

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2018-11-18 through 2018-11-24



### Afghanistan

Fr Giuseppe Moretti (Italian embassy chaplain, reported on a suicide bombing of a celebration of the birthday of Muhammad in which at least 50 Muslims were killed and 85 wounded: "The attack is even more serious than usual, because it was against clerical leaders, who are akin to Christian bishops")

Date: November 20, 2018

Location: Kabul

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Murderous-attack-against-Sunni-ulema-in-Kabul-is-an-attack-on-religion-45540.html>



### Australia

Senator Barry O'Sullivan (said after a pro-abortion advocate told him to keep his rosaries off of her ovaries "These people come and attack me for my religion...using words like 'rosary beads', because I had the audacity to raise issues around late-term abortions, where babies who are only minutes away from getting a smack on the ass and a name, are being aborted under the policies of the Australian Greens. So I will not stand silent, I will not stand mute while these people try to continue to marginalize policies and ideas that we want to continue to discuss for this nation...It is despicable, the behavior of these people, for them to come in here with the freedom that they do, and that vomit, that vitriol that comes out of their mouths, it needs to be called out", added that he would accept reassignment as a woman so he could be permitted to comment on abortion)

Date: November 14, 2018

Location: Canberra

Source: <https://catholicerald.co.uk/news/2018/11/20/australian-pro-life-senator-declares-himself-female-so-he-can-speak-out-on-abortion/>

Luke and Carla Burrell (shut down their wedding magazine due to an advertising boycott following their refusal to feature same sex couples)

Date: November 17, 2018

Source: <https://whitemag.com/blog/official-statement/?q=%2Fblog%2Fofficial-statement%2F&v=7516fd43adaa>

and <https://www.christianpost.com/news/australian-wedding-magazine-forced-to-shut-down-after-christian-owners-refuse-to-feature-gay-couples.html>



## Central African Republic

Msgr Blaise Mada (**killed**)

Fr Celestine Ngoumbango (**killed**)

Bishop Cyr-Nestor Yapaupa (remained after the attack with three priests)

Bishop Juan Jose Aguirre Munos MCCJ (Spanish citizen; **UPDATE**: reported on the killing of the priests and the destruction of the cathedral: "Do not stop to denounce the massacre of Christians. Ask yourselves why this happened...The event that triggered the massacre was the killing of a Nigerian mercenary of the UPC [United for Peace in Central Africa militia], a few days ago. The members of the UPC are Peuls who come mostly from neighboring countries like Niger. The UPC, born from a division of Seleka, has been in Alindao for 5 years, in the west of the city. The Catholic mission is in the east, where the camp for displaced people for non-Muslims is located, which welcomes about 26,000 people...The reprisal was terrible. The men of [UPC leader] Ali Darassa assaulted, looted and set fire to the displaced camp and killed women and children, they burned down the cathedral where they killed the two priests. Immediately after the UPC mercenaries allowed groups of young Muslims of the western part to enter the eastern part of Alindao and looted the Bishop's residence and burned the presbytery and the center of Caritas. I saw some photos. What remains of these structures are only the limed walls...Everybody [from NGOs] left except Mgr Cyr-Nestor Yapaupa, Bishop of Alindao, and three priests who wanted to remain close to the population. I spoke with them, they are exhausted, but they had the strength to bury the two priests and the 42 people massacred in the camp. I believe that tomorrow, Cardinal Dieudonne Nzapalainga, Archbishop of Bangui, intends to go to Alindao...As soon as the attack began, the Mauritan Blue Helmets [peacekeepers] of MINUSCA withdrew to their base. Bear in mind that the rules of engagement of some contingents such as Mauritania, Egypt and Pakistan, have an agreement with the UN on the basis of which they respond to armed assaults only if attacked directly. Therefore the Blue Helmets were completely ineffective. Other contingents such as that of Rwanda have rules of engagement on the basis of which they intervene to defend the population when there is a sign of an attack against them...we cannot limit ourselves to denouncing these massacres. We need to get to the bottom of what is happening in Central Africa. Groups like the UPC are made up of foreign mercenaries who have occupied parts of our territory for 5 years. They are paid by some Gulf countries and led by some neighboring African states. They enter Chad through Birao with weapons sold to Saudi Arabia from the United States. They want to divide Central Africa by fueling hatred between Muslims and non-Muslims. In this way they take advantage to plunder the riches of Central Africa, gold, diamonds, and cattle. But above all, some foreign and non-African countries want

to use Central Africa as a gateway to enter the Democratic Republic of Congo and the rest of the continent, manipulating radical Islam. This is the game that is behind the massacre of Alindao")

