

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2018-06-10 through 2018-06-16



Australia

Archbishop Mark Coleridge (said that a new law that would require priests to divulge the contents of confessions is “seemingly driven by a desire to penalize the Catholic Church”)

Archbishop Christopher Prowse (said “The Government threatens religious freedom by appointing itself an expert on religious practices and by attempting to change the sacrament of confession while delivering no improvement in the safety of children”)

Date: June 13, 2018

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2018/06/13/australian-law-forces-priests-to-violate-seal-of-confessional/>



Burkina Faso

Pastor Pierre Boena (abducted from [Bilhore village](#) along with his son, daughter-in-law, granddaughters and possibly three other Christians on [June 3, 2018](#); **UPDATE**: released)

David Boena (son of Pastor Pierre Boena, husband of Ami Sawadogo, released)

Ami Sawadogo (wife of David Boena, released)

Fasne-wende Ouedraogo (granddaughter of Pastor Pierre Boena, released)

Pelagie Sawadogo (granddaughter of Pastor Pierre Boena, released)

Pauline Sawadogo (mother of Sanata and Zoenabou, whereabouts not reported)

Sanata (daughter of Pauline Sawadogo, whereabouts not reported)

Zoenabou (daughter of Pauline Sawadogo, whereabouts not reported)

Date: June 7, 2018

Basnere Mathieu Sawadogo (husband of Alizeta, catechist, abducted)

Alizeta (wife of Basnere Mathieu Sawadogo, abducted)

Date: May 20, 2018

Location: Arbinda

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/06/burkina-faso-kidnappers-release-pastor-and-his-family-after-four-days/>



China

Event: Four Christians were detained by police after a raid on a worship service at their house church, interrogated for hours, and released later that night

Pastor Huang Xiaoning

Wang Chuanjun

Date: June 10, 2018

Location: Guangzhou, Guangdong province

Source: www.chinaaid.org/2018/06/four-christians-detained-in-guangzhou.html



Egypt

Bishop Morcos (**UPDATE:** publicly thanked imam Sheikh El Jamea who used his mosque loudspeakers to call Muslims to help put out an accidental church fire)

Date: June 11, 2018

Location: Shubra al Khaymah

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/64342-AFRICA_EGYPT_Fire_in_a_church_the_imam_launches_the_SOS_and_calls_for_help_from_the_mosque_s_loudspeakers

Hani Shamshoun Girgis (aged 31, newspaper photographer, detained by police for carrying a bottle of water during Ramadan, said “There was a bottle of water inside my bag and, while he was searching it, he was staring at this bottle with anger. He took my ID from me and asked me to follow him. When I resisted and asked where he was taking me, he started insulting me and ordered that I stopped talking – as if I was a criminal, [later at the police station] The officer told me, ‘Why did you have this bottle of water while we are in Ramadan?’ I told them I was not fasting because I was a Christian, but they insulted me and said that I would stay there until sunset and that I was not allowed to sit...When I am at work, I don’t eat or drink in front of my Muslim colleagues, as a sign of respect”)

Date: June 5, 2018

Location: Giza

Adel Ayoub (aged 52, farmer, beaten by several young men for drinking water, said “They asked me, ‘Why are you breaking Ramadan fasting?’. I told them I was a Christian. As soon as

they heard the word ‘Christian’, they attacked and beat me with their hands until I almost fainted”)

Date: June 6, 2018

Location: Beni Ibrahim village, Asyut province

Ashraf Mourad (witnessed an attack on a microbus in which the driver was injured from broken glass, said “I approached the microbus and found out that the driver was attacked because he was drinking a cup of tea inside and also because he was a Christian. There was a tattoo of a cross on his right wrist”)

Date: June 1, 2018

Location: Helwan

Abraam Youssef (teacher, criticized a 2016 religious ruling that required Christians to publicly observe the Ramadan fast “This fatwa is a crime of incitement of violence and opens the door to religious extremism under a political cover”)

Date: June 13, 2018

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/06/coptic-christians-harassed-for-drinking-water-during-ramadan-fasting-hours/>

Mina Bendary (aged 22, forced out of professional soccer in 2015, said “Christians simply don’t play in professional football clubs in Egypt. I was told by club officials to change my name in order to play professionally”, has opened a soccer school for Christians)

