

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2018-03-18 through 2018-03-24



### **Bolivia**

Archbishop Jesus Juarez Parraga (**UPDATE**: signed a letter addressed to parents of students in Catholic schools which claimed that government interference in the schools "cannot guarantee teaching, Christian education and integral quality education")

Prof Carmen Suarez (said she is convinced the government "intends to eliminate the private education system in Bolivia, and aims especially at the Catholic one")

Date: March 16, 2018

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63908->

[AMERICA BOLIVIA State Church convention violated Catholic education in a state of emergency](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63908-AMERICA_BOLIVIA_State_Church_convention_violated_Catholic_education_in_a_state_of_emergency)



### **China**

Wang (reported that all churches in two cities and a county had been notified by the government that their activities were cancelled and that violations of the notice would be punished)

Date: March 9, 2018

Locations: Zhumadian and Zhoukou cities, and Gushi county

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/03/pressure-increases-for-henan-christians.html>



### **Egypt**

Matthew Habib (aged 22, son of Samir, soldier, **died from two gunshots** while with his military unit, death ruled a suicide, family said he had reported that his commanding officer had persecuted him)

Samir (father of Matthew Habib, refused to sign the cause of death or to receive his son's body, said he did not believe the suicide ruling was true)

Date: March 14, 2018

Location: Giza

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/03/coptic-soldiers-family-say-he-didnt-commit-suicide-but-was-killed/>



## India

Archbishop Bernard Moras (**UPDATE**: retired)

Bishop Peter Machado (appointed bishop)

Date: March 19, 2018

Location: Bangalore

Source: <http://mattersindia.com/2018/03/bangalore-gets-new-catholic-archbishop/>

Sajan K George (**UPDATE**: denounced the unannounced demolition of a church facade that had been built years earlier for handicapped access)

Date: March 15, 2018

Location: Mukherjee Nagar district, Delhi

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Delhi-Methodist-church-fa%C3%A7ade-and-entrance-destroyed-43400.html>



## Iraq

Fr Salar Kajo (**UPDATE**: said "We have to rebuild now - if we take more time families will leave and Christianity will disappear from Iraq...It is urgently necessary for everyone to return to their towns and villages...After a year of rebuilding, the only channel of aid has been through the Church")

Date reported: March 19, 2018

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20180319102948.htm>

Mawj (aged 40, husband, father of two, life savings completely depleted by tribal claims made over a vehicular accident in which he was not at fault and no major injury resulted)

Date: November 2017

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2018/03/14/iraqs-tribes-christians-dangerous-solitude-rights-erased/>



## Kazakhstan

Dilobarkhon Sultanova (arrested on [January 11, 2018](#) after helping a secret police agent download a Bible onto her phone "Literally a minute and a half after we parted they detained me"; **UPDATE**: acquitted)

Date: [March 13, 2018](#)

Location: Shymkent

Source: [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2360](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2360)



## Nicaragua

**Event: Church leaders reacted after Vice President Rosario Murillo [and the wife of President Daniel Ortega] proposed social media censorship on national television**

Auxiliary Bishop Silvio Jose Baez (**UPDATE**: said "The state should not control or censor social media because it would limit freedom of expression, nor should it stand as a moral arbiter of people")

Bishop Rolando Jose Alvarez Lagos (**UPDATE**: said "One must not limit anyone's freedom: in social networks, as in any street, people can write and express their opinion, of course one must stigmatize the lack of respect or offenses to the dignity of the person, but not for this we can limit the freedom of people...We deplore the attempts of public authorities to block access to information, on the Internet or other social media, preventing legitimate freedom of expression and opinion")

Date: [March 16, 2018](#)

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63907-AMERICA NICARAGUA The Church No to the censorship of social media>



## Nigeria

Bulus John (aged 30, husband of Lami Bulus, father of three, **killed** by Fulani Muslims)

Lami Bulus (aged 25, widow of Bulus John, mother of three, said "We had to leave the village after my husband was killed as we received death threats from the herdsmen for reporting the killing of my husband to security agencies. Please, I need your prayers for strength and for means to care for my children")

Moses Chohu (church elder, later said "We found some bullets from an AK-47 gun at the scene where Bulus John was shot. The case was reported to the Bassa police authorities, and the corpse was taken away by the police. Four months after the incident, nothing has been

heard again, and the police have not said anything about the incident to Lami, nor contacted her to find out how she's coping with life")

Date: November 5, 2017

Location: Zanwra village, outside Jebu Miango, Plateau state

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/03/christian-woman-hiding-muslim-fulani-herdsmen-kill-husband-nigeria/>