Date: November 15, 2018

Location: Alindao

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/65114-AFRICA CENTRAL AFRICA There is huge interest behind the massacre of Alindao says the Bishop of Bangassou](http://www.fides.org/en/news/65114-<u>AFRICA CENTRAL AFRICA There is huge interest behind the massacre of Alindao says the Bishop of Bangassou</u>)



## China

Rev John Cao San Qiang (husband of Jamie Powell, father of two sons, U.S. 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 in [Pu'er, Yunnan province](#) on [March 23, 2018](#), fined US\$3,168; **UPDATE**: still in prison, health declining, has lost 50 pounds)

Date: November 16, 2018

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/11/aclj-releases-petition-to-free.html>



## India

Sajan K George (Global Council of Indian Christians president; **UPDATE**: said "In Uttar Pradesh an evil religious and sectarian division is taking place. In view of the 2019 elections, every effort is aimed at polarizing voters. The question of Ram Mandir [Ram temple in Ayodhya] is exploited to mount nationalist sentiment and religious conversions are used to divide the majority against the vulnerable Christian minority...intolerance and suspicion are creating problems of public order. Every day pastors are beaten and prayers interrupted. Unfortunately all this happens in secular India, where Christians are second-class citizens")

Date reported: November 14, 2018

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Uttar-Pradesh,-Christians-investigated-for-'forced-conversions'.-But-it's-a-fake-news-45473.html>



## Iran

Behnam Ersali (convert, arrested)

Davood Rasooli (convert, arrested)

Date: November 16, 2018

Location: Mashhad

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=4121>



## Niger

Fr Vito Girotto SMA (forced to abandon his mission after the [September 18, 2018](#) abduction of Fr Pierluigi Maccalli; **UPDATE**: reported on a jihadist attack on a police checkpoint near a mission, two policemen were killed and their weapons taken)

Fr Pierluigi Maccalli SMA (Italian national, abducted in [Bomoanga](#) on [September 18, 2018](#) by jihadists, probably taken over the border into Burkina Faso; **UPDATE**: still in captivity)

Date: November 17, 2018

Location: Makalondi

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/65112-AFRICA\\_NIGER\\_New\\_jihadist\\_attack\\_near\\_the\\_mission\\_of\\_Makalondi](http://www.fides.org/en/news/65112-AFRICA_NIGER_New_jihadist_attack_near_the_mission_of_Makalondi)



## Pakistan

Aasiya Noreen aka Asia Bibi (aged 53, wife of Ashiq Masih, mother of five including Isham, daughter of Soran Masih, convicted of blasphemy on [November 8, 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; **UPDATE**: in hiding with her family in a secure location, subject of a police inspector general report that she and other Christians are the targets of currently planned terror attacks)

Wilson Chowdhry (Chairman of the British Pakistani Christian Association; **UPDATE**: stated "Asia Bibi has been at a high risk of attack the entire duration of her case and the potential for her to be killed in Pakistan is reaching an apex. The police leak of sensitive information is a clear indication of the corruption from within and their lack of professionalism and does nothing to inspire confidence. Weakness in the security services around Asia Bibi's detail continue to alarm us. The Police Inspector General has now ostensibly confirmed that Asia Bibi is still in Punjab which could make it easier to locate her...I have no faith in the Pakistani Security forces who failed in their protection of Benazir Bhutto, Salmaan Taseer and Shahbaz Bhatti...The threat continues to be imminent and this will not change as long as she is in Pakistan. Every minute she remains

there she became a lightning rod for not only terrorists trying to kill her, but for her possible neighbors who would feel it their civic and religious duty...This situation is untenable...")

