

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2018-07-29 through 2018-08-04



Algeria

Pastor Esaid Benamara (church closed by police who said it did not comply with an ordinance regulating non-Muslim worship, said the closure was “purely and simply unjustified”)

Date: July 11, 2018

Location: Riki, Bejaia province

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/07/algerian-government-allows-three-churches-to-re-open-in-june-but-now-closes-another/>



Burkina Faso

Event: A pastor and his family who were abducted on June 3, 2018 and reported on June 7, 2018 to have been released are still in captivity, the report of their release was incorrect

Pastor Pierre Boena (father of David Boena, grandfather, abducted)

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

Ami Sawadogo (wife of David Boena, abducted)

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

Pelagie Sawadogo (granddaughter of Pastor Pierre Boena, abducted)

Pauline Sawadogo (mother of Sanata and Zoenabou, abducted)

Sanata (daughter of Pauline Sawadogo, abducted)

Zoenabou (daughter of Pauline Sawadogo, abducted)

Baowend-Som Boena (son of Pastor Pierre Boena, said “I was away, in the northern city of Ouahigouya, when I heard the news of the release of my father on 7 June. I then travelled to Ouagadougou, with the aim of meeting them. I went first to meet with a leader of the Assemblies of God Church, who told me that there’s no doubt about the release of the hostages, as the Minister of Interior Affairs [Simon Compaore] had confirmed the news to him over the phone...On Saturday 16 June, one of the kidnappers called me on the

telephone. He told me that my father and the rest other hostages are still detained in Mali and they are all in good health. When I asked him to pass the telephone on to my father, he said the hostages were elsewhere, in a camp near the Burkina border...Today we don't know exactly what to do. I don't know what to tell my mother again in order to calm her worries. We only rely on God and the support of the government in order to obtain the release of my father and the other hostages")

Date reported: July 13, 2018

Location: Bilhore village, Soum province

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/07/families-left-confused-after-reported-release-of-burkina-faso-christians-turns-out-to-be-false/>



China

Pastor Huang Xiaoning (church assessed a 50,000 yuan [US\$7,685] administrative fine on **June 20, 2018**; **UPDATE**: fine upheld on appeal, said that someday the government would be held accountable for its illegal actions)

Date: July 30, 2018

Location: Guangzhou, Guangdong province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/07/after-court-hearing-government-forces.html>



Egypt

Bishop Epiphanius (aged 64, **found dead** inside his monastery, had been beaten with a blunt object, three others were wounded)

Date: July 29, 2018

Location: Saint Macarius Monastery, Wadi Natrun, Beheira province

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/64592-AFRICA_EGYPT_Coptic_Orthodox_Bishop_Epiphanius_Abbot_of_the_Monastery_of_San_Macario_murdered
and <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mystery-surrounds-the-killing-of-Coptic-Orthodox-bishop-in-Egypt-44550.html>

Abdo Adel (aged 43, baker, arrested on 'contempt of religion' charges after making a post to Facebook comparing Muhammad and Jesus)

Karam Youssef (relative of Abdo Adel, said "Abdo is a simple man. He works in making the church's bread. He is a very humble man and he is loved by all the church members. He is not good at reading and writing, and he is not good at dealing with his Facebook page in the best way, which put him and the village in this crisis")

Fr Makarios El-Kommas Antoun (posted on Facebook “We strongly denounce what was published on the Facebook page of this man, which is understood as an abuse to our Muslim brothers. We do not accept this abuse. May God protect our country from evil”)

Date: July 6, 2018

Location: Membal village, Minya province

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/07/egypt-copt-in-court-for-blasphemous-facebook-post-that-led-to-riot/> and <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/07/egypt-copts-attacked-after-facebook-post-showing-contempt-of-islam/>

Girgis Shawky (aged 32, described rioting in his village “The Muslim extremists in our village and the nearby villages incited the Muslim villagers against us...They began pelting the Coptic-owned houses with stones and bricks, while shouting ‘Allahu akbar’ [Allah is the greatest] and chanting slogans against Copts, such as ‘We will displace you and the priest from our village, oh kafir, oh the worshipers of the cross, oh defiled people’”)

Fr Makarios El-Kommas Antoun (**UPDATE**: home attacked, rioters stopped when police fired into the air)

Hany Adly (electrical-supplies shop owner, said “We lived very terrible moments while the mob were attacking our homes. Our children were screaming...All of us have stayed in our homes. We are afraid to get out to the village streets. There is a state of panic and fear among all of us here. I cannot open my shop. Despite the presence of security forces in the village, we are still receiving threats from our Muslim neighbors. They say they will take revenge on all of us as soon as the security forces leave the village. We are afraid that they will attack us this Friday after their noon prayers”)

Date: July 9, 2018

Location: Membal village, Minya province

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/07/egypt-copts-attacked-after-facebook-post-showing-contempt-of-islam/>

Hany Farouk (described rioting in his village after the arrest of Abdo Adel “The protesters were chanting slogans against us, such as ‘We don’t want a church in our village. We locked ourselves in our homes during the demonstration because we were afraid that they would attack us. Police didn’t do anything to disperse the demonstrators and didn’t arrest anyone of them”)

