

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

**Weekly Report – 2018-06-03 through 2018-06-09**



## **Argentina**

Archbishop Hector Aguer (condemned on [July 2, 2014](#) a video advertisement for a gay bar that was surreptitiously recorded inside the La Plata cathedral and which mocked the sacraments; reported on [September 20, 2016](#) to be under criminal investigation by the Secretary for Human Rights for having written that “carnal copulation outside of marriage” has been “transformed into something trivial, common, unsubstantial”; **UPDATE:** retired due to age, ordered by the Vatican to leave his diocese before his replacement arrives, an Orthodox bishop offered to let him stay with him since the Vatican order effectively made him homeless)

Date: [June 2, 2018](#)

Location: La Plata

Source: <https://onepeterfive.com/respected-predecessor-of-new-la-plata-archbishop-tucho-fernandez-ordered-to-depart-his-diocese-immediately/>



## **Bangladesh**

**Event: Christians continue to try to reclaim church land seized by a Buddhist priest and his followers**

Fr Jerome D'Rozario (said that the Buddhists destroyed paddies and beat Christian farmers)

Romesh Tripura (local Union Council chairman, said "At the end of the year, we won the case to get back the property as we possessed all valid land documents. However, Bhante filed a review petition, which the church authority was unaware of, so he again won the property. Then we filed a petition with the High Court, which is still going on")

Date: [June 6, 2018](#)

Location: Bandarban district

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/church-fights-to-reclaim-land-grabbed-by-bangladesh-monk/82492>



## Burkina Faso

Pastor Pierre Boena (abducted along with his son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter)

Date: June 3, 2018

Location: Bilhore village

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/06/second-christian-leader-in-two-weeks-kidnapped-in-burkina-faso/>



## Central African Republic

Fr Francis Davy Barka-Nado SMA (said "It seems as if there was a planned depopulation project in some parts of the country. Villages, infrastructures, human lives are destroyed; entire families eradicated due to ethnicity, race and religion. It can be said that at present there is an atypical form of genocide in the CAR...The news on incidents and massacres committed by rebel groups against the civilian population do not reflect reality on the ground. What is said, transmitted and disseminated by international means, is bias and exploited...When there is a tragedy in a city or village, the survivors know who did what and know the number of victims. But they are also victims and do not have access to international media to express themselves. Often the perpetrators are presented as victims...The suffering of the Central African population far exceeds what is reported outside the Country or what is seen on television in the West. Death has become an everyday friend. The morgues of the Bangui General Hospital and the community hospital are no longer sufficient to receive corpses. The coffin business, which culturally represents a taboo, is becoming very profitable right now...The arrival of the Russian army in the country was greeted by the population as a relief against the atrocities, despite the presence of United Nations forces")

Date: June 4, 2018

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/64290-AFRICA\\_CENTRAL\\_AFRICAN\\_REP\\_An\\_atypical\\_form\\_of\\_genocide\\_is\\_scourging\\_the\\_country](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64290-AFRICA_CENTRAL_AFRICAN_REP_An_atypical_form_of_genocide_is_scourging_the_country)

Fr Firmin Gbagoua (**UPDATE**: reported on a militia attack on his city "The population is devastated, houses burned and looted. The bodies of the victims lie on the ground")

Date: May 14, 2018

Location: Bambari

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/64217-AFRICA\\_CENTRAL\\_AFRICA\\_Assault\\_on\\_Bambari\\_even\\_the\\_Church\\_is\\_not\\_spared](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64217-AFRICA_CENTRAL_AFRICA_Assault_on_Bambari_even_the_Church_is_not_spared)



## China

Chen (reported that the local government had forced all churches to remove their crosses)

Wang (said “The government aimed at the Three-Self [official] churches this time. Most house churches do not have their own church buildings. The Three-Self churches feared that the officials would demolish the crosses by force, so they chose to take them down on their own. No one dares defy the orders”)

Li (said that the local government has forbidden more than five people from meeting without permission, that it has posted guards at some churches, and added “The officials from the brigade will show up at your door and ask you to remove or cover up Christian decorations. They will damage your house if you dare to say no. Porcelain tiles that said ‘Jesus loves you’ embedded in the wall were gouged out. They also forbade us from singing hymns”)

