

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2018-10-07 through 2018-10-13



Algeria

Rachid Ouali (convert, appeared in court after his wife accused him of attempting to convert her from Islam, denied the accusation, said his wife had said she was pressured by relatives into making the accusation)

Ali Larchi (aged 67, husband, father of five, appeared in court after the wife of Rachid Ouali accused him of attempting to convert her from Islam, denied the accusation)

Date: October 9, 2018

Location: Bouira

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/10/christians-face-trial-in-algeria-over-wifes-accusations-of-evangelizing/>



Azerbaijan

Emil Mehdiyev (aged 18, conscientious objector, case charging him with evasion of military service opened in Barda on January 5, 2018; trial begun on May 7, 2018; motion to dismiss denied on May 23, 2018; found guilty on July 6, 2018, sentenced to one year's imprisonment, sentence suspended; **UPDATE**: appeal filed)

Date: August 27, 2018

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2408

Vahid Gunduz oglu Abilov (aged 19, conscientious objector, indicted for evasion of military service on July 9, 2018; **UPDATE**: sentenced to one year's imprisonment, sentence suspended, appeal planned)

Date: September 6, 2018

Location: Quzanli

Emin Tahmazov (conscientious objector, case referred to prosecutors after he refused military service)

Date: July 9, 2018

Location: Baku

Levani Otarashvili (conscientious objector, case referred to prosecutors after he refused military service)

Date: July 25, 2018

Location: Qakh

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2415



Canada

Marie-Claire Bissonnette (aged 26, assaulted by a pro-abortion counter-demonstrator, news account rejected by major media outlets)

Date: September 30, 2018

Location: Toronto

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/breaking-police-to-lay-charges-against-man-who-roundhouse-kicked-pro-life-w>

Blaise Alleyne (assaulted by pro-abortion demonstrators)

Katie Somers (assaulted by pro-abortion demonstrators)

Date: October 1, 2018

Location: Toronto

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/video-second-toronto-pro-abortion-activist-assaults-pro-life-demonstrators>



China

Yan Xiaojie (detained in [Wenzhou, Zhejiang province](#) on [August 26, 2015](#); released on [February 2, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: home visited by police, wrote the next day “I was not home, so they threatened my mom and wife, telling them that they must see me and investigate two things: one is that I signed the petition [in support of persecuted Christians in Henan province], and the other that I will travel abroad in October. I am communicating with them now. May the Lord Jesus be with me. I hope brothers and sisters will pray hard for me”)

Date: September 18, 2018

Location: Wenzhou, Zhejiang province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/10/pastor-investigated-for-supporting.html>

Pastor Su Tianfu (**UPDATE**: stated “Multiple schools in Guiyang have asked teachers and students to sign a religious background inquiry, forcibly requesting that religious people put ‘no religion’ on the form”)

Date: October 7, 2018

Location: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/10/christians-churches-under-scrutiny-as.html>

Fr Liu Honggeng Liu (aged 47, detained without charge in 2006; released after August 9, 2014; arrested on May 7, 2015; **UPDATE**: whereabouts still unknown, family has asked why the recent China-Vatican concordant did not specify the release of current Catholic prisoners)

Bishop James Su Zhimin (aged 86, disappeared while in police custody in 1997; family told on or before August 29, 2015 that he was being held as a bargaining chip with the Vatican; **UPDATE**: whereabouts still unknown)

Date: October 5, 2018

Location: Baoding, Hebei province

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/hebei-priest-still-missing-despite-china-vatican-deal/83553>



Ecuador

Fr Arturo Rene Pozo Sampaz (aged 62, **found dead** in his bedroom with his hands and feet tied)

Date: October 9, 2018

Location: Quito

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/64904-AMERICA_ECUADOR_Funeral_of_the_priest_found_dead_in_Quito_have_been_celebrated



Indonesia

Antonius Gunawan Agung (aged 22, air traffic controller, remained in the airport control tower after it was damaged in an earthquake to ensure safe movement of aircraft, jumped from the tower as it collapsed, suffered internal injuries, hospitalized, **died**)

Date: September 28, 2018

Location: Palu, Sulawesi island

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/bodies-of-bible-class-students-retrieved-from-rubble/83526>

and <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/indonesia-quake-palu-air-traffic-controller-hero-tributes-10773450>