Date: July 9, 2018

Location: Ezbet Sultan Pasha village, Minya province

Hany Farouk (**UPDATE**: described more rioting in which stones were thrown at the closed church and a Christian residence “They were shouting ‘Allahu akbar’ [Allah is the greatest] and chanting hostile slogans against Copts, such as: ‘We will not allow any church to exist in our Muslim village’, ‘We will not allow any other prayers to be held in our Muslim village except our prayers’”)

Bishop Makarios (escaped a [September 30, 2013](#) assassination attempt; **UPDATE**: issued a statement denouncing the rioting and police complicity)

Deacon Ayman Samir (later said “We didn’t celebrate the feast of St Karas the Anchorite on 15 July as we used to do, and to congratulate each other on that wonderful occasion. This year we were deprived of that celebration because of the current events”)

Date: July 13, 2018

Location: Ezbet Sultan Pasha village, Minya province

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/07/egypt-mob-attack-encouraged-by-police-promise-no-church-will-be-allowed-here/>

Fr Feltaws Ibrahim (presided over the first Divine Liturgy in his new church, the construction of which was delayed for seven years by the same anti-Christian sentiments that caused the closure of the original church)

Date: July 22, 2018

Location: Kom El-Loufy village, Minya province

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/07/egypt-copts-celebrate-first-mass-in-new-church-seven-years-since-last-churchs-closure/>



India

Ezekiel Baskar (aged 19, college student, charged under the Black Magic Act after the parents of a classmate who converted to Christianity filed a police report, said "The girl has been tortured by her parents. We are also being threatened by a political party")

Cyril Dara (activist said "The girl follows the teachings of Jesus Christ of her own volition")

Date reported: July 27, 2018

Location: Mumbai

Source: <http://persecutionrelief.org/fir-filed-against-sobo-student-for-black-magic/>

Event: A prayer meeting in a private home was disrupted by Hindu radicals, police negotiated a compromise, the events were repeated 2 days later

Parama Vinay Kumar (home invaded, threatened, beaten)

Ester Rani (mother of Ruben, beaten)

Pastor Ruben (son of Ester Rani, beaten)

Dates: July 24 and 26, 2018

Location: Telangana Nagar, Palvancha Mandel, Bhadra Sri Kothagudem district, Telagana state

Source: <http://persecutionrelief.org/christians-attacked-during-prayer-meeting-telangana/>

Event: A worship service was disrupted by Hindu radicals, police observed the attack but did nothing

Pastor Krishnanand Yadav (husband, wife six months pregnant, father of a 14 month old daughter, locked his family in their residence during the attack, later taken by police along with his wife and 25 parishioners and questioned into the evening concerning forced conversions, taken to another police station with his family and held overnight)

Devkant (owner of the church building)

Ravin Kumar (Bible college student, beaten, hospitalized in critical condition)

Sarwan (beaten)

Date: July 22, 2018

Location: Saharsa district, Bihar state

Source: <http://persecutionrelief.org/police-mute-spectators-as-sunday-worship-disrupted-congregation-beaten-bihar/>

Rev Sumer Samuel (father of Abhinav, witnessed the beating of his son by up to 30 Hindu radicals armed with bricks, told they would return and inflict a more severe beating if he did not leave his home within 2 months, threatened with arrest when he attempted to file a police report)

Abhinav (son of Rev Sumer Samuel, beaten by up to 30 Hindu radicals armed with bricks, hospitalized for 4 days with internal injuries)

Date: July 20, 2018

Location: Biloli village, Meerut district, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: <http://persecutionrelief.org/home-invasion-reverend-son-beaten-up-uttar-pradesh/>

Event: Bishops protested the state government's use of the Anti-Terrorism Squad against church institutions including the arrest of church employees and volunteers on fabricated charges

Auxiliary Bishop Telesphore Billung (**UPDATE:** said "We are now treated as terrorists and officials of the ATS are after us as if we are involved in terrorist activities")

Date: July 30, 2018

Location: Jharkhand state

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-state-treats-christians-as-terrorists/82954>



Iran

Amir Sina Dashti (arrested without warrant by MOIS agents while fishing and picnicking with his wife in Firuzkuh on August 26, 2016; **UPDATE:** sentenced to 4 months' imprisonment)

Date: July 11, 2018

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=4065>



Iraq

Patriarch Louis Raphael I Sako (**UPDATE**: wrote a letter to government officials and foreign diplomats which called for reforms including the disarming of sectarian militias)

Date: July 31, 2018

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/64595-ASIA_IRAQ_Chaldean_patriarch_to_politicians_a_strong_coalition_government_to_remove_weapons_from_sectarian_militias_is_needed