Date: late May 2018

Location: Ningling county, Henan province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/06/henan-persecution-targets-both-official.html>

**Event: Police and RAB [religious affairs bureau] officials arrested 17 Christians for holding a prayer service in memory of the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre**

Pastor Wang Yi (husband of Jiang Rong, **UPDATE**: arrested)

Jiang Rong (wife of Pastor Wang Yi, **UPDATE**: arrested)

Rev Li Yingqiang (**UPDATE**: arrested)

Zhang Xudong

Ge Yingfeng

An Yankui

Wen Guanghe

Liu Yingxu

Dai Zhichao

Ren Yifei

Li Chengju

Date: June 4, 2018

Location: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Source: [www.chinaaid.org/2018/06/17-christians-arrested-for.html](http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/06/17-christians-arrested-for.html)

Rev John Cao San Qiang (husband of Jamie Powell, father of Amos and Ben, U.S. legal resident, minister to Myanmar Christians, arrested at the Myanmar border with China on [March 5, 2017](#) and charged with illegal border crossing; sentenced to 7 years' imprisonment and fined US\$3,168 in [Pu'er, Yunnan province](#) on [March 23, 2018](#); **UPDATE**: still imprisoned)

Date: May 1, 2018

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/05/huffington-post-asian-american-pastors.html>

Yin (reported on government pressure to cancel church lease agreements, said "The police called us today and forbade us from organizing religious activities in any form...In the morning, the government forced the brother who rented the building to sign a letter guaranteeing that he would not participate in any religious activities. We haven't met with any representatives from the religious affairs bureau yet, and we don't know how to handle all of this")

Date: May 8, 2018

Location: Xicheng district, Beijing

Xu Yonghai (**UPDATE:** said "[W]e gathered for a Bible study on Friday, April 20. On April 19, the police showed up at my house and asked me: 'Who is going to attend the gathering tomorrow? Will there be reporters?' A few reporters visit our church frequently and attend the Bible study sessions. Two reporters had planned to come on April 20", one reporter cancelled when he saw the police outside the church)

Date: April 19, 2018

Location: Beijing

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/05/christian-times-chinese-officials.html>

Cardinal Emeritus Joseph Zen Ze-Kium SDB (aged 86; **UPDATE:** denounced the Hong Kong judiciary for acts of suppression "Those citizens who safeguard the intrinsic values of Hong Kong and have ideals, especially young people, have been sent to prison in batches. The authorities have done whatever they want. Is this not China before June 4, 1989?")

Date: June 4, 2018

Location: Hong Kong

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/cardinal-denounces-hong-kong-judiciary-for-suppression/82496>

**Event: A Christian couple were arrested for handing out religious literature and for the display of anti-abortion signs in a public park**

Liang Ziliang (husband of Li Yinxiu, arrested)

Li Yinxiu (wife of Liang Ziliang, arrested)

Date: June 1, 2018

Location: Heshan, Guangdong province

Source: [www.chinaaid.org/2018/06/christian-couple-criminally-detained.html](http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/06/christian-couple-criminally-detained.html)

Bishop Joseph Zhang Yinlin (a Way of the Cross shrine constructed in 1903 was demolished by local authorities in the middle of the night, had been notified of the pending demolition a month earlier)

Date: June 5, 2018

Location: Tianjiajing village, Henan province

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/chinese-authorities-demolish-way-of-the-cross-in-henan/82510>



## Congo, Democratic Republic

Fr Pierre Mavinga (beaten and robbed along with another priest, hospitalized, said "It was about 8 o'clock when a dozen hooded bandits, some in military uniform, invaded our premises, fired point-blank range with real ammunition. They beat us and took our phones, computers and a little money")

Date: April 10, 2018

Location: Seka-Mbote district, Boma

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/64030->

[AFRICA DR CONGO Two priests attacked The Church is intimidated and threatened Church sources tell Fides](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64030-)

Fr Etienne Sengiyumva (**killed** after celebrating Mass)