Rev Ojahan Tampubolon (spoke after local officials ordered churches to relocate or merge "We haven't decided yet. We need to discuss it first. Let's say we do this, it will last only a month")

Date: October 2, 2018

Location: Sumatra

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/sumatra-churches-forced-to-close/83532>



Iran

Fatimeh Bakherti (aged 37, convert, home raided by police during a [May 25, 2017](#) worship service, several Christians arrested; **UPDATE**: sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment for 'spreading propaganda against the regime')

Saheb Fadaie (convert, home raided by VEVAK agents on [February 16, 2015](#), religious items seized, warned on [February 17, 2015](#) to leave the country; arrested on [May 13, 2016](#); charged on [September 10, 2016](#) with acting against national security and consumption of communion wine; called into court in [Rasht](#) on [June 14, 2017](#) on charges of 'actions against national security, were accused of accepting a half million pounds from the British government, told they would receive a verdict in 20 days, a hardline judge then joined the hearings and said 'Christians make foolish claims'; sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment on [June 24, 2017](#); arrested in [Rasht](#) on [July 24, 2018](#), transferred to [Evin Prison in Tehran](#); **UPDATE**: sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment for 'spreading propaganda against the regime', sentence to run concurrently with his current imprisonment)

Date: September 22, 2018

Location: Tehran

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/10/crack-down-on-christians-in-iran-continues-with-two-more-prison-sentences/>



Kenya

Event: Suspected al-Shabaab militants attacked a school, killing 2 Christians and severely wounding three others

Johnstone Okumu (teacher, **killed**)

Simon Wekesa (teacher, **killed**)

Martin Kamutu (teacher, said "It is painful to lose our colleagues through such a heinous act of cowardice. Our hearts bleed because even after dedicating our time and professionalism in serving this community, they still hate Christians")

Rev John (said “This is another bad example of what religion can do. We are losing Christians at a very high rate in Mandera. Last month we lost five to terrorism and now again we have lost two teachers. We ask the international community and human rights groups to get involved in northern Kenya”)

Date: October 10, 2018

Location: Mandera East

Source: <https://www.persecution.org/2018/10/11/two-christian-teachers-murdered-northeastern-kenya/>



Myanmar

Rev Lazarus (reported that about 100 Christians had been released by the United Wa State Army after signing statements pledging to worship only at home, 92 pastors were still detained, said "Christians will face more restrictions and be closely monitored by the United Wa State Army, so the situation is worrisome")

Date reported: October 10, 2018

Location: Kyaing Tong, Shan State

Rev Thang Cin Lian (said "We are praying for the Christians in the Wa Hills")

Date reported: October 10, 2018

Location: Shan State

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/christians-forced-to-sign-pledge-curbing-faith-in-myanmar-region/83588>



Pakistan

Bashir Masih (aged 58 or 60 or 72, husband of Grace Mashi, father of five, retired sanitary worker, threatened in [June 2017](#) by his neighbors, later said "I reported [that] incident to the District Superintendent for Police...but he didn't take any action and in fact pressured and held it over our family to build relationships with the attackers. He told us to drop the charges or blasphemy charges would be laid against us. We were told that they would send the whole family to Adyala Jail [in Islamabad]. My family and I caved in to the pressure and had no choice but to accept it"; attacked along with his wife on [September 20, 2018](#) after refusing to step inside their home to avoid contaminating the air in use by Muslims: "I told him that there was no power and it was hot, so I have come out. He told me that none of us should be seen outside and then he, along with his brothers, beat me. My wife came to help me, but they beat her as well, tore her clothes and broke one of her fingers...They called us Chuhra [latrine cleaner] and beat both of us mercilessly";
UPDATE: received a threatening phone call at 4:00 AM, that afternoon was attacked:

“...around 3pm, the brothers, and about 10 other unidentified persons, armed with firearms, sticks and torches lit with fire, first hit our main door and then scaled the boundary wall and entered our house. They started beating every one of us. My three sons, women and children – all were home because it was a public holiday...They stripped the clothes off my daughters-in-law and forced them out on the street. They also threw the children, some as young as two, against the walls. My sons and I were hit with gun butts and iron rods amid volleys of abuse and threats...My son, Imran, had blood gushing out from his mouth and nose and he fell unconscious. Then they stole money and gold ornaments from our cases and set our household goods on fire, including a vehicle standing in the veranda. In order to save ourselves, we ran out of the house and from far away looked back to see fire and smoke rising high”)

