.html>



Sri Lanka

Bishop Sebastian Tudu (condemned attacks by Muslim mobs that left one Hindu dead and 15 Hindu families homeless: "We have seen such attacks in the past but no justice done. The silence and inaction of the authorities encourages attackers and frustrates minorities, which is unacceptable")

Date: November 19, 2017

Location: Thakur Para village, Rangpur district

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/police-arrest-53-for-attacks-on-bangladeshi-hindus/80768>



Uganda

Hassan Muwanguzi (Christian elementary school director; **UPDATE**: beaten by a former teacher who had been suspended after it was discovered the teacher had lied about his religion - he was Muslim - and had tried to convert students to Islam, face and right hand injured, hospitalized for two days)

Eric Kakonge (Christian elementary school head teacher, witnessed the attack, said "He [Hassan Muwanguzi] is still unwell and may need further specialized treatment...The Muslims have complained that the school every evening makes noise in praising, worshiping and praying. We need prayers at this trying moment for quick recovery for our school director, and that this criminal act will be brought to book")

Date: November 4, 2017

Location: Kabuna village, Budaka district

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2017/11/muslim-posing-christian-teacher-school-uganda-attacks-director-sources-say/>



United Kingdom

Tajamal Amar (aged 45, food delivery driver, immigrant from Pakistan after being shot there, beaten into unconsciousness outside a restaurant in [Littleover, Derbyshire](#) by a Muslim gang on [October 20, 2017](#), nose broken, hospitalized; **UPDATE**: readmitted to the hospital with bleeding in the brain, discharged 3 days later)

Date: November 1, 2017

Location: Nottingham

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/poppy-hero-tajamal-beaten-by-muslims-for-his-support-of-british-forces-is-admitted-back-into-hospita>

Rev Richard Cunningham (director of the Christian Union college fellowship, which was banned from an event because its presence might alienate some students, said "We are however concerned that the current desire to provide safe spaces on campus does not infringe on the core liberties of freedom of speech and freedom of association which are surely foundational to the university experience and indeed to basic human flourishing")

Date reported: October 10, 2017

Location: Balliol College, University of Oxford

Source: <http://www.ecumenicalnews.com/article/oxford-university-college-ban-on-christian-group-at-freshers-fair-stirs-backlash/60431.htm>

Joshua Sutcliffe (teacher, suspended after he said "Well done girls" to a group that included a girl claiming to be a boy, charged with misconduct despite immediately apologizing to the student and despite a history of successfully accommodating the student's wishes, stated that the school had offered no guidance or training to teachers on this matter, had moderated an after school Bible study with 100 students for 18 months until it was closed by the headteacher - the LGBTI, mindfulness, and qigong clubs were allowed to continue)

Date: November 2, 2017

Location: Oxfordshire

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/press-release/christian-maths-teacher-facing-disciplinary-hearing-after-calling-pupil-born-female-a>

Anthony Horan (director of the Catholic Parliamentary Office; **UPDATE**: wrote regarding a proposed Scottish law that would change the minimum age for a gender reassignment certificate from 18 to 16 and remove the requirement for a medical evaluation "The suggestion that 16- and 17-year-olds should pursue a change of gender at a time of their life fraught with confusion and vulnerability is deeply disturbing")

Date reported: November 15, 2017

Source: <http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2017/11/15/catholic-lobby-group-condemns-scottish-governments-plan-to-make-legally-changing-gender-easier/>

Bishop Gavin Ashenden (**UPDATE**: wrote to the Times of London "Your leading article [Nov 13, 2017] tells us of a 1,000 per cent increase in referrals of trans children in the past six years at the Tavistock clinic in London, suggesting a causal link between publicizing gender fluidity and the increase of mental disorientation among the young...At stake lies not only the virtues that have underlain the best parts of our culture but the mental health of our most fragile children. As a society we urgently need to reject the politicizing of gender identity and exaggerated notions of fluidity. We must allow our children to be safe in the given biology of their bodies")

Date: November 15, 2017

Source: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/church-of-england-and-the-gender-debate-xbsf3lt3m>

Today's Martyrs

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

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