Bishop Theophile Kaboy Ruboneka (**UPDATE**: reported on the murder of Fr Etienne Sengiyumva: "Around 3pm, after celebrating Mass in Kyahemba a circumscription of his parish, Fr Etienne had gathered his collaborators, when an armed man, accompanied by other people, entered the meeting room and killed the priest...it is difficult to say who was responsible of this terrible act. There are different armed groups in our region, at least 15, which cannot be dismantled despite the presence of the regular army and the Blue Helmets of MONUSCO [UN Mission in the DRC]...Fr Etienne is the third priest killed in the area. Investigations on the perpetrators of these deaths never lead to anything. On our behalf, we will do everything to identify Fr Etienne's murderers. In these cases, the witnesses fear for their lives and that of their loved ones and hardly offer useful information...I repeat: in our region there are so many armed groups that it is difficult to understand who commits the action. Here in North Kivu we live in total chaos. The situation in my diocese of Goma, like that of Butembo-Beni, is incredible. We are completely abandoned by everyone, we live only thanks to Providence. I ask the faithful of the universal Church to pray for our region so that they can rediscover peace")

Date: April 8, 2018

Location: Kyahemba

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/64003->

[AFRICA DR CONGO We are abandoned by all says the Bishop of Goma after the murder of Fr Etienne Sengiyumva](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64003-)

Fr Celestin Ngango (abducted on April 1, 2018 on the road between Nyarukwangara and Karambi, Rutshuru, North Kivu province; **UPDATE**: released)

Date: April 5, 2018

Location: Bunyangula village

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63999->

[AFRICA DR CONGO Congolese priest kidnapped on Easter Sunday released](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63999-)



## Denmark

Dr Sara Afshari (criticized Western governments for their attempts to reject the Christian conversion of people from Muslim majority countries in asylum applications “I don’t like this naive understanding of conversion by the politicians or the media saying they become Christian because their case will be strengthened. That might be one of the reasons for some – not for all...there are no reliable criteria for judging what a Christian should know in order to believe”)

Date reported: June 8, 2018

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/06/assessment-of-religious-conversions-as-genuine-or-asylum-motivated-dismissed-as-naive/>



## El Salvador

Fr Walter Osmin Vasquez (aged 36, **shot dead** after celebrating Mass)

Date: March 29, 2018

Location: near Santiago de Maria

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/63975-AMERICA\\_EL\\_SALVADOR\\_Fr\\_Walter\\_assassinated\\_like\\_the\\_Gospel\\_s\\_grain\\_of\\_wheat](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63975-AMERICA_EL_SALVADOR_Fr_Walter_assassinated_like_the_Gospel_s_grain_of_wheat)



## India

Pastor Suryadev Kumar (husband, father of six aged 4-13, beaten and thrown from a moving train after sharing a Bible with another passenger, hospitalized with a severe head injury)

Date reported: June 2, 2018

Location: Punpun, Bihar state

Source [warning - graphic]: <https://persecutionrelief.org/pastor-pushed-out-of-a-moving-train-bihar/>  
and <https://persecutionrelief.org/update-on-pastor-suryadev-who-was-pushed-from-moving-train/>

Janglia Neenama (father of Ramesh, home invaded during a prayer meeting, beaten, hospitalized)

Ramesh (son of Janglia Neenama)

Rakesh (beaten, hospitalized)

Arobai Makodia (beaten, hospitalized)

Date: June 1, 2018

Location: Gomala village, Jhabua district, Madhya Pradesh state

Source [warning - graphic]: <https://persecutionrelief.org/christians-beaten-up-mp/>

Pastor Kamlesh Kuma (husband of Shashikala, described a Hindu attack on his church: "They manhandled women, beat them, pulled their clothes, spoke to them in a filthy language and disgraced them", threatened with death, said when police arrived "Instead of taking action against our plight, the police began to question us as to, 'Why are you running a church? You are not supposed to worship here...otherwise you will get killed and we can do nothing to help you'"")

Shashikala (wife of Pastor Kamlesh Kuma, described a Hindu attack on her church "They were looking for the pastor, saying, 'We will kill him today'. We had hidden him inside a room and locked the room from outside. They went on hunting for him everywhere. This is how we were able to save his life...I saw Ram Prasad fall on the floor bleeding profusely after being hit by a brick, but the attackers continued kicking him and hitting him with wooden sticks until he lay motionless on the floor...The neighbors just stood watching us in fear during the attack. No one came to our rescue for fear of getting beaten up", said police questioned parishioners for evidence of illegal conversions, received medical treatment)