Grace Masih (aged 60 or 68, wife of Bashir Masih, mother of five, retired nurse, beaten on [September 20, 2018](#); **UPDATE**: beaten again)

Fiyaz Masih (aged 36, son of Bashir and Grace Masih, beaten)

Sobia (aged 31, adult child or in-law of Bashir and Grace Masih, beaten)

Imtiaz (aged 30, adult child or in-law of Bashir and Grace Masih, beaten)

Adnan (aged 29, adult child or in-law of Bashir and Grace Masih, beaten)

Imran (aged 22 or 28, son of Bashir and Grace Masih, beaten)

Ahsan (aged 26, adult child or in-law of Bashir and Grace Masih, beaten)

Date: [September 21, 2018](#)

Location: [Gujar Khan village, Punjab province](#)

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/09/pakistani-christian-family-flees-after-home-set-on-fire-told-theyll-be-killed-if-they-return/>
and <https://barnabasfund.org/us/news/muslim-mob-assault-and-evict-only-christian-family-in-pakistan-village>
and <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6935>

Aasiya Noreen aka Asia Bibi (aged 53, wife of Ashiq Masih, mother of five including Isham, daughter of Soran Masih, convicted of blasphemy in [2009](#) and sentenced to death; **UPDATE**: final appeal heard by the Supreme Court, verdict reached but reserved for future declaration)

Date: [October 8, 2018](#)

Location: [Islamabad](#)

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/asia-bibi-fate-is-sealed-after-final-appeal-but-the-decision-is-reserved>

Anil Saleem (aged 27, brother of Kiran Saleem [who was killed by doctors, male nurses, and hospital security personnel on [March 26, 2018](#)]; **UPDATE**: reported that no arrests had been made in the murder of his brother, said “Moreover, the police exonerated the main accused, Dr. Saira, in the initial investigation, even though she was the one who had instigated her colleagues and the security guards to attack us in the hospital ward...We think that the police were told by the provincial government not to arrest the doctors to avoid confrontation with the YDA [Young Doctors Association, which had threatened a strike if prosecutions went ahead]...They have made several attempts to settle the case

through money, offering up to 2 million rupees [US\$26,905], but I have refused to take the money. No money can heal the wound we have suffered. I have told the accused that I will not withdraw the case until all of them, including Dr. Saira, are put behind bars. How can they just absolve Dr. Saira, when it was she who had instigated the attack in the first place? The court has directed the police to re-investigate the case, but they are delaying presenting the report on one pretext or the other”)

Date: October 8, 2018

Location: Lahore

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/10/six-months-after-medical-personnel-kill-christian-in-pakistan-no-arrests-brother-says/>



Philippines

Sr Susan Bolanio OND (**UPDATE:** wrote to authorities to request an investigation into a social media post that called her and two tribal leaders of being Communists for being a "malicious and vile design to put her life in danger, especially as Mindanao is under martial law...To be linked to a terrorist communist group is to condemn a person as all-out anti-government...The mere suggestion of affiliation to a terrorist communist group poses a serious threat to the lives, dignity and security of the persons singled out")

Date: October 2, 2018

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/filipino-catholic-nun-tagged-as-communist-fears-for-life/83511>



Sudan

Rev Ismail Abdurahman Kenani (Bible Society director, announced that shipments of Bibles which had been held by the authorities for years had been released in August 2018, said “We came to learn that proper documents for the shipments were intentionally misplaced by one of the officers of the port authority”)

Date: October 5, 2018

Location: Port Sudan

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/10/sudan-releases-bible-shipments-detained-in-port-years-ago/>



Thailand

Event: Seventy adult Pakistani Christian refugees and scores of children were arrested for immigration violations