Date: November 15, 2018

Location: Punjab province

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/threat-alert-issued-by-punjab-police-inspector-general>

Adeel Patras Chaudhry (vice president of "Jesus Life TV", received the police inspector general report stating that Asia Bibi and other Christians are the targets of currently planned terror attacks, said "Christians will pay close attention and act with caution in the organization of gatherings and celebrations at Christmas time. We pray for the protection of the faithful and also of the security forces, committed to our protection. We are aware of the delicate situation and collaborate with the police and with the Government")

Date: November 19, 2018

Rt Rev Sarfarz Humphrey Peters (**UPDATE**: received the police inspector general report stating that Asia Bibi and other Christians are the targets of currently planned terror attacks, said "We know it is a critical moment. Christians in Pakistani have trust in the security forces. We will continue to carry out our role in society, in full cooperation with law enforcement and government")

Date: November 19, 2018

Location: Peshawar

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/65113-ASIA\\_PAKISTAN\\_Police\\_warn\\_Christians\\_danger\\_of\\_terrorist\\_attacks](http://www.fides.org/en/news/65113-ASIA_PAKISTAN_Police_warn_Christians_danger_of_terrorist_attacks)

Rashid Gill (activist, said "We demand that false ascertained accusers are given the same punishment inflicted on the blasphemer, in every single case of alleged blasphemy. This will be the only way to stop the abuse of the blasphemy law")

Date reported: November 21, 2018

Location: Karachi

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/65133-ASIA\\_PAKISTAN\\_Blasphemy\\_law\\_campaign\\_to\\_punish\\_false\\_accusers\\_is\\_increasing](http://www.fides.org/en/news/65133-ASIA_PAKISTAN_Blasphemy_law_campaign_to_punish_false_accusers_is_increasing)



## Rwanda

Archbishop Thaddee Ntihinyurwa (preached in [Cyangugu](#) against the massacres of Tutsis on [April 10, 1994](#), then travelled to [Nyamasheke](#) in an attempt to stop an attack against Tutsis in a church; tried to evacuate three religious brothers from [Cyangugu](#) on [April 10, 1994](#) but was forced to watch their murders; **UPDATE**: resignation due to age accepted)

Date: November 19, 2018

Location: Kigali

Source: [www.fides.org/en/news/65118-AFRICA RWANDA Resignation of Archbishop of Kigali and appointment of successor](http://www.fides.org/en/news/65118-AFRICA_RWANDA_Resignation_of_Archbishop_of_Kigali_and_appointment_of_successor)



## South Sudan

Fr Victor-Luke Odhiambo SJ (aged 62, Kenyan citizen, college principal, **shot dead** in his home)

Date: November 13, 2018

Location: Cueibet

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/jesuit-priest-killed-in-south-sudan-89506> and <http://www.fides.org/en/news/65098->

[AFRICA SOUTH SUDAN The first Kenyan to become a Jesuit has been killed A great teacher and an example for all of us says Fr Sosa](#)



## Thailand

Adnan Masih (aged 32, husband of Sumaira Adnan, father of two, Pakistani asylum applicant, detained in **Phuket** on **July 3, 2018** while on the way to work; **UPDATE**: still detained)

Sumaira Adnan (aged 29, wife of Adhan Masih, mother of two aged 4 and 9, Pakistani asylum applicant, as of **July 3, 2018** has worked as a teacher at an underground school for the children of asylum seekers; detained with her two sons on **October 9, 2018**, later said "In a morning I woke up to make food for my husband because he is in IDC [Immigration Detention Center] I was near the lift when I heard voices. They were all crying and screaming so I ran back to my room but then the police came and arrested all of us, took us down to the trucks and put us in IDC...My husband was very stressed inside the IDC but when I was arrested too, he became more tense and upset because we don't have any relatives or any people who can send us food or supplies that we might need. My husband is also not well because two years ago he had an accident at work so he does not walk well and now he has scars on his legs - he is in very bad condition"; **UPDATE**: released on bail with her children, said "I don't know about when we will leave but we are refugees so hopefully soon we will find a new country. We need your prayers. We can't return to Pakistan because it is very dangerous, the Pakistan police have arrest orders against my husband and our lives will be in danger. This is why we ran from Pakistan to Thailand where the UNHCR has declared us refugees...Inside the Immigration Detention Center the conditions are very bad. The people who are being held have no food, no money, no proper clothes, and no proper place to sleep. Many women with their children are kept together in one room without proper water and no space to move, when I think about that I feel depressed and I cry...Pak-Christians in IDC they have many health

problems because inside there is no clean drinking water, as a result almost everyone held in IDC has a throat infection and most people have fever and itching. These are the most notorious health and sanitation concerns inside IDC...When I was arrested there were almost 60 to 70 kids total, but as of right now almost all refugee women have posted bail, so right now inside the IDC where there are only people with cases that are closed there are 15 or 16 children still in IDC...I do not believe the Thai government are directly trying to be mean to the kids and guards sometimes will even play with them...They are not deporting anyone forcefully but the horrible conditions can make living in detention, especially with a family very hard so some people gone back of their own accord, almost 20 families whose cases have been closed have left already and other are waiting for their tickets")

