

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2019-01-27 through 2019-02-02



Bulgaria

Pastor Teodor Oprenov (wrote after the government voted to not impose restriction of religious practice “We are relieved to state that the most discriminatory and limiting clauses which affected us have been successfully removed or changed appropriately. We are fully aware that this would not have happened without the strong international support and prayers that questioned the intentions of our lawmakers and the strong and consistent protesting and lobbying within the country”)

Date reported: January 31, 2019

Location: Sofia

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/us/news/bulgarian-government-backs-down-after-evangelical-christians-and-others-protest-crackdown>



China

Huang Yan (aged 49, beaten by security officials in 2010, miscarried; beaten by security officials in 2012, miscarried, the beating continued while she was in the bathroom attending to the miscarriage; arrested on November 26, 2015, held in shackles until her ankles bled; reported on January 3, 2017 that government officials forced her doctors to cancel a procedure for ovarian cancer, is now in a 'safe location' but may not be able to afford the procedure; entered Taiwan on May 29, 2018, subjected to deportation back to China, deportation stopped after intervention from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees; UPDATE: granted asylum in the United States)

Date: January 24, 2019

Source: <https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/01/human-rights-defender-granted-asylum-in.html>



Germany

Haroon Masih (aged 34, alias, convert, former imam, fled Pakistan at age 26 after several attempts had been made on his life, said "During my studies, I persecuted and oppressed Christians myself. Then the question flared up in my heart: why?...My own family now wants to kill me", reported to have been stabbed by two men who spoke Urdu)

Date reported: January 20, 2019

Source: <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/christenverfolgung-in-pakistan-ein-imam-wird-christ-und-verstossen-59534164.bild.html> - with translation



India

Rev Ajay Ravi (church service interrupted by 15 Hindu radicals, parishioners beaten and women insulted, three Bibles, musical instruments and a motorcycle were destroyed)

Date: January 27, 2019

Location: Chhattisgarh

Source: <http://asianews.it/news-en/Chhattisgarh,-Hindu-radicals-attack-a-Pentecostal-church-46087.html>

Archbishop Thomas Dabre (**UPDATE**: condemned a Hindu attack on a girl's secondary school in which the windows were broken, the office ransacked, and crosses and religious statues damaged)

Sr Bharati (secondary school principal, school attacked by about 20 youths from the Yuva Sena Hindu youth organization, said "They entered the campus with force, shouting slogans against the direction of the school and looted the office, while the nuns, frightened and disoriented, the students and the teachers were astonished and helpless. They started mistreating staff members, and when I asked them to stay calm and discuss the matter peacefully, they started to wreak havoc in the office, damaging even the religious items like the statues and the cross that were in the office. The attack was so sudden and atrocious, that the students were trembling with fear and are still in shock, we could not do anything except to observe")

Date: January 22, 2019

Location: Kolhapur, Maharashtra state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Maharashtra,-Catholic-school-vandalized.-Msgr.-Dabre:-The-students-are-almost-all-Hindus--46065.html>

and <http://www.fides.org/en/news/65434->

[ASIA INDIA Vandalistic acts carried out by young Hindu extremists in a Catholic school](#)



Indonesia

Basuki Tjahaja Purnama aka Ahok (former governor, sentenced in [Jakarta](#) on [May 9, 2017](#) to 2 years' imprisonment on blasphemy charges despite the court ruling there was no evidence of guilt and the prosecutorial recommendation of a suspended sentence; **UPDATE:** released)

Nicholas (son of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama aka Ahok, brought his father home from prison, wrote on Instagram "He's back. My dad's a free man! Thank you everyone for the support!")

Date: [January 24, 2019](#)

Location: [Deepok Prison](#)

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/jakartas-former-christian-goveror-walks-free-from-prison/84360>



Nigeria

John Karik (aged 70, father of Anthony John, **shot dead** in his home while sleeping)

Anthony John (aged 43, son of John Karik, shot, survived)

Gideon Philip (aged 16, **shot dead** while fleeing his home)

Abel Bako (aged 48, church secretary, said “The sad thing is that it is only Christian communities that have come under these herdsmen attacks. It clearly shows that there is a deliberate effort to cleanse Christians from this part of the country”)

Pastor Williams Yakubu (said “Some of our church members have fled the village, and those who have stayed back in spite of the dangers are scared to attend church programs out of the fear that the herdsmen might return to attack while we are inside our churches. Apart from this, we have been forced to stop holding our church’s weekly activities of Bible study, those of other fellowship groups like choir, Boys and Girls Brigades and women and men’s fellowships”)