Mina Samir (aged 17, brother of Abanoub Samir, said “I have been playing football since I was 12 and started applying then. My first experience was at El-Ismaily. The coaches there told me they were impressed by my performance. But as soon as I told them my name is Mina...they said they would call me back. I never got that call...Last year, I applied at Petrojet. I was the only player wearing yellow trainers while we stood in line during the trial. The coach called out to me ‘the one wearing the yellow trainers, what’s your name?’ So I told him ‘Mina’ and then he quickly diverted his attention away claiming he meant the player standing next to me. The player next to me was wearing black trainers. It was then I knew I wouldn’t make the cut after his sudden shift in the way he treated me”)

Abanoub Samir (aged 21, brother of Mina Samir, told in 2013 to change his name to 'Mostafa Ibrahim' to obtain a contract with a soccer team, denied a contract after he refused)

George Murad (aged 24, unsuccessfully attempted to lodge a complaint when he was told to change his Christian name “It’s very difficult in Egypt to prove religious discrimination because it’s often not explicit”)

Madgi Khalil (activist, has been finalizing a report to FIFA the violation of FIFA rules against religious discrimination, FIFA did nothing for two years following the initial complaint of Egyptian non-compliance and then merely asked for more information)

Date reported: June 15, 2018

Source: <https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2018/06/15/i-was-told-to-change-my-name-to-play-professionally-the-plight-of-egyptian-christians-in-football/>

Ibrahim Sadic (land burned in an arson attack after he was accused of operating a house church)

Date: June 15, 2018

Location: Beni Suef

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=2171&A=35173>

Nancy Michael Girgis (disappeared after taking an exam, likely abducted)

Date: June 13, 2018

Location: Tanta

Source: www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=2171&A=35157



Eritrea

Pastor Oqbamichel Teklehaimanot (husband, father of three, detained for 'a few weeks' in 2003; arrested along with 68 other Christians including the wedding couple while officiating at their January 2005 wedding, abused in prison, released after four months; arrested in October 2007, held in a police station; **UPDATE**: released, in need of medical care)

Date reported: June 7, 2018

Location: Asmara

Source: <https://vom.com.au/eritrea-prisoner-released/>



India

James Kujur (reported that a cross in a cemetery was vandalized on November 22, 2017; **UPDATE**: the cross was vandalized again, saw the perpetrators flee)

Date reported: June 9, 2018

Location: Bhandaria, Garhwa district, Jharkhand state

Source: <https://persecutionrelief.org/cross-in-cemetery-vandalized-jharkhand/>

Seema (wife of Pastor Jay Baghwan, saw Hindu radicals block a dozen Christians from coming near her house church, the Christians were chased away, threatened with harm if she and her husband did not stop worshipping Christ)

Pastor Jay Bagwan (husband of Seema, threatened with harm if he and his wife did not stop worshipping Christ)

Date: June 10, 2018

Location: Haryana state

Source: <https://persecutionrelief.org/christians-chased-off-from-attending-sunday-worship-service-haryana/>

Pastor Mukunda Sagar (beaten and stripped down to his underwear by a Hindu mob, fled into the fields, rescued by other Christians, taken to a hospital, said "I love Jesus and Jesus Christ loves me. This I know for sure")

Bijari Khondu (witnessed the attack on Pastor Mukunda Sagar)

Pastor Shravan Kumar (reported on the attack on Pastor Mukunda Sagar)

Date: June 10, 2018

Location: Kumelsingha village, Odisha state

Source: <https://persecutionrelief.org/brutally-beaten-for-visiting-christian-friend-odisha/>

Pastor Vinay (received threats for leading worship services)

Mahabali (convert, threatened after he started construction of a house on his own land that was near to a Hindu temple, told he could proceed if he renounced Christ, said "I am not concerned about this perishable house I will never forsake Jesus Christ who will come back to take me and we will live together in the imperishable house he is building for me")

Date reported: June 9, 2018

Location: Raebareli district, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: <https://persecutionrelief.org/prayer-only-defense-of-persecuted-christians-uttar-pradesh/>

Event: A worship service was interrupted by Hindu radicals and allied media, the attending Christians boldly testified to the media, three pastors were arrested on illegal conversion charges

Pastor Mahendra (arrested, released)

Pastor Prem (arrested, released)

Brother Rahul (arrested, released)

Rev Pramod Thomas (worked with police to secure the release of the church leaders)

Pastor Raj (reported on the incident)

Date: June 10, 2018

Location: Satna district, Madhya Pradesh state

Source: <https://persecutionrelief.org/2-pastors-detained-during-sunday-worship-madhya-pradesh/>