Christopher (aged 12, son of Joseph Gah Nze, twin brother of Emmanuel, **killed**)

Emmanuel (aged 12, son of Joseph Gah Nze, twin brother of Christopher, **killed**)

Peace Joseph (aged 6, son of Joseph Gah Nze, **killed**)

Henry Audu (aged 18, nephew of Joseph Gah Nze, **killed**)

Chanka Amos (aged 4, nephew of Joseph Gah Nze, wounded, hospitalized)

Joseph Gah Nze (aged 48, husband, father of Christopher, Emmanuel, and Peace Joseph, uncle of Henry Audu and Chanka Amos, said "My house is located in the outskirts of this area, and so it became the first to be attacked. But because the sound of gunshots in my house alerted the other Christians around here, they quickly mobilized themselves and repelled the attackers, forcing them to retreat")

Samaila Isa (aged 55, convert, husband of Jummai Samaila, father of nine, **shot dead**)

Jummai Samaila (aged 45, widow of Samaila Isa, mother of nine, said "I was woken up by heavy sounds of gunshots. The herdsmen shot at our windows, and as I woke up I saw dust all over the room. The room was covered with dust, and I could not see anything. I had to move my hand around in the dark in search of my child. I eventually found my child and held tight to it. There was shooting going on all around our house, and the whole house was shaking. I quickly ran to the children's room to ensure they were safe, and I found that they were safe. I wanted to go running out of the room, but one of my sons told me not to do so. The window in their room was opened. I lifted the curtain of the window slightly, and outside I saw six armed Fulani herdsmen. I moved away from the window and tried getting out, only to find that my husband was shot and was lying on the floor. I could not move since the herdsmen were still in our house. I hid myself in a corner and watched as they carried my husband. Two of them carried his legs, while another two carried him from the chest up. One of them had a torchlight which was switched on to show them the way out of our house. As they made their way out of our house carrying my husband with them towards a stream just behind our house, my son urged me to open the door so that we can run out to seek for help. I opened the door, and we ran out")

Yusuf Samaila (aged 20, son of Samaila Isa, cut the hand of a gun toting Fulani Muslim with a machete, the gunman fled)

Mallam Isa (aged 80 plus, convert, father of Samaila Isa)

Rev Sunday Zibeh (said "We ran as they pursued us and were shooting at us at the same time. We ran to the area where the district headquarters of ECWA church is located here in Miango. The herdsmen, after a while, withdrew from pursuing us and retreated to the bush where they had emerged. It was after the herdsmen had retreated that I was alerted that they killed some children in one of my member's house. I rushed to the house to find

that four children were killed in the house, and one was taken to the hospital...If all that is happening to Christians at this time is within the plans of God for us his children, then let His will be fulfilled in us, but if this is not the case, I have faith that God will raise he who will rescue us from these attacks of the herdsmen. I plead with other Christians to please stand in the gap for us and other Christians facing persecution in northern Nigeria. I also want to plead that should there be others who are being led by the Holy Spirit to help displaced Christians in northern Nigeria, they should please do so...In spite of the shortcomings I see in our government in Nigeria, I believe God will rescue us from this calamity. God alone can wipe away our tears in this part of Nigeria. As Christians, all we need do is to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, and this we can do by getting on our knees and being prayerful”)

Date: March 8, 2018

Location: Nzharuvo village, Miango, near Jos, Plateau state

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/03/christian-widow-bereaved-father-show-reality-behind-herdsmen-attacks-nigeria/>



## Pakistan

Sarfraz Victor (cateshist, told parishioners at the cathedral “be on alert. Consider yourselves like security staff, protect yourselves and others, be friendly and work together with [police] agents" in the days leading to Easter)

William Arif Khan (cathedral security leader, said "No visitor will be allowed in without a national identity card. Action will be taken against any parishioner who brings a non-Christian to church Mass. Use of smartphone /social media will be prohibited inside Church premises...Volunteers with licensed weapons are already armed during Masses. But those without a license cannot do much in capturing an infiltrating terrorist. We have asked police to issue license for arms to protect churches")

Samuel Piyara (**UPDATE:** said "Punjab government has yet to implement SOPs, standard operation procedures, including installation of walk-through gates and posting of snipers in Churches. We shall file a contempt case if they continue ignoring the apex court verdict...A major concern of Islamabad churches is the irregularity of police [agents]. Most were busy on their mobile phones while on duty to protect worshipers. Also Church buildings were exempted from safe city project under which security cameras were installed in Islamabad")

Date: March 18, 2018

Location: Lahore, Punjab province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Catholics-to-work-with-police-as-Easter-security-threat-level-raised-43393.html>