Mona Sumbal (teacher, hid in a boiler room to avoid arrest, later said "I had not even woken up when I heard shouts and screams as people began to warn others to escape. Our community is protective of one another and for many the first thought was help others slip the arrest that would place them into brutal incarceration in Bangkok IDC [Immigration Detention Centre]. I heard the children I teach weeping and my heart was broken, I wanted to help but knew that if I came out of hiding I would be arrested too and the end result would be a return to Pakistan where my life is at threat. I just hunkered down closed my eyes, covered my ears and prayed to God to save me from arrest. He was my only hope. I waited an hour after all the noise had dissipated and discovered our school had been destroyed and no-one was around from the community everyone was arrested. I felt isolated and alone and broke down and wept as I fell into a deep depression. About 20 mins later my cousin appeared she is only 18 and now from such a large community only the two of us remain free. I feel helpless and have been crying constantly this latest raid has left me in a position I have never been in before, one where I no longer have the safety and protection of my family")

Date: October 9, 2018

Location: Bangkok

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/in-excess-of-70-pak-christians-arrested-as-thai-authorities-raid-santi-suk-asylum-community>



Turkey

Pastor Andrew Brunson (U.S. citizen, husband of Norine Brunson, detained as a 'national security risk' in Izmir on October 7, 2016, denied access to U.S. diplomats, attorneys, and fellow parishioners, told he would be deported; confirmed to be a hostage at a September 28, 2017 press conference by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President explicitly called for the U.S. government to exchange him for Sufi cleric and U.S. resident Fethullah Gulen; prosecutors said on March 13, 2018 that they would seek life imprisonment; denied bail on July 18, 2018; a court ruled on July 25, 2018 that he is to be released from jail and placed under house arrest, banned him from leaving the country; **UPDATE:** convicted on espionage and terrorism charges despite prosecutorial witnesses recanting their testimony, sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment, released with time served, said to the court "I am an innocent man. I love Jesus, and I love Turkey", left the country)

Date: October 12, 2018

Location: Izmir

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/10/brunson-freed-permitted-to-leave-country/>



Ukraine

Pastor Aleksandr Moseychuk (church building seized by the breakaway Donetsk People's Republic government, said "About midday, seven officials – including some with weapons – arrived and told us that our building no longer belongs to us. Despite all our persuasion and discussions, they sealed the building")

Date: July 6, 2018

Location: Makeyevka

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2422



United Kingdom

Daniel McArthur (husband of Amy McArthur, owner of a bakery in [Belfast](#) convicted on [May 18, 2015](#) of discrimination for refusing to provide a cake with a pro-same sex marriage message, fined US\$786; **UPDATE**: conviction overturned by the Supreme Court, said “I want to start by thanking God. He has been with us during the challenges of the last four years. Through the Bible and the support of Christians, He has comforted us and sustained us. He is our rock and all His ways are just... We're delighted and relieved at today's ruling. We always knew we hadn't done anything wrong in turning down this order. After more than four years, the Supreme Court has now recognized that and we're very grateful. Grateful to the judges and especially grateful to God... We're particularly pleased the Supreme Court emphatically accepted what we've said all along – we did not turn down this order because of the person who made it, but because of the message itself... The judges have given a clear signal today. In fact, it couldn't be clearer. 'Family businesses like ours are free to focus on giving all their customers the best service they can – without being forced to promote other people's campaigns.'”)

Amy McArthur (**UPDATE**: conviction overturned)

Date: October 10, 2018

Location: London

Source: <https://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/equality/victory-for-freedom-of-expression-bakers-win-supreme-court-case>
and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V68fvVrbNeg>



United States - Illinois

Fr Paul John Kalchik (sexual abuse victim, GoFundMe account for financial support closed for unspecified violations of Terms & Conditions, the account had been opened by supporters following his suspension and eviction by Cardinal Blaise Cupich [which happened after he allowed his parishioners to burn a rainbow flag])

Date: October 9, 2018

Location: Chicago

Source: <https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/gofundme-yanks-fundraising-campaign-for-fr.-paul-kalchik>

United States - Oklahoma

Prof Brian McCall (resigned as Dean of the University of Oklahoma School of Law under pressure due to having advocated a return to traditional Christian norms of modest dress for women in a 2014 book)

Date: October 2, 2018

Location: Norman

Source: <https://kfor.com/2018/10/02/university-of-oklahoma-college-of-law-associate-dean-resigns/>

Today's Martyrs

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

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