

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2018-10-28 through 2018-11-03



Belgium

Br Rene Stockman FC (superior general of the Brothers of Charity, reported on [April 28, 2017](#) to have objected when the mostly lay board of directors of the psychiatric hospitals operated by his order voted to allow euthanasia; issued a statement opposing his hospital board's [September 12, 2017](#) vote in favor of euthanasia; **UPDATE**: along with his congregation removed two monks from the board of directors for failing to oppose the euthanasia policy)

Date: end of September 2018

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/belgian-brothers-of-charity-drop-board-members-who-accepted-hospital-euthanasia-protocol-81225>



Cameroon

Charles Wesco (aged 43. missionary, husband of Stephanie Wesco, father of eight, son of Rebecca Wesco, brother of Tim Wesco, U.S. citizen, **shot in the head** while driving in his vehicle, had apparently been caught in a crossfire between government troops and Anglophone separatists, hospitalized, **died**, had arrived in the country only two weeks earlier)

Stephanie Wesco (missionary, widow of Charles Wesco, was present in the vehicle when he was shot)

Ben Sinclair (missionary, husband of Becca Sinclair, was driving the vehicle when Charles Wesco was shot)

Becca Sinclair (missionary, wife of Ben Sinclair, said "My husband already prayed for his killer. Charles would want us to do that, he would")

Date: October 30, 2018

Location: Bamenda

Source: <https://www.persecution.org/2018/10/31/cameroon-unrest-leads-death-us-missionary/> and <https://www.christianpost.com/news/indiana-missionary-murdered-in-front-of-wife-son-cameroon-228274/>



China

Pastor Lin Kezhen (forced to stop a church service by police, a baby suffered an eye injury after her mother attempted to leave the service during the raid)

Date: October 21, 2018

Location: Fuzhou, Fujian province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/10/authorities-break-into-church-harass.html>



India

Rev Ravi Kumar (filed a complaint with police after up to 25 Hindu radicals from the VHP and Bajrang Dal [the RSS paramilitary youth organization] stormed a church meeting in a hotel and beat 7 pastors, at least 3 were hospitalized, stated the radicals “attacked with sticks, tore the clothes off several women during the scuffle and damaged musical instruments”)

Date: October 31, 2018

Location: Agra, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Hindu-radicals-beat-seven-Pentecostal-pastors-in-Agra-alleging-'forced-conversions'-45382.html>



Kenya

Event: Two Christians were dragged from a bus by al-Shabaab militants and shot dead after they refused the invitation to Islam

Fredrick Ngui Ngonde (husband of Penianh Mwatha, father, church choir leader, **shot dead**)

Joshua Ooko Obila (brother of Victor Oketch, bus mechanic, **shot dead**)

Pastor Cosmas Mwinzi (described Fredrick Ngui Ngonde as “a faithful follower of Christ who was committed to the church and his family. He had a passion for God’s work and loved the fellowship of brethren”)

Penianh Mwatha (widow of Fredrick Ngui Ngonde, mother, said her husband was “caring, prayerful, and a friendly person who I hoped to spend the rest of my life with. I am still in shock. Fredrick has left me with a 2-year-old son too soon. It is painful to lose him...I don’t know what my future will be, but I am persuaded that one day we shall see him in heaven”)

Victor Oketch (brother of Joshua Ooko Obila, said “His Somali colleagues, the driver, and the conductor, did nothing to defend him. This shows you how religious animosity is at the core of persecution in northeastern Kenya”)

Date: September 2018

Location: on the road between Garissa and Masalani

Source: <https://www.persecution.org/2018/10/31/two-christian-men-executed-declining-recite-islamic-creed/>



Pakistan

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:** the Supreme Court issued a ruling that overturned her conviction on the grounds that she had been denied presumption of innocence, ordered her immediate release, reports tell of government preparations for civil insurrection)

Mehwish Bhatti (British Pakistani Christian Association officer; **UPDATE:** said "We are so happy and thankful to God for this big day! All glory goes to Him. The decision was tough: God has strengthened the resolve of the Justices and has made it possible. I pray for the peace of minorities, let God be their guardian")

Peter Jacob (director of the National Commission for Justice and Peace; **UPDATE:** said “Indeed it is a happy moment for Asia’s family, the Christian community, and Pakistan as she is acquitted by the Supreme Court. The decision raises hope for the rule of the law and justice. The charges against Asia were false and based on a narrative of hatred, hence the Supreme Court has dealt with the case on merit”)

Sajid Christopher (President of Human Friends Organization, said “Truth prevailed. Justice has won. Asia will be leaving Pakistan immediately after her release for her safety”)

Samson Salamat (chairman of the interfaith Rawadari Tehreek [Movement for Tolerance]; **UPDATE:** said "The decision of Supreme Court in favor of Asia Bibi is evidence that blasphemy law is being used against religious minorities of Pakistan to settle personal scores. The justice system at the Lower level looked very weak and ruled against Asia Bibi under pressure of the extremist elements, however the judges of the Apex Court are to be appreciated who did not bow to pressure of the hardcore Tehreek Labbaik Pakistan [TLP] and other extremist outfits. Asia Bibi is acquitted but the sad part of the story is that she will not be able to live in her own homeland because of threats to her life similar to many other cases. The story does not end here, there is an extreme level threat to the Christian Community and their lives, worship places and properties are in danger", also issued a press release stating "This is a highly tense and threatening situation for religious minorities, especially for Pakistani Christians, and there is fear of persecution of Christians and attacks on their churches and other properties. Therefore, we call upon the government of Pakistan and the Supreme Court to take notice of the threats made by [TLP leader] Khadim Rizvi and his group prior to the announcement of the Asia Bibi

verdict. We also call for a ban of Tehreek-e-Labaik and all similar extremist groups who are involved in hate speech and use religion as a tool to promote violence in society. We also call upon the government and law enforcement agencies to beef up security and ensure the deployment of military troops to safeguard the lives and property of religious minorities, especially the Christian community")