Ram Prasad (aged 55, beaten into unconsciousness, hospitalized)

Mithlesh (received medical treatment)

Kalavati (received medical treatment)

Maya (received medical treatment)

Date: April 29, 2018

Location: Baburia Khera, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/05/pastors-wife-hides-husband-from-hindu-extremists-seeking-to-kill-him-in-northern-india/>

**Event: Hindu radicals attempted to prevent a Christian funeral, then threatened Christians throughout the village**

Halal Ram Sahu (convert, widower of Sushila Sahu, father of Manish Kumar Sahu, threatened at his wife's funeral)

Manish Kumar Sahu (son of Sushila and Halal Ram Sahu, threatened at his mother's funeral)

Pastor Arvid (described the attacks)

Sewa Ram (family threatened with death, signed a document renouncing Christ)

Pramila (wife of Suresh Sahu, home threatened, refused to sign a renunciation of Jesus, husband forced to sign despite not being a Christian, father-in-law transferred her farmland to his own daughter)

Date: June 3, 2018

Location: Sirsida village, Kanker district, Chhattisgarh state

Source: <https://persecutionrelief.org/christians-harassed-over-burial-cg/>

Ivania (aged 8, daughter of Maria Demari, Christian boarding school resident, seized along with other students by child welfare agents)

Maria Demari (mother of Ivania, wife, domestic worker, attempted to recover her daughter from child welfare custody, said "But when I went to CWC with the documents, they refused to acknowledge that she is my daughter. I was told that because I am a Christian, my daughter wouldn't be given back to me. They also asked me to convert to Hinduism")

Date: May 19, 2018

Location: Kota, Rajasthan state

Source: <https://persecutionrelief.org/now-raje-govt-targets-missionary-schools-under-juvenile-justice-act/>

Fr Cedric Prakash SJ (**UPDATE:** commented on state elections "The elections for the Karnataka State Assembly were a crucial moment in the history of the country. Outgoing Prime Minister of Karnataka Siddaramaiah, of the Congress Party, carried out a worthy job, but in the final race he had to deal with the Baratiya Janata Party [BJP], the Hindu nationalist party, which through money, manipulation and power, was very successful")

Date: May 21, 2018

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/64218-ASIA\\_INDIA\\_A\\_Jesuit\\_In\\_Karnataka\\_the\\_nationalist\\_forces\\_have\\_not\\_triumphed](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64218-ASIA_INDIA_A_Jesuit_In_Karnataka_the_nationalist_forces_have_not_triumphed)

**Event: A Christian couple were arrested on the day before their wedding on illegal conversion charges due to opposition to the ceremony**

Sumanti Kumari (fiancee of Rupash Manjhi, arrested)

Rupash Manjhi (fiance of Sumanti Kumari, arrested)

Date: May 29, 2018

Location: Simdega district, Jharkhand state

Source: <https://www.premier.org.uk/News/World/Christian-couple-arrested-day-before-wedding-under-anti-conversion-law>

Bishop Thomas Paulsamy (spoke on continuing persecution "The BJP [Hindu nationalist party] supports the fundamentalists...[Prime Minister Modi] does not want the constitution to apply, but rather the religious principles and values of Hinduism")

Date: June 5, 2018

Location: Dindigul, Tamil Nadu state

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2018/06/05/christians-protest-amid-surge-in-hindu-nationalist-attacks-in-india/>

Archbishop Filipe Neri Ferrao (**UPDATE:** said "The Indian Constitution is in danger and many people live with a feeling of insecurity. It is urgent to protect the values of the Constitution, including the freedom to practice one's own religion...Lately we have seen a new trend that is emerging in our country: one wants to impose a kind of uniformity on what and how to eat, dress, live and even on the God to be worshiped. It is a kind of mono-culturalism: human rights are under attack and democracy seems to be in danger")