Ireland

Niamh Uí Bhriain (Life Institute; **UPDATE**: commented on government threats to seize Catholic hospitals if they continued to refuse to perform abortions and to force doctors to make abortion referrals "Minister [for Health Simon] Harris has already said he will try to force doctors to take part in the abortion process by insisting that they must refer for abortions, despite the opposition of the National Association of General Practitioners [NAGP] who represent the vast majority of family doctors...This small-minded bullying may well backfire on the Minister. GP services are in crisis because there simply aren't enough doctors in general practice in Ireland, and this is set to worsen as record levels of doctors emigrate and others retire...There are many pro-life doctors who will move to a different area of medicine if Harris tries to force them to refer one of their patients – the preborn child – to be killed. If these GPs, and some Catholic hospitals, are forced out of service by bully tactics on abortion, then already hard-pressed patients will suffer the consequences...That may well be the price the people will be forced to bear for yet another failure of a Minister for Health who seems fixated on abortion instead of real healthcare")

Date reported: August 1, 2018

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/irish-bishops-catholic-hospitals-wont-commit-abortion-or-refer-women-for-ab>



Nepal

Pastor Sagar Baizu (aged 46, attacked by up to eight men in a coffee bar, "They beat me for a minute and a half and suddenly fled the site. They said, 'We will blast your church and all the churches with bombs and shoot you and all your leaders'...I just could not understand what was happening to me for about 10 minutes after the assault" due to disorientation from head injury)

Date: July 19, 2018

Location: Kathmandu

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/07/assault-on-christian-leader-in-nepal-reflects-growing-threat/>



Nicaragua

Event: Thousands demonstrated in support of the country's Catholic bishops after attacks on them by pro-government paramilitaries

Elma Amador (said that President Ortega “knows he’s lying, he knows the bishops are not attempting a coup. He’s afraid that the people have risen up, have woken up, and that’s why he makes baseless accusations”)

Date: July 28, 2018

Location: Managua

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/thousands-march-in-support-of-nicaraguan-bishops-24808>



Turkey

Event UPDATE: Additional testimony was reported on the trial of Pastor Andrew Brunson

Gungor Senturk (occasional church cook, denied having seen any secretive or discriminatory acts committed by Pastor Andrew Brunson “Everything was done openly. The prayers, the hymn singing, greetings between them all. There were some books, Bibles there”)

Umut Dogan (church board chairman, said he not aware of any major differences among church members of different ethnicities)

Pastor Andrew Brunson (**UPDATE:** said in his closing statement “that they [none of the prosecution witnesses] had heard anything about the PKK [Kurdish terror organization] from my mouth...I completely reject the accusations of these witnesses against me. I greatly miss my wife and family, but my faith teaches me to forgive, so I forgive those who testified against me...It is a privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ. Blessed am I as I suffer for Him. Blessed am I as I am slandered. Blessed am I as I am lied about. And blessed am I as I am imprisoned. Blessed am I to share His suffering”)

Date: July 18, 2018

Location: Aliga

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/07/brunsons-third-turkish-hearing-focused-on-pkk-allegations/>



United Kingdom

Fr Bryan McCanny (church vandalized with graffiti with anti-Catholic paramilitary slogans, said "We never had a problem like this before. There was something very minor about five or six years ago but this is completely new to us. Parishioners are very upset about it. It's depressing that things like this should happen when we are enjoying peace. The two police officers who arrived this morning helped to clean the paint off the door")

Date: July 31, 2018

Location: Limavady, Northern Ireland

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/catholic-church-in-northern-ireland-hit-with-sectarian-graffiti-68455>



United States - Delaware

Fr William Graney (elderly priest, beaten in his office, dowsed with wine and forced to orally ingest compressed air, hospitalized in serious condition)

Date reported: August 1, 2018

Location: Pike Creek

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/man-in-custody-after-delaware-priest-assaulted-66227>



Vietnam

Event: Authorities continued to prosecute opponents of a new cybersecurity law

William Nguyen (U.S. citizen, convicted, deported)

Date: July 20, 2018

Location: Ho Chi Minh City

Tran Nguyen Duy Quang (aged 35, sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment)

Pham Ngoc Hanh (aged 45, mother of five, sentenced to 16 months' imprisonment)

Fr Joseph Nguyen Duy Tan (**UPDATE:** defended the demonstrators, said "The sentences are inhumane and take away the right to demonstration of citizens...Demonstration is good for the government to know the people's opinion")

Fr Anton Le Ngoc Thanh CSSR (**UPDATE:** said "The judges and police violated the constitution when they convicted the defendants of causing public disorder")

Date: July 30, 2018

Location: Ben Hoa

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnamese-court-imprisons-peaceful-demonstrators/82966>

Mary Magdelene Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh (aged 39, mother of two, sentenced in [Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa province](#) on [June 29, 2017](#) to 10 years' imprisonment for anti-government internet postings, which included criticism of hospitals refusing to serve the poor; has been denied a Bible in prison, began a hunger strike on [July 6, 2018](#) to protest deliberate food poisoning, harassment by fellow inmates, and use of a toilet with no privacy, in poor health; **UPDATE:** ended her hunger strike after a visit with U.S. diplomats)

Date: July 23, 2018

Location: Prison Camp No. 5, Thanh Hoa province

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/jailed-vietnamese-catholic-activist-ends-hunger-strike/82934>

Today's Martyrs

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