Vicky Nanjappa (published an analysis of the book *Breaking India*, which purports that Christian missionaries are seeking to destabilize and partition the country)

Date: June 11, 2018

Source: <https://persecutionrelief.org/how-christian-missionaries-are-funding-naxals-their-urban-friends-to-break-india/>

Bishop Singham (demanded that government censors remove objectionable scenes from the allegedly anti-Christian movie *Jai Ho Indians*)

Date: June 11, 2018

Location: Sundarayya Vignana Kendram

Source: <https://persecutionrelief.org/christians-demand-ban-on-jai-ho-indians-telangana/>

Event UPDATE: A Christian couple were arrested on the day before their wedding on illegal conversion charges due to opposition to the ceremony along with their pastor and a female guest

Sumanti Kumari (convert, fiancée of Rupash Manjhi, sister of Tripti, arrested)

Rupash Manjhi (convert, fiancée of Sumanti Kumari, arrested)

Pastor Sudarshan Manjhi (husband of Biyari Devi, arrested)

Tripti (aged 18, convert, sister of Sumanti Kumari, said "My father was drugged with alcohol that day, and the Sarna tribals, including the village president, abetted him to submit the false complaint in the police station pending the wedding so there won't be a Christian wedding in the village. He is now repentant for what he has done, but it is too late... We have been pleading with my father to testify in the court that he was instigated by the Sarnas, and that the allegations are false. My younger brother and I keep asking him, 'How can you go against your own daughter? She is in jail because of you. Why are you doing this?'"

Biyari Devi (wife of Pastor Sudarshan Manjhi, said of the engaged couple "They both come from Sarna [tribal] families but have accepted Christ, and it is obvious that they would want a holy matrimony. Somaru Manjhi [the bride's father] is my uncle also in relation. He has always been against Christ and the church since the house church was established in 2008. But he never became violent or aggressive with us until the question was about his daughter's marriage")

Date: May 28, 2018

Location: Simdega district, Jharkhand state

Event: Eleven Christians were accused of illegal conversions

Ajay Champiya (convert, husband of Suman Champiya)

Suman Champiya (convert, wife of Ajay Champiya, accused along with her family)

Date: May 12, 2018

Location: Mohanpur, West Singhbhum district, Jharkhand state

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/06/christians-arrested-at-their-wedding-site-on-forcible-conversion-charge-in-india-relatives-say/>

Ahmed (alias, convert from Islam, called to a police station along with three other Christians, told that a complaint had been filed accusing them of creating a terror cell and receiving foreign aid, the police said they did not take the allegation seriously)

Date: June 11, 2018

Source: <https://persecutionrelief.org/christians-accused-of-terrorism/>

Aniyachayan (threatened along with another Christian for distributing Christian literature)

Date reported: June 15, 2018

Location: Kaviyoor village, Thiruvalla, Kerala state

Source: <https://persecutionrelief.org/evangelist-team-confronted-kerala/>

Pastor Suguna Rao (harassed by 'fanatics' who brought pressure against the government in an attempt to deny him a home loan on the grounds that he would use his home for religious purposes)

Date reported: June 16, 2018

Location: Nandamuru village, Tadepalligudem, West Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh state

Source: <https://persecutionrelief.org/pastor-being-harassed-andhra-pradesh/>



Ireland

Dr Ruth Cullen (commented after the Prime Minister said that proposed legislation will compel Christian hospitals to provide abortions “We are witnessing something truly appalling at present – a government that seems prepared to trample on freedom of conscience in order to keep the pretense going that their abortion proposals are somehow medically indicated and based. It is very reassuring though to see the numbers of GPs [general practitioners] who are voicing their opposition”)

Date reported: June 13, 2018

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/gay-irish-prime-minister-catholic-hospitals-will-be-required-to-abort-babie>



Nigeria

Archbishop Valerian Okeke (**UPDATE:** wrote “The Church in Nigeria is passing through a very trying time more than ever before. The recent massacre of two Catholic priests and some parishioners during Holy Mass in Benue State and similar killings in other parts of the country strike deep note on the ears of the populace...Understanding [Islamic] fundamentalists groups, their ideologies and how to counter these ideologies should an integral part of seminary formation and general Christian formation”)

Date: May 2018

Location: Onitsha

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/boko-haram-burns-catholic-building-previously-destroyed-by-boko-haram-90524>