Date reported: June 6, 2018

Location: Goa

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/64308->

[ASIA INDIA Archbishop of Goa The Indian Constitution is in danger](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64308-)

Sajan K George (**UPDATE**: reported on the desecration of a cross)

Date: May 22, 2018

Location: Raia village, Goa

Source: <http://asianews.it/news-en/Goa-cross-smashed.-Sajan-K-George:-Intolerance-against-Christians-43976.html>



## Indonesia

**Event: A family of suicide bombers attacked three churches, killing 12 and wounding over 50**

Aloysius Bayu (new convert, church security coordinator, stopped the suicide bomber from entering the church, **killed**)

Fr Alexius Kurdo Irianto (three parishioners killed in the suicide bombing, said "Despite our profound sadness we forgive the perpetrators of crimes and pray for the guilty and organizers of these horrible acts: may the Lord enlighten their minds")

Fr Siprianus Hormat (condemned the suicide bombings of the three churches that killed 12 and injured over 50 "The Indonesian Bishops are shocked, they expressed strong disappointment and solidarity towards the families of the victims and wounded. It is traumatic to know that a whole family of suicide bombers carried out the attacks: what do we instill in the minds of children? Extremism? This is the most profound question that these attacks bring with them ")

Date: May 13, 2018

Location: Surabaya, Java

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/64181->

[ASIA INDONESIA Attacks on three churches the Catholic parish priest Let us forgive the terrorists](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64181-)

and <http://www.fides.org/en/news/64183->

[ASIA INDONESIA The Bishops Attacks against coexistence and pluralism](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64183-)



## Ivory Coast

Fr Bernardin Brou (aged 41, **shot in a roadside robbery attempt**, hospitalized, **died**)

Fr Theophile Ahi (witnessed the shooting of Fr Bernardin Brou)

Date: April 23, 2018

Location: Nianda

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/64085-AFRICA COTE D IVORE Priest killed in road robbery](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64085-<u>AFRICA COTE D IVORE Priest killed in road robbery</u>)



## **Mali**

Jeffery Woodke (aged 57, husband of Els, missionary, U.S. citizen, abducted on [October 14, 2016](#) from [Arcata](#) by armed men who forced him to strip to his underwear, guard and housekeeper killed; **UPDATE**: still in captivity according to the government)

Date: June 4, 2018

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/06/us-missionary-captive-for-20-months-is-alive-reports-nigers-president/>



## **Myanmar**

Bishop Francis Daw Tang (reported that over 7,000 Kachin Christians have fled their homes "In early April, the Burmese army began to attack the region on the border with China. Many villages were attacked and the population started to flee. Many have been trapped in the jungle for at least three weeks, without food and without freedom to move, because they are suspected of being rebel collaborators...The refugees have come to the parish of Tanghre. At the moment there are 243 families in the parish territory, a total of 1,200 people. Another 600 displaced people have arrived in Palana, in a Baptist church complex, and other groups have found shelter in other churches")

Than Htoi (social worker, said a Christian school complex was destroyed in a bombing raid: "It is an invisible war")

Date: May 17, 2018

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/64200-ASIA MYANMAR Bishops alarm Over 7 000 Kachin Christians forced to flee](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64200-<u>ASIA MYANMAR Bishops alarm Over 7 000 Kachin Christians forced to flee</u>)

Fr Peter Nlam Tu (church and home damaged from military gunfire, said "The next day, the military came and took the unexploded shell. They didn't question me about the attack nor talk about who did it")

Tang Lung (catechist, said "We informed the village administrator, police and firefighters about the unexploded shell and then they talked to the military, who came and took it the next day")

Date: May 30, 2018

Location: Kamaing Kawng Ra village, Hpakant township, Kachin state

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/catholic-church-attacked-in-myanmars-conflict-torn-kachin/82499>



## Nepal

### **Events: Four churches were damaged in arson attacks in a single week by suspected Hindu extremists**

Pastor Hasta Lova Limbu (church damaged in an arson attack)

Date: May 9, 2018

Location: eastern part of the country

Pastor Shyam Thapa (church damaged in an arson attack)

