

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2018-02-04 through 2018-02-10



### Austria

Bishop Manfred Scheuer (said at an interfaith meeting that 1 in 10 Christians is persecuted “That is more than 200 million people in 60 countries. But what does Europe care? Political correctness does not want to know anything about the ongoing persecution and suppression of Christianity and so it is being ignored in an almost sinister way”)

Date: February 6, 2018

Location: Linz

Source: <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/8523/europe-s-disregard-for-christian-persecution-almost-sinister->



### China

**Event: Several provinces have begun to require that churches post notices that prohibit the entry of legal minors**

Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-Kium SDB (aged 86, **UPDATE:** reported on a Shanghai underground church "The priest has told Catholics not to come because there will be no Mass since they have not registered")

Peter (said he saw the signs in Xinjiang "When minors enter internet bars, the government and police turn a blind eye. However, they are becoming very strict in prohibiting minors from entering religious venues. It is ridiculous")

Fr Stephen (underground priest, said children are forced to lie to teachers about their faith "Is this the way to build up our civilization?")

Fr Thomas (said "All religious sites must be registered, no religious activities can be held beyond registered venues, non-registered clergymen are forbidden to host religious liturgies, and party members and minors are prohibited from entering a church. The living space for the church is getting less and less", had begun talks with the State Administration of Religious Affairs "to strive for space for religious freedom and the church to survive, to protect the church and staff from being attacked, and to preserve the church's dogma")

Fr John (said "Officials do not want us to be really underground, which would mean they would lose our traces and not know where we are. If our dogma is not meddled with, everything will be fine. If the religious affairs bureau and the public security bureau understand us, they will not have any worries. If we are really undergoing clandestine activities, we are really a problem to them. For myself, I do not want to be hidden but if we are not allowed to have our religious gatherings, the only way is to become clandestine")

Date: February 8, 2018

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/china-church-further-squeezed-by-revised-regulations/81469>



## Ethiopia

Temesgen Mitiku Mezemir (aged 24, charged with 'causing outrage to religious peace and feeling' on January 23, 2018 after a debate with other Christians over a replica of the Ark of the Covenant, attacked and beaten along with fellow parishioners outside the courthouse; **UPDATE**: convicted, sentenced to 7 months' imprisonment)

Date: February 2, 2018

Location: Arba Minch

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/ethiopian-evangelical-sent-prison-insulting-orthodox-church/>



## Germany

Bishop Hans-Jorg Voigt (wrote that the government acceptance of asylum applicants who were Christian converts from Islam had dropped from 100% to 10% in 2 years, called it a "scandal that is silently taking place under our very noses")

Date: February 6, 2018

Source: <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/8523/europe-s-disregard-for-christian-persecution-almost-sinister->



## India

Samuel Thomas Mathura (interrupted by a heckler when addressing a Christian convention, a mob then rushed in and forced everyone to leave, roughed up a few attendees, threw chairs, and burnt Bibles and other literature, the convention was cancelled)

Date: February 1, 2018

Location: Surat, Gujarat state

Source: <http://www.persecution.in/node/4535>



## Kenya

Fred Awuor (secondary school principal, injured when Muslim students slashed Christian students after they refused the invitation to Islam, at least 35 were injured including some Muslims when the Christians tried to defend themselves)

Date: January 23, 2018

Location: Nairobi

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/01/christian-students-knifed-beaten-high-school-clash-kenya/>



## Malaysia

Pastor Raymond Koh Keng Joo (aged 63, husband of Susanna Liew, father of Esther, Elizabeth, and Jonathan Koh, abducted by 5 armed and masked men in [Petaling Jaya](#) on [February 13, 2017](#), police initially refused to file a report despite witness accounts of the abduction; **UPDATE**: still missing)

Pastor Joshua Hilmy (convert from Islam, husband of Ruth Sitepu, apparently abducted in [March 2017](#); **UPDATE**: still missing)

Ruth Sitepu (wife of Pastor Joshua Hilmy, apparently abducted in [March 2017](#); **UPDATE**: still missing)

Archbishop Julian Leow Beng Kim (**UPDATE**: asked Christians “to continue to look to God in prayer and to seek closure [for] this dastardly act on a servant of God” regarding the abduction of Pastor Raymond Koh Keng Joo)

Rev Dr Hermen Shastri (**UPDATE**: said "We fear we are at the threshold of the undoing of the constitution, so that it becomes compliant to Islamic laws of sharia and hudud...The government is seeking to insinuate some link between churches and opposition parties since our demands to practice our faith in freedom and non-interference, and for peace and harmony, resonate with the stance taken by the political opposition. Our prayer for Malaysia is for it to remain a secular nation as envisioned by the founding fathers in 1957 and to abide by the tenets of the constitution")

Date: February 9, 2018

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/struggle-continues-for-minorities-as-malaysias-reputation-as-moderate-muslim-nation-hangs-by-a-thread/>

and <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/07/christian-preachers-disappearance-in-malaysia-stokes-fears-of-crackdown-on-religious-minorities>