## Philippines

Bishop Carlo Morales (husband of Maria Teofifina Morales, arrested with others at a police checkpoint in Gango on May 11, 2017 while travelling with an alleged member of a rebel group; **UPDATE**: released on bail after a judge ruled that the evidence presented by the prosecution would not prove a conviction)

Date reported: March 19, 2018

Location: Ozamiz City

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-protestant-bishop-freed-after-10-months-in-jail/81826>



## United States - Pennsylvania

Lake Ingle (college senior, religious studies major, accused of classroom disruption and barred from the class “Christianity 481: Self, Sin, and Salvation” after he stated there are only two genders, will not be able to graduate unless he is re-instated)

Date: February 28, 2018

Location: Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/blogs/christian-booted-from-class-on-christianity...for-opposing-transgenderism>

## United States - Rhode Island

Michael Smalanskas (aged 22, college dormitory resident advisor, former seminarian, threatened and harassed after having posted a defense of traditional Christian marriage on a bulletin board, said “I couldn’t even go brush my teeth for several nights without facing a mob in my hallway...There had been a pro-lesbian bulletin board up for the entire month of February in one of the female residence halls. But nobody was rioting outside the girl’s door. There’s a tremendous double standard when it comes to Catholic teaching or conservative views. They are just not protected in the same way”, moved by campus security to a secure undisclosed location, fiancée threatened, after threatened with homosexual rape said it “very disturbing threat [and] a Title IX issue now...[a] lawsuit’s not off the table by any stretch”)

Dr James Keating (faculty advisor to Michael Smalanskas, criticized the college's lack of response to the attacks against Michael: “The example that I gave to [Vice President of Student Affairs] Kristine Goodwin is, let’s say a young Mexican-American student had put up a poster that said, ‘God loves the dreamers,’ that poster had been torn down, and [the student who created it] felt unsafe in her own dormitory because kids who tore it down were milling outside her door. Then, a poster is put up of her being raped. How would the college react?”)

Dr Matthew Cuddeback (said “President Shanley’s [March 19] message to the Providence College community leaves Michael Smalanskas exposed. The President does not defend the bulletin board. He seems to imply that expressions of Catholic teaching on marriage should be confined largely to the classroom and the pulpit. And he leaves Michael exposed to the charge that the bulletin board is, in fact, ‘uncharitable.’”)

Bishop Thomas J Tobin (re-tweeted an article about college faculty who were supporting Michael Smalanskas and in effect asked why were anti-Christian students attending a nominally Christian college: "But, it seems to me that those who teach or study at a Catholic school should accept the stated identity and mission of the school? Otherwise, why are they there? There are lots of other good options")

Date reported: March 19, 2018

Location: Providence College

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/catholic-college-silent-on-student-threatened-with-gay-rape-for-posting-bul>

### **Event UPDATE: Four college chaplains sent an email affirming traditional Christian marriage**

Fr Peter Martyr Yungwirth OP (Chaplain)

Fr Michael Weibley OP (Assistant Chaplain)

Fr Dominic Verner OP (Assistant Chaplain)

Fr Bonaventure Chapman OP (Assistant Chaplain)

Michael Smalanskas (aged 22, college dormitory resident advisor, former seminarian; **UPDATE:** said “I think it was a great effort on their part...a significant moment...possibly a turning point here at PC...Four young Dominicans came out with something that went much [further] than what the president or Vice President of mission and ministry did”)

Date reported: March 20, 2018

Location: Providence College

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/providence-college-chaplains-respond-to-attacks-on-pro-marriage-Catholic-st>

### **United States - Vermont**

Brian Senecal (daughter denied access to a state funded program that granted college vouchers to high school students because her school was Catholic, said “I can’t believe that Vermont would do that. That’s discriminatory”)

Robin McCormick (mother of Catholic school students, said “Ironically, a public school student can get this voucher and go to a Catholic college with it, but a Catholic high school student can’t take the voucher and go to the University of Vermont with it. It’s a little crazy”)

Bishop Christopher Coyne (said “There’s no good argument against it in terms of the separation of church and state”)

Date reported: March 14, 2018

Source: [https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2018/03/14/vermont-latest-clash-between-public-money-and-catholic-church?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletters&utm\\_content=3+-+In+Vermont+the+latest+clash+between+publ&utm\\_campaign=Newsletter&source=Newsletter](https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2018/03/14/vermont-latest-clash-between-public-money-and-catholic-church?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletters&utm_content=3+-+In+Vermont+the+latest+clash+between+publ&utm_campaign=Newsletter&source=Newsletter)

## **Today's Martyrs**

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

*or write to*

**2490 Black Rock Turnpike #455  
Fairfield CT 06825-2400**

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