Date: May 10, 2018

Location: Doti district

Pastor Dhirendra Rana (aged 34, church damaged in an arson attack, said “The miscreants broke the lock of the church and formed a heap of all the stuff present in the building, including the records of the church, 300 kilograms of grain and electric appliances, and they set everything ablaze...I reported the matter to the local police, but I have not heard anything back from them since then”)

Date: May 11, 2018

Location: midwest region

Pastor Birendra Kariya (church damaged in an arson attack)

Date: May 12, 2018

Location: Dhangadhi

Pastor B P Khanal (said of the church arson attack “Though it might appear that these attacks have been carried out by the same person, geographically this is not possible. Which means that these are performed by people who are in a network and are well connected to each other”)

Tanka Subedi (Religious Liberty Forum Nepal chair; **UPDATE:** said of the police “They have not made any arrests yet, as it seems that they have been clearly notified to not carry out arrests in these cases”)

Date: May 21, 2018

### **Event: Six Christians were arrested on May 9, 2018; UPDATE: jail time extended for seven more days**

Dinesh Subba (aged 28, arrested)

Ashish Subba (aged 22, arrested)

Dipak Subba (aged 28, arrested)

Manatula Dhital (aged 44, arrested)

Barshiya Dhital (aged 40, Indian citizen, arrested)

Pawan Rai (aged 33, Indian citizen, arrested)

Date: May 17, 2018

Location: Tehrathum district

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/05/christians-in-nepal-suspect-hindu-extremists-in-sudden-attacks-on-churches/>



## Nicaragua

Fr Edwin Roman (said following anti-government demonstrations "On Saturday a young man was executed, this is the right word, because he was arrested, he was helpless, but a woman police officer shot him in the chest. The young man told her: if you have the intention of killing me, then kill me, and the policewoman shot him, and the victim fell in front of the parish of San Miguel")

Date: June 2, 2018

Location: Masaya

Fr Mario Jarquin (attacked along with neighbors by armed government supporters)

Date: June 2, 2018

Location: Diria, Granada

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/64288-AMERICA\\_NICARAGUA\\_Parish\\_priests\\_alongside\\_young\\_people\\_while\\_violence\\_continues](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64288-AMERICA_NICARAGUA_Parish_priests_alongside_young_people_while_violence_continues)



## Pakistan

**Event UPDATE: A family celebrating Easter was shot dead while going for ice cream**

Rahib (aged 19, college student, **shot dead**)

Azhar Iqbal (aged 20, college student, **shot dead**)

Sunana Shakeel (aged 10, shot in both legs, hospitalized)

Mehwish William (aged 19, shot in her left leg, hospitalized)

Samuel Masih (aged 38, shot in the neck, hospitalized)

Date: April 2, 2018

Location: Shah Zaman area, Quetta, Balochistan province

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/bpca-assists-shooting-victims-and-families-of-those-slain-in-easter-terrorist-attack>

Pastor Yousuf Aziz (church attacked with a firebomb "We have not received any threats and we are not in conflict with anyone, this criminal act is shocking for all of us, everything was burnt: mats, rugs, chairs, furnishings, crosses, sacred books like the Bible, hymn books, catechism books...The members of the community are in tears in seeing their Church like this, we pray for the guilty and leave everything in God's hands. God will protect his people")

Date: April 15, 2018

Location: Shahdara

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/64047-ASIA\\_PAKISTAN\\_A\\_church\\_burned\\_in\\_Lahore\\_by\\_unknown\\_persons](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64047-ASIA_PAKISTAN_A_church_burned_in_Lahore_by_unknown_persons)

Fr Francis Nadeem OFM Cap (**UPDATE**: reported on the eviction of 50 Christian families from their homes in a corrupt land grab, said "even some Muslim leaders condemned this injustice and asked the government to act immediately against the guilty")

Date: April 1, 2018

Location: Sankhatra village, Narowal district, Punjab province

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/64006-ASIA\\_PAKISTAN\\_Christian\\_and\\_Muslim\\_leaders\\_solidarity\\_with\\_Christian\\_families\\_thrown\\_out\\_from\\_their\\_homes](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64006-ASIA_PAKISTAN_Christian_and_Muslim_leaders_solidarity_with_Christian_families_thrown_out_from_their_homes)