## Mexico

### **Event: Two priests were killed while driving on a highway**

Fr Ivan Anorve Jaimes (**shot dead**)

Fr Germain Muniz Garcia (**shot dead**)

Date: February 5, 2018

Location: Taxco, Guerrero state

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/two-priests-murdered-in-mexico-40846>



## Nigeria

### **Event: At least 75 Christians have been killed in the past month**

Jerry Datim (described a series of Fulani Muslim attacks “It was about 12 noon, when some Fulani men laid an ambush around Rafiki, a place well close to the 3rd Army Division Cantonment. They killed three people, before moving on to another village, Jebbu Bassa, where they also killed three people. They also burned down a lot of properties...Political leaders in the state have failed to protect the people from the Fulani attackers because they fear that President Muhammadu Buhari may move against any politician that goes against the Fulani, who are Buhari’s kinsmen”)

Date: January 24, 2018

Location: Plateau state

Rev Jacob Gidado (called on President Buhari to protect Christians against the “incessant killings...[Christians have been] persecuted beyond measure”)

Peter Ahile (House of Assembly Member, said “As a lawmaker, I can only talk. The governor, as the chief security officer of the state, is the one [who] can enforce security, he is supposed to come out and address the people of the state. I don’t have the security apparatus. We are only calling on the government to take action because it is the responsibility of the government to protect lives and property”)

Date reported: February 5, 2018

Location: Plateau state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/nigeria-75-killed-in-renewed-fulani-attacks-on-christian-community-in-plateau/>

Erick McBen Kyari (aged 25, college student, beaten with sticks and machetes by rioting Muslim students, **died**)

Ajine Delo (Christian Association of Nigeria Youth Fellowship president, said “At the time of the attack, there was no single Muslim female student at the campus. They have all left since Friday, but nobody informed the Christian students. The assailants may have been angered by the elections of the Student Union Government leadership, held on 29 January 2018. The results had seen the emergence of Christian students on almost all the positions of the Union”)

Date: February 4, 2018

Location: Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, Adamawa state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/nigeria-9-churches-burnt-down-and-christian-students-attacked-as-violence-continues/>

**Event: Eleven Catholic bishops met with President Buhari to deliver a statement that read “Innocent citizens in different communities across the nation are brutally attacked and their sources of livelihood mindlessly destroyed. Property, worth billions of Naira, including places of worship, schools, hospitals and business enterprises, are torched and turned to ashes. We are still more saddened by the recent massacre of unarmed citizens by these terrorists in some communities in Benue, Adamawa, Kaduna and Taraba states, which has caused national shock, grief and outcry...the government, whose responsibility it is to protect the life and property of every citizen, seems either incapable or unwilling to do this. The silence of the federal government...is, to say the least, shocking...[support for the President] is being fast depleted by some glaring failures of government which we have the moral duty to bring to your notice...[there is] a near civil war situation in many parts of the country”**

Archbishop Ignatius Ayau Kaigama (**UPDATE**)

Bishop William Avenya

Date: February 8, 2018

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/02/nigerian-bishops-accuse-government-failing-protect-citizens-terrorist-herdsmen/>



## Syria

Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem II (**UPDATE**: led the Divine Liturgy in a ruined church, said "It's an indescribable feeling for us to pray in a nearly-destroyed church, which serves as a consolation for our hearts and a message of hope to the people of the city to come back and take part in building it anew")

Bishop Maurice Amsih (**UPDATE**: said "The important thing now is for life to come back - for Deir Ezzor's residents and Christians to come back to it")

Shadi Tuma (aged 31, remained in the city during the war, said "The hard times that Deir Ezzor went through pushed the families to leave, but there was a determination inside of me to stay in this city. Deir Ezzor will always have coexistence. Christians will always have a presence here")

Sally Qassar (aged 40, said "Prayer for me is like a new life. It gave me the determination to come back to Deir Ezzor and put up with the poor provision of services, and participate in rebuilding it")

Date: February 3, 2018

Location: Deir Ezzor

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20180204152627.htm>

and <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/syria-christians-hold-first-prayer-in-years-in-ravaged-deir-ezzor-church-1.701475>

and <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/first-holy-qurobo-in-deir-ez-zor-after-its-liberation/>



## Ukraine

Archimandrite Gideon Kharon (U.S. citizen, issued a statement regarding ultranationalist threats against his monastery "We have appealed to the Ukrainian Security Service, the Mayor of Kiev, and the President of Ukraine...We have appealed to the United Nations. We have appealed to the ambassadors of many countries. We have also appealed to the President of the United States of America Donald Trump with a request to protect the Tithes Monastery")

Date: February 3, 2018

Location: Tithes Monastery of the Mother of God, Kiev

Source: <http://orthochristian.com/110459.html>

### **Event: People gathered to protect a monastery from further incidents following a January 25 arson attack**

Alla Ratushnaya (said "Because we will not fight. We will kneel, we will pray - but we will not give up our holy things")

Artem (said that the arsonists were misled by political slogans and should turn to faith)