Date: November 16, 2018

Location: Bangkok

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/bangkok-bail-out-of-refugees-is-slow-as-thai-police-continue-their-hardline-purge-of-pakistani->



## United Kingdom

Lord David Alton (human rights advocate; **UPDATE**: raised questions in the House of Lords as to why the government had not offered asylum to freed Pakistani blasphemy victim Asia Bibi, was told that the government could not comment due to security concerns)

Date: November 20, 2018

Location: London

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/asia-bibi-lord-alton-asks-questions-that-cannot-be-answered-but-we-must-answer-them>

Izzy Montague (parent, met with school officials to discuss her child's mandatory attendance at a pro-homosexual rally, said "After I complained about my young child being forced to take place in an event that goes against our Christian beliefs, the school's attitude towards me changed completely. I know other parents who are afraid to speak up because of how the school has treated me. It was like being bullied. They stopped treating me like any other parent but were antagonistic towards me. I believe that they retaliated against me by unreasonably excluding me from the premises, victimizing my child and not taking my safeguarding concerns seriously. I wasn't even trying to stop the Pride event. I just wanted my child to receive an education, rather than indoctrination")

Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chief Executive of Christian Concerns; **UPDATE**: said "In another example of 'totalitolerance', those who preach tolerance and diversity the loudest do not appear to be interested in practicing it. The treatment of parents at Heavers Farm Primary School represents one of the most chilling breaches of parental rights I have ever seen in my many years of working on educational issues. Education is always a partnership between the school and parents, but the school's actions show disrespect, dismissiveness and hostility towards these parents. A particular agenda is being forced

onto children inside the school gates and parents are being given no means to ensure that their children are being taught in line with their religious and philosophical beliefs”)

Date: June 2018

Location: South East London

Source: <https://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/education/prayer-alert-pray-for-parents-meeting-with-school-over-lgbt-promotion>

Bishop Gavin Ashenden (**UPDATE**: wrote after the Dean of Blackburn Cathedral allowed the Muslim call to prayer [which contains an implied condemnation of Christians and Jews] to be sung in the Cathedral: "Too many of the Church of England's cathedrals are in the hands of the under-read, under-learned, unreal and sub-Christian who like their religion comfortable, who prefer inclusion to salvation, who give themselves the choice not to choose between good and evil, but offer comfort-spirituality to 'those of every religion and none'. But life is not like that, Christian faith is not like that, Jesus is not like that")

Date: November 20, 2018

Source: <https://ashenden.org/2018/11/20/when-does-a-cathedral-stop-being-a-cathedral-art-inclusion-and-choosing-between-mohammed-and-jesus-in-blackburn/>



### **United States - Missouri**

Jamie Schmidt (aged 53, wife of Gregg Schmidt, mother of three, **shot dead** while shopping in a religious goods store, the attack was not due to robbery or other material crime)

Gregg Schmidt (widower of Jamie Schmidt)

Date: November 20, 2018

Location: Ballwin

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/gunman-kills-one-at-catholic-store-in-missouri-26096>



### **Vietnam**

Cardinal Peter Nguyen Van Nhon (**UPDATE**: resignation due to age accepted)

Bishop Joseph Vu Van Thien (**UPDATE**: named Archbishop of Hanoi)

Date: November 17, 2018

Location: Hanoi

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/65117-ASIA\\_VIETNAM\\_Resignation\\_of\\_Metropolitan\\_Archbishop\\_of\\_Ha\\_Noi\\_and\\_appointment\\_of\\_successor](http://www.fides.org/en/news/65117-ASIA_VIETNAM_Resignation_of_Metropolitan_Archbishop_of_Ha_Noi_and_appointment_of_successor)



## **Today's Martyrs**

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

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