### **Event: Christians have been ordered to dismantle their church**

Pastor Samuel Masih

Rafiq Masih (aged 70, donated the land for the church)

Rafaqat Masih (union councilor for minorities, retired army, shopkeeper, has been working to resolve the dispute, said "Rafiq is childless, so he bequeathed this property for the construction of a church building. The construction began in 2012 and we had been holding worship services since then. But in December 2016 the local Muslims objected over it and filed an application against us in the local police station. At that time, a compromise was reached and we again started holding services. But, again, in December 2017, they submitted an application in the police station, after which we were called in and were told to sign an agreement [to end services]...We are being forced to demolish the existing church structure and, in lieu of this, they would let us build a church on a piece of government land outside the village which is already dedicated for a school. They haven't even given any documentary proof that this piece of land would be transferred to Christians. Then another issue is that we worked for several years to construct this church building. Now who is going to pay for building from scratch?")

Pastor Liaquat M Qaiser (**UPDATE**: said "Christians are peace-loving people. We don't desire any conflict. If the local Muslims do not want Christians worshipping among them, then they should provide them an alternative place. They are poor people and do not have resources to buy another place and build a church once again")

Date: June 2, 2018

Location: Nayya Sarabah (Chak 336) village, Toba Tek Singh district, Punjab province

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/06/pakistan-christians-told-they-cant-have-a-church-in-muslim-majority-village/>

Saqib Masih (aged 19, contractor, **died from asphyxiation** in a sewer, had been denied safety equipment)

Mushtaq Masih (aged 45, sanitation worker, **died from asphyxiation** in a sewer while trying to rescue Saqib Masih, had been denied safety equipment, had applied for retirement but was forced to continue work after denial of back pay)

Gamma (retrieved Saqib Masih and Mushtaq Masih from the sewer)

Rashid Masih (municipal councilor, said “They were assigned to open up a clogged sewerage line on Qaziwala Road. The line had been clogged for almost a year. First Saqib went down and opened one side of the clogged pipeline. But as soon the line was cleared poisonous gases in the pipeline for months started leaking into the gutter and Saqib quickly fell unconscious. Then Mushtaq went down but he also fell unconscious. We called rescue services, but no help arrived. Another Christian, Gamma, tied a water-soaked handkerchief over his mouth, went down and brought out both the unconscious men. We took them to hospital where they were pronounced dead...After the two were declared dead, we held a protest and the civil administration assured us of support. The protest ended after the civil administration negotiated. They then arranged for the funerals and also provided 250,000 Pakistani rupees [c. US \$2,170]. We are struggling to ensure that now the bereaved families be given a pension as their children are still young”)

Date: May 22, 2018

Location: Bahawalnagar, Punjab province

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/05/two-pakistani-christian-sewerage-workers-die-from-poisonous-gases/>

Shahzad Masih (aged 24, husband, father of two, contractor, asphyxiated in a sewer on **January 17, 2018**, hospitalized, had been denied safety equipment; **UPDATE: died**)

Date: January 20, 2018

Location: Karachi

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/01/pakistan-christian-cleaner-dies-work-leaving-wife-two-children/>

Waqas Masih (aged 24, nephew of Saleem Masih, cousin of Emmanuel Saleem, **beaten to death by police** after his uncle refused to pay the police in an attempted extortion)

Saleem Masih (father of Emmanuel Saleem, uncle of Waqas Masih, rickshaw driver, home invaded by police who threatened to arrest him on false charges if he did not pay them extortion money, refused, nephew beaten to death in retribution)

Emmanuel Saleem (son of Saleem Masih, cousin of Waqas Masih, described the police attack on his home in which his cousin was killed “We asked them what they wanted, to which they said that they had information that we are drug peddlers and that they had raided the house to recover the narcotics. We are poor Christians, but we earn our livelihood with honesty and integrity. We knew that the policemen were there for extorting money, but since we had done nothing wrong, my father chose to confront them rather than succumb to their blackmail [at which point they repeated their threats to make false arrests]. This must have panicked Waqas, who ran outside the house. The three cops ran after him, as did my other cousins, Qaiser and Dawood. The cops got hold of Waqas soon after and

started hitting him mercilessly with punches, kicks and gun butts. Qaiser and Dawood tried to save Waqas from the police torture, but they were pushed back and warned not to intervene in the beating”)