Esther Ibrahim (aged 55, church leader, said “Towards the end of the year when the beans were ready for harvest, the herdsmen took their cattle to the farm and destroyed all the beans. I could not harvest anything on that farm. This to me, is genocide. What they want is to kill us either through using their guns, or if we survive such attacks, starve us to death”)

Date: [December 4, 2018](#)

Location: [Ginden Dutse village, Jema’a county, Kaduna state](#)

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2019/01/grieving-christians-baffled-by-muslim-fulani-herdsmen-aggression-in-nigeria/>



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; 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**: the Supreme Court rejected a petition that it overturn its ruling ordering her release, still in hiding, has been unable to find a country willing to grant her asylum)

Date: January 29, 2019

Location: Islamabad

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/court-dismisses-challenge-to-asia-bibi-blasphemy-acquittal-22923>

Event: The government refused to allow 14 young Christians to leave the country to attend World Youth Day

Paul Mohan (Diocese of Hyderabad Youth Commission coordinator, said "On the morning of January 23, we passed the security checks at the airport and collected the boarding passes to reach the Immigration Office. They kept us waiting for more than an hour and then they refused us permission. It was a very sad fact for the whole group, we tried a way out, talking with the members of the Office and with the officials of the airlines, we changed the ticket for the following day, paying a penalty and hoping that everything will be clarified. But the next day, the Office stopped us again, even though we all had a regular visa and the letters of accompaniment of the Bishops")

Atif Sharif ("Jesus Youth" movement coordinator, said "if you meet the criteria, if you have the regular documentation requested by the Consulates of foreign countries and you get a visa, a citizen must be free to leave, among other things, there was a huge investment for a trip abroad, and today our government discriminates against us")

Fr. Bonnie Mendez (**UPDATE**: said "The right to movement, including the right to travel, is a fundamental right of every citizen...government departments can not prevent people from traveling, if they have all the documents in place. At this point a political and legal battle is needed to protect this right. It is a matter that the Justice and Peace Commission or the Human Rights Commission will have to face")

Date: January 24, 2019

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/65441->

[ASIA PAKISTAN No WYD for young Pakistanis blocked in their homeland by the Immigration Office](#)

Saima (aged 24, daughter of Niaz and Rehana, cousin of Sinaha, domestic worker, arrested on false theft allegations on December 29, 2018 after she informed her employer of her impending marriage, repeatedly detained and beaten, threatened with sexual assault by police who undressed in her presence; **UPDATE**: hung by her arms and beaten, forced to drink boiling water, later briefly hospitalized but then returned to custody)

Sinaha (aged 11, cousin of Saima, niece of Rehana, repeatedly detained and beaten beginning on December 29, 2018, threatened with sexual assault by police who undressed in her presence; **UPDATE**: still in custody)

Rehana (wife of Niaz, mother of Saima, aunt of Sinaha, beaten by police during the [December 29, 2018](#) search of her home for the alleged stolen gold, repeatedly detained and beaten; **UPDATE**: released)

Date: January 7, 2019

Location: Chak Jhumra district, Faisalabad

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/police-undress-in-front-of-and-torture-young-christian-woman-after-false-theft-allegation-by-rich-ho>



Philippines

Event: Two suicide bombers attacked a cathedral and then first responders, killing 21 and wounding 114

Chienly Camille Tabas Rubio (aged 14, hospitalized, **died**)

Fr Romeo Saniel (said those killed had "died for their Christian faith")

Cardinal Orlando Quevedo OMI (aged 80; **UPDATE**: signed a joint statement condemning the bombing "As former religious leaders of Jolo we totally condemn the criminal bombing of Jolo Cathedral...on a sacred day and at a sacred moment of worship [was] the action of evil people with utter disregard for the sacredness of human life and of human dignity")

Archbishop Angelito Lampon OMI (**UPDATE**: signed the joint statement condemning the bombing)

Date: January 27, 2019

Location: Jolo, Sulu province

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-cathedral-blasts-kill-at-least-20-injures-100/84380>

and <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Isis-claims-attack-on-Jolo-cathedral.-Bishops-'United-against-extremism'-46090.html>

and <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Jolo,-husband-and-wife,-authors-of-cathedral-attack.-Grenades-thrown-at-a-mosque-46109.html>



Turkmenistan

Gurbanglych Dovletovich Muhammetgulyyev (aged 18, conscientious objector, sentenced to one year's imprisonment)