Valentina Kudryavskaya (said "We are united by a common impulse to protect our holy places. People with a pure heart go to protect their home, their saints, ")

Archimandrite Gideon Kharon (U.S. citizen; **UPDATE:** said "We decided to act in a Christian way, with mercy, that [the arsonists] are released, we will officially submit documents to the appropriate authorities to take them on bail")

Archpriest Alexander Bakhov (said that the monastery had full legal title to its land and buildings)

Date: February 5, 2018

Location: Tithes Monastery of the Mother of God, Kiev

Source: <http://orthochristian.com/110496.html>

and <http://uoj.org.ua/novosti/zashchita-tserkvi/budem-molitsya-poka-ne-prekratyat-popytki-snesti-veruyushchie-o-desyatinnom> - with translation

and <http://uoj.org.ua/novosti/nasushchnyj-vopros/yurist-upts-desyatinnyy-monastyr-postroena-zakonnykh-osnovaniyakh> - with translation



## United Kingdom

Pastor Paul Song (South Korean national, prison chaplain, told by the senior Muslim chaplain that he could no longer use the Alpha course materials due to its “extremist” nature, banned from the prison without explanation in [August 2017](#), appealed the ban; falsely accused on [September 4, 2017](#) of having called an undisclosed prisoner a 'terrorist', told that his testimony would not be allowed in his appeal; **UPDATE**: informed that his ban has been made permanent, said “I worked alongside the prisoners in harmony. When speaking with prisoners, staff members or anyone else, I would never make offensive comments. The Bible exhorts believers to ‘love thy neighbor as thyself’, and to ‘let thy light shine before men’, and so being intentionally offensive would violate these commandments...The whole reason I served at the prison was because of my desire to bring the good news of the gospel to people, regardless of their religion or background. I believe that it has the power to transform the lives of all who believe, and so I would never do anything which may cause an individual to not want to hear the Christian message...The prisoners who attended the Christian courses were of different religions, sexual orientations and ethnic backgrounds. Some of them were violent and held views which strongly opposed mine, yet I never made any judgmental or stereotypical comments to any of them. For 19 years, I served with an exemplary record. I worked alongside the prisoners and other staff members in harmony, recognizing our differences and praying that they would come to faith, but equally respecting their decisions and background. I would have had plenty of opportunities to make offensive comments should I have wanted to, and yet during this time, no complaints were ever made about me”)

Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chief Executive of Christian Concerns; **UPDATE**: later stated "To call this Christian who has served without a blemish for almost 20 years an extremist defies belief. Pastor Song's work with prisoners has been shut down for no good reason, denying prisoners of life-giving ministry. We are considering legal action against Brixton Prison which has acted unlawfully by removing Christian services from prisoners without fair process. We are seeking justice not just for Pastor Song but for the prisoners who want to see him...Christian ministry in prisons has a long history, and its presence is essential for the rehabilitation and transformation of lives. Paul's work has led to many prisoners in Brixton turning their lives around, and so it is shocking that prisoners who are desperate for a new way of life should now be prevented from seeing Paul")

Date: [January 11, 2018](#)

Location: HMP Brixton

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/freedom/volunteer-chaplain%C2%A0excluded-from-prison-in-move-to-wipe-out-christian-domination>



### **United States - District of Columbia**

Amelia Irvine (college student, president of the campus group Love Saxa which supports traditional marriage, as of [October 20, 2017](#) had been threatened with banishment from campus as a hate group; the student government voted 8-4 on [November 3, 2017](#) to not banish Love Saxa; **UPDATE:** complained to the university that hundreds of dollars in donations to Love Saxa had been diverted by the student government to LGBTQ campus groups)

Date: February 3, 2018

Location: Georgetown University

Source: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-traditional-marriage-group-georgetown-funneling-donations-to-lgbt-groups-216181/>

### **United States - Oklahoma**

Ken Ham (speaking engagement cancelled after the college was pressured by LGBT groups, said "Free speech in America is under increasing attack by some very intolerant people")

Date: February 6, 2018

Location: University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond

Source: <https://www.charismanews.com/us/69475-lgbt-activists-kick-ken-ham-off-college-campus>



### **Vietnam**

**Event: Two Christians were convicted of 'resisting officials on duty' and 'abusing democratic freedoms to infringe the interests of the state, the legitimate interest and rights of organizations and citizens' for helping fishermen sue a Taiwanese steel plant for pollution**

Hoang Duc Binh (aged 35, sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment, 10 relatives were detained by police at the trial and beaten)

Nguyen Nam Phong (aged 38, husband, sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment)

Fr John Baptist Nguyen Dinh Thuc (**UPDATE:** was not allowed to testify at the trial, said that Hoang Duc Binh and Nguyen Nam Phong were right to not open their automobile to police during a [February 2017](#) demonstration because they saved 2 nuns from police beatings)



Date: February 6, 2018

Location: Dien Chau district, Nghe An province

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/catholic-activists-get-harsh-sentences-in-vietnam/81456>

## **Today's Martyrs**

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

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