Date: May 29, 2018

Location: Haider colony [ghetto], Gujrat district, Punjab province

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/06/police-in-pakistan-kill-young-christian-man-in-raid-relatives-say/>



### **Palestine**

Fr Fadi Shalufa OFM (threatened with a knife after he shut a gate in the faces of two men who were harassing pilgrims)

Date: June 1, 2018

Location: Bethlehem

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/64292-ASIA\\_HOLY\\_LAND\\_Bethlehem\\_a\\_Franciscan\\_priest\\_attacked\\_for\\_defending\\_the\\_pilgrims](http://www.fides.org/en/news/64292-ASIA_HOLY_LAND_Bethlehem_a_Franciscan_priest_attacked_for_defending_the_pilgrims)



### **Philippines**

Fr Rey Urmeneta (aged 64, shot while in his automobile, hospitalized in stable condition)

Remedios de Belen (church secretary, witnessed the shooting)

Date: June 6, 2018

Location: Calamba City

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/third-philippine-priest-shot-since-december/82500>

Fr Mark Anthony Yuaga Ventura (aged 37, **shot dead** while blessing children after Mass)

Date: April 29, 2018

Location: Gattaran, Cagayan province

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/priest-shot-dead-after-mass-in-northern-philippines/82175>



### **Sweden**

Aideen Strandsson (aged 37, convert, refugee from Iran, as of [July 28, 2017](#) has been scheduled for deportation back to Iran despite a high risk of imprisonment; **UPDATE**: no date set for the appeal of her deportation order, denied a work permit and welfare benefits, said “I know some people who sent their requests for appeal at the same time as I did, about one year ago. They’ve received an answer to their appeal, but there is no answer for me yet. I don’t think they even care if I’m alive or not”)

Date reported: June 8, 2018

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/06/convert-in-sweden-tells-of-nightmares-every-night-amid-fears-of-deportation-and-iranian-jail/>



### Uganda

Pastor Moses Saku (prayer crusade interrupted by local Muslims, said “We have never abused Muslims or Allah but it seems they [Muslims] are concerned by the way we were highlighting the contradictions in the Quran”)

Pastor Andrew Bogere (said “Muslims will not stop us from spreading the gospel. We are here for the truth and we shall not be stopped”)

Date reported: June 4, 2018

Location: Iganga Town

Source: <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Police-foil-Christian-Muslim-fight-Iganga-Islam-evangelism-/688334-4595484-tsg66j/index.html>



### United Kingdom

Rev Andrew White (aged 54, suspended from his charity Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East on [June 30, 2016](#) after allegations that he had paid ISIL to release sex slaves; **UPDATE**: exonerated by police)

Date reported: June 8, 2018

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lk6ljbmwZ-0&t=87>



### United States - Colorado

Jack Phillips (bakery owner, cited in [2013](#) for refusing to make a cake for a same gender wedding; the state Supreme Court in [Denver](#) refused on [April 25, 2016](#) to hear his appeal;

**UPDATE:** the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the state Civil Rights Commission ruling against him and upheld his right to exercise his religious beliefs)

Date: June 4, 2018

Location: Washington DC

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/breaking-supreme-court-rules-in-favor-of-baker-who-declined-to-serve-gay-wedding-81541>  
and <https://www.charismanews.com/politics/71444-colorado-baker-scores-huge-victory-for-religious-rights-at-u-s-supreme-court>



## **Vietnam**

Pastor Nguyen Trung Ton (sentenced on [April 5, 2018](#) to 12 years' imprisonment for supporting democratic reforms; **UPDATE:** appeal denied)

Nguyen Van Dai (attorney, sentenced on [April 5, 2018](#) to 12 years' imprisonment for supporting democratic reforms; **UPDATE:** appeal denied)

Date: June 4, 2018

Location: Hanoi

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnam-jails-human-rights-lawyer-for-15-years/81999>  
and <https://www.ucanews.com/news/jail-looms-for-pastor-activists-in-hanoi-as-appeals-fail/82486>

## **Today's Martyrs**

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