Date: November 28, 2018

Location: Mary City

Azamatjan Narkulyev (aged 18, conscientious objector, sentenced to one year's imprisonment)

Date: January 7, 2019

Location: Danew, Lebap region

Eziz Atabayev (aged 20, conscientious objector, sentenced to two years' imprisonment on December 19, 2018; **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

Date: January 15, 2019

Location: Dashoguz

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2443



Ukraine

Sergei Viktorovich Filatov (aged 46, criminal case opened by the Russian FSB on November 14, 2018 for membership in an illegal religious organization, could face a 10 year sentence if convicted; **UPDATE**: name added to an official terrorism list, bank accounts frozen)

Date: January 17, 2019

Location: Dzhankoi. Crimea

Aleksandr Ursu (aged 78, home one of eight raided by Russian FSB agents and OMON riot police, pushed against a wall, fell on his knees, handcuffed, at another residence the wife suffered a miscarriage)

Date: November 15, 2018

Location: Dzhankoi. Crimea

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2444



United Kingdom

Asher Samson (aged 41, Pakistani refugee since 2004 after being beaten and threatened with death, **UPDATE**: deported back to Pakistan, in hiding)

Rev Lorraine Shorton (said "I've received some messages from him. He's very scared, he's fearful for his life. He's in hiding in Pakistan and his family are terribly worried for him...Just pray for Asher's safety - that is paramount. At the moment he has no funds to live on - he can't work. Pray for Asher's family that they can get the support and the legal help needed and just pray for the whole community because the whole community has been rocked by this latest event. Pray that the [UK] government will see sense. I would ask them to look again and bring Asher home to where he is safe...[Foreign Secretary] Jeremy Hunt on the 18th January - just this week - was talking with the Open Doors UK charity and said, 'no one should face persecution for their faith where ever they are' and that includes Christians. But the UK is sending people back to these countries where their lives are in danger. Pakistan is number five on the World Watch List for extremism

against Christians and it's just disgraceful really that we're sending people potentially to their death")

Date reported: January 25, 2019

Source: <https://www.premier.org.uk/News/World/Christian-beaten-and-threatened-by-Islamic-extremists-in-hiding-after-UK-deportation>

Fr Andrew Browne (received a letter in High Green, Sheffield on January 4, 2019 threatening that his church would be firebombed if he did not stop services; **UPDATE**: said that it was reported at a Bishop's conference that at least 15 churches had received similar threats)

Date: January 16, 2019

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-46891432>



Uzbekistan

Pastor Ahmadjon Nazarov (husband of Yelena Nazarov; home raided by police on July 25, 2018, sermons and other items seized; **UPDATE**: fined US\$244 for illegal possession of religious literature)

Date: September 12, 2018

Location: Urgench, Khorezm region

Rano Abdullayeva (detained by police after visiting Pastor Ahmadjon Nazarov's apartment, mocked, threatened, and forced to recite Islamic prayers)

Date: November 25, 2018

Location: Urgench, Khorezm region

Sharofat Allamova (aged 50; **UPDATE**: home raided by police without warrant during a meal for fellow church members)

Pastor Ahmadjon Nazarov (husband of Yelena Nazarov; **UPDATE**: questioned by police, hospitalized after suffering chest pains)

Lolakhon Umarova (questioned by police)

Date: November 23, 2018

Location: Urgench, Khorezm region

Lolakhon Umarova (**UPDATE**: threatened by police with a criminal case and seizure of her two children, physically assaulted and then evicted from the family home along with her son by her mother-in-law under police pressure)

Date: November 24, 2018

Location: Urgench, Khorezm region

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2434

Shukhrat Safarov (home raided by police without warrant on [December 27, 2018](#), refused to go to the police station without a summons; summoned to the police station on [January 5, 2019](#), told he would be charged with illegal distribution of religious literature because he had given another person a New Testament; **UPDATE**: fined US\$66, New Testament ordered destroyed)

Date: [January 15, 2019](#)

Location: Bukhara

Andrei Serin (worship service raided by SSS secret police and National Guard troops on [November 25, 2018](#), religious literature and DVDs seized; **UPDATE**: reported that while some literature had been returned "we still need the children's literature, song books, and music notes to be returned as we need them for conducting worship")

Date: [January 22, 2019](#)

Location: Yashnobod district, Tashkent

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2446

Today's Martyrs

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

or write to

2490 Black Rock Turnpike #455

Fairfield CT 06825-2400

Permission is granted to copy, disseminate and forward this document without charge or fee, provided no changes are made and full attribution is made to Today's Martyrs