Michelle Chaudhry (president of the Cecil & Iris Chaudhry Foundation; **UPDATE:** said "Today the Supreme Court has shown great mettle by taking a firm stand on justice and civil liberties. However, this verdict may have chilling ramifications, as the threatening warnings of Khadim Rizvi [leader of Tehreek Labaik Pakistan], a flamboyant hate monger, are making the air thick with fear of another bout of anarchy. Exciting religious emotions, they can create situation of law and order, which Pakistan can't afford, given its financial woes. While the acquittal offers a sigh of relief, it may inject more blood in the already swelled up veins of extremists. What the government should do? It should not give in to hate mongers, as they will find it an opportunity to further their agenda to control the state. Parents should keep an eye on their young children lest they should be used by these extremists for their nefarious design to destabilize the country")

Nasir Saeed (**UPDATE:** said "While we are rejoicing the acquittal of the Asia Bibi, at the same time we are very concerned about the ongoing security situation in Pakistan. Christians who are a beleaguered community and are living under constant fear for their lives are further threatened because of the present situation")

Event: Christians commented on Prime Minister Imran Khan's televised address in support of the Supreme Court ruling freeing Asia Bibi

Samuel Piyara (Implementation Minority Rights Forum chairman; **UPDATE:** said "The cricket hero [Prime Minister Imran Khan] took the bull by the horns. Nobody can take the state hostage")

Joseph Francis (Pakistan Christian National Party chairman; **UPDATE:** thanked Prime Minister Imran Khan for his speech and added "We humbly request government security agencies to take action against the fanatic groups who create problems for the whole nation. A police first information report must be launched or legal action should be taken against them")

Date: October 31, 2018

Location: Islamabad

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/breaking-news-asia-bibi-is-to-be-freed>
and <https://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistan-acquits-asia-bibi-on-death-row/83759>
and www.asianews.it/news-en/Asia-Bibi-acquitted:-a-victory-for-civil-society-45356.html
and <https://www.persecution.org/2018/10/31/asia-bibi-acquitted-blasphemy-conviction/>
and <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6956>
and <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Imran-Khan-defends-Asia-Bibi's-release.-Christians-express-their-appreciation-45365.html>

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; the Supreme Court issued a ruling on October 31, 2018 that overturned her conviction on the grounds that she had been denied presumption of innocence, ordered her immediate

release, reports told of government preparations for civil insurrection; **UPDATE:** awaiting release in a secure location, reportedly 'terrified' by the anti-government violence underway as a result of the ruling, asylum requests underway but no country has yet agreed to take her and her family, media reports state that the government has caved to pressure and has placed her on the 'Exit Control List)

Wilson Chowdhry (British Pakistani Christian Association chairman, **UPDATE:** said "Asia Bibi and her entire family are in need of immediate asylum. She and her family have suffered enough, she just needs a country willing to cut through the bureaucracy. It would not do for her, after escaping hanging to die because of the tangle of red-tape! Given the often lengthy asylum process most Western embassies have to expect, her clearly established case should be prioritized - after all it has brought a whole country to a standstill, resulted in the death of two senior politicians and more individuals recently. Moreover her prolonged stay in Pakistan will inevitably cause many more deaths. It is incredulous that thus far Asia Bibi has not been granted asylum anywhere as countries remain entrenched in following immigration protocols, despite the thousands of people protesting and demanding her death in Pakistan. Obviously she is danger and no one can deny that, she requires urgent protection now and the window of time may have already slipped away!")

Joseph Nadeem (Renaissance Education Foundation executive director, legal guardian of Asia Bibi; **UPDATE:** asylum requests underway but no country has yet agreed to take him and his family)

Date: November 2, 2018

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/government-caving-in-to-the-pressure-terror-and-lawlessness-in-pakistan-mean-asia-bibi-needs-asylum->

Cecil (aged 15, son of Mr Yousaf, received head injuries during a **February 2018** midnight home invasion by Muslim extremists angered by his refusal of their invitation to Islam, moved to a safe house; **UPDATE:** attacked again, stabbed in the foot, bones exposed)

Mr Yousaf (father of Cecil, spoke on the **February 2018** attack on his son "an armed mob attacked our house and tortured family members which resulted in minor injuries to the family's women and head injuries to Cecil. The mob made their way in, breaking the main gate of the house at midnight. The attackers broke the doors, windows, fans, furniture, damaged the vehicle, and looted the valuables, including two laptops, four mobile phones, and cash"; **UPDATE:** said "The religiously motivated group thrashed him badly. His foot was hit with some sharp weapon causing the skin on his foot to peel off, exposing the bones", added two months later "Cecil is still under medical treatment and his life is being threatened")

Date: August 2018

Source: <https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/pakistani-christian-teenager-brutally-thrashed-by-religiously-motivated-group/>

Fr. Saleh Diego (**UPDATE:** protested an editorial cartoon concerning an electricity rate hike that depicted a utility pole as a crucifix: "We protest against the media for publishing derogatory images that offend the religious feelings of Christians. The image of the crucifix in a satirical cartoon deeply hurts our religious feelings. The crucifix is a symbol of our faith. Our faith is not complete without the Holy Cross. It reminds us of our Lord

Jesus Christ and of the great sacrifice he has had for every person in the world. We start and end the day with the sign of the cross")

Date: October 29, 2018

Location: Karachi

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/65002-ASIA_PAKISTAN_Desecration_of_religious_symbols_Catholics_deplora_the_Pakistani_media

Today's Martyrs

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

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