Pakistan

Event: Five Christian youth were arrested and tortured for a theft at a medical clinic, the Muslim doctor who saw the thieves said they were not the culprits, two were released

Edwin Javed

Shakil Masih

Victor Masih

Adnan Masih

Johnson Masih

Date: June 9, 2018

Location: Latifabad

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6870>



Philippines

Fr Richmond Nilo (aged 43, **shot dead** while preparing the church altar for Mass)

Date: June 10, 2018

Location: Zaragoza, Nueva Ecija

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2018/06/12/third-priest-shot-in-philippines-in-six-months/>

Archbishop Socrates Villega (**UPDATE**: issued a statement: "They are killing our flock. They are killing us the shepherds. They are killing our faith. They are cursing our Church. They are killing God again as they did in Calvary...Let us implore the grace of God to touch the heart of the President of the Philippines to stop the verbal persecution of the Catholic Church because such attacks can unwittingly embolden more crimes against priests")

Date: June 10, 2018

Location: Lingayen-Dagupan

Source: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/204692-archbishop-villegas-statement-killing-nueva-ecija-priest-richmond-nilo>



Romania

Archimandrite Mina Dobzeu (aged 96, imprisoned in 1948 for 11 months and then subjected to 5 years' house arrest for protesting the seizure of icons, churches, and monasteries; arrested after the dismantling of the monasteries, tried in a military court, and sent in February 1959 to prison and then to a Danube canal labor camp; released in 1964; jailed in 1988)

for eight months after he wrote seven letters to President Nicolae Ceausescu regarding communist atheism and morality; **UPDATE: died of natural causes)**

Date: June 11, 2018

Location: Husi

Source: <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/archim-mina-dobzeu-confessor-of-communist-romania-reposes-in-the-lord-at-96/>
and <http://ziarullumina.ro/arhimandritul-mina-dobzeu-aparator-al-unitatii-de-credinta-si-neam-129670.html> - with translation



United Kingdom

Maqsood Bakhsh (aged 50, Pakistani refugee, has not been granted asylum after 6 years, said to PM Theresa May "Prime Minister, please help us because I do not understand why the Home Office keep rejecting us. They keep telling us that some parts of Pakistan are safe for Christians. It is true that lots of Christians live in Pakistan but once you have been targeted by Islamic extremists who know your name and your face, it is impossible to live. Four of my friends have been killed by Islamic extremists and my sister-in-law's brother is serving life in jail because of the blasphemy law. My nephew was kidnapped last month and no one knows what has happened to him")

Date: June 12, 2018

Location: Glasgow, Scotland

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/asylum-family-in-plea-to-pm-over-fears-of-death-in-pakistan>

Lord David Alton (human rights advocate, **UPDATE: wrote "The Northern Ireland minister Lord Duncan of Springbank recently remarked that the province's insistence that the only lawful justification for abortion should be a threat to the mother's life was 'Victorian'. This ill-considered and patronizing remark was not random. It was part of a concerted attempt to force abortion legislation on Northern Ireland...Significantly, the most recent vote on abortion within any UK legislature was 18 months ago in the Northern Ireland Assembly. It voted against a change to the law. But British political parties, once champions of devolution [i.e. local autonomy], have turned full circle when it comes to abortion...This is only the latest example of what the philosopher John Gray calls 'alt-liberalism', a mutant version of liberal ideology: all-knowing, self-regarding and autocratic. It's the phenomenon that led to Tim Farron packing his bags as Liberal Democrat leader, saying it had become impossible to reconcile his Christian faith with this new ideology. One Labour MP told me that he daren't say what he believes for fear of retaliation. Free speech is going the same way as devolution and conscience. The judiciary, meanwhile, is becoming increasingly politicized...one hundred thousand people are alive in Northern Ireland who would be dead had the 1967 Abortion Act applied there")**

Date: June 14, 2018

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/issues/june-15th-2018/the-mutant-ideology-thats-driving-mps-to-impose-abortion-on-northern-ireland/>



Vietnam

Fr Joseph Nguyen Duy Tan (aged 40, church attacked by government thugs on [September 4, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: prevented from leaving the country for a conference after he spoke with an EU representative on May 16, 2018 concerning religious persecution)

Date: June 11, 2018

Location: Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Ho Chi Minh City

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnam-bars-dissident-priest-from-traveling-abroad/82550>

Today's Martyrs

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

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