

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2019-02-10 through 2019-02-16



### Canada

"A" (spouse of "L", application to become a foster parent denied, had been asked if they 'still' believed 'in some of the more outdated parts of the Bible' and if they believed homosexuality was a sin, told in writing 'the policies of our agency do not appear to fit with your values and beliefs')

"L" {same account)

Date: October 2018

Location: Ontario

Source: <https://www.christianpost.com/world/christians-told-cant-foster-kids-after-asked-if-they-believe-more-outdated-parts-of-the-bible.html>



### China

Li Zhu (church elder, reported on [December 21, 2018](#) to have been charged with 'stirring up trouble'; **UPDATE**: still in custody, still denied access to his attorney)

Qin Defu (church elder; reported on [December 21, 2018](#) to have been charged with 'illegal business operations', prevented from meeting with his attorney; **UPDATE**: still in custody, still denied access to his attorney)

Su Bingsen (home raided by police on [December 20, 2018](#), detained along with fellow worshippers; **UPDATE**: still in custody, still denied access to his attorney)

Date: January 29, 2019

Location: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Source: <https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/02/government-denies-imprisoned-members-of.html>

Fr Su Guipeng (disappeared into police custody in [October 2018](#); **UPDATE**: released, banned from religious activities)

Date: January 21, 2019

Location: Hebei province

Bishop Cui Tai (aged 68, disappeared in [mid-April 2018](#); **UPDATE**: allowed to return home, banned from religious activities, weighted only 115 pounds due to ill health)

Fr Zhao He (disappeared into police custody in [October 2018](#); **UPDATE**: released, banned from religious activities)

Date: January 24, 2019

Location: Hebei province

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/chinese-bishop-and-priests-released-for-lunar-new-year/84473>



## **Egypt**

Marnia Milad (aged 18, disappeared on [February 7, 2019](#); **UPDATE**: returned home by police)

Date: February 13, 2019

Location: Nawasir village, Esna, Luxor province

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=2338&A=37542>



## **Ethiopia**

Adane (aged 25, alias, convert, police officer, arrested after admitting he was a Christian and refusing to return to Islam, dismissed from the police, relocated to another area of the country)

Date reported: February 7, 2019

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2019/02/ethiopia-ethnic-somali-christian-police-man-forced-to-relocate-after-talking-about-his-faith/>



## **India**

Rev Ranjit (prayer service in his home attacked by 25 Hindu radicals, Bibles burned)

Rakesh (seriously injured)

Mukesh (seriously injured)

Bhanu Pratap (seriously injured)

Date: February 7, 2019

Location: Chapar village, Sultanpur district, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christians-beaten-during-prayer-in-Uttar-Pradesh-46210.html>

Fr Rocky Shah (diocesan spokesman, **UPDATE**: condemned an arson attack on a shrine with a statue of Mary the mother of Jesus)

Bishop Basil Bhuriya (said "[I] "visited the Grotto [shrine] around 9.30 pm, the same day, it was very sad to witness the scene, police were guarding the place, I said prayers at the Grotto and consoled our people who were present. There are nearly 4,000 Catholics in this Parish. A case has been registered against unidentified persons")

Date: February 3, 2019

Location: Ishgar village, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Statue-of-Mary-set-on-fire-in-Madhya-Pradesh-46195.html>

and <https://www.ucanews.com/news/politics-suspected-in-burning-of-marian-statue-in-india/84451>

Sajan K George (**UPDATE**: denounced the forced reconversion of 98 Christians to Hinduism, said "the reconversions of tribal or indigenous groups known as adivasis, are conducted in an habitual manner by extreme right-wing groups...tribals are animists and have never been Hindu, so the attempt to bring them back to the fold is just a political ploy to create social discord, mistrust and division among the tribals themselves")

Date: January 23, 2019

Location: Tripura state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Sajan-K-George:-98-Christian-tribals-forced-to-reconvert-to-Hinduism--46163.html>

**Event: Persecution Relief released its annual report which documented 1,059 incidents of persecution in 2018, up from 736 in 2017**

Shibu Thomas (**UPDATE**: said that 2018 saw a 118% increase in incidents over 2017)

Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX (**UPDATE**: wrote in the report foreword "The fringe elements becoming bolder and bolder and taking center stage in some areas is a cause of worry...Persecution comes in different forms today: disruption of peaceful gatherings for prayers, physical attacks against innocent worshippers, use of laws to intimidate and harass institutions and persons")

Date: January 5, 2019

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/politics-suspected-in-burning-of-marian-statue-in-india/84451>

and <http://persecutionrelief.org/persecution-relief-annual-report-2018/>

Fr Alphonse Aind SJ (middle school principal, arrested on [June 22, 2018](#) on fabricated charges of organizing the abduction and rape of five social activists by six Pathagadi tribal gunmen after the gunmen had seized his automobile, denied bail; **UPDATE**: still in jail)

Date: February 8, 2019

Location: Jharkhand state

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-priest-bailed-in-rape-case-must-stay-in-jail/84475>

Dr. John Dayal (All India Christian Council; **UPDATE**: reported that the government has cancelled the licenses of 15,000 foreign charity NGOs since 2014, said "Every Indian government, but especially the current one led by the Hindu nationalist BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], has been hostile to international organizations and media scrutiny...[because they investigate the] real situation, such as extreme poverty, suicides among farmers, rape, human rights violations and civil liberties, and above all religious freedom...India does not usually grant a visa to United Nations special envoys to investigate human rights. It is very hostile to them. This is especially true when Western governments raise questions about the treatment of Christians, Muslims and Dalits...[this] weakens the voice of India's own human rights community, which needs access to domestic and international media to amplify its voice, [but] the truth in the end will come to the fore and the human rights community will find alternative ways to speak out and put the spotlight on what is happening...the lives of millions of beneficiaries who receive aid from the West are at risk. What started as mere suspicion towards groups headquartered in New York or Europe has morphed into full blown paranoia")

Date: February 12, 2019

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Since-2014-the-Modi-government-has-cancelled-the-licence-of-15,000-foreign-NGOs-46231.html>



## Iran

Sina Moloudian (aged 26, convert, arrested without warrant in his home on [January 23, 2019](#), Bibles and CDs seized; **UPDATE**: released on bail)

Date: February 4, 2019

Location: Esfahan

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=4156>



## Myanmar

Pastor Tun Nu (aged 41, convert, husband, father of three, abducted from his home by 5 armed men on [January 19, 2019](#); **UPDATE**: killed)

Date reported: February 1, 2019

Location: Rakhine state

Source: <https://www.persecution.org/2019/02/05/kidnapped-pastor-killed-myanmars-rakhine-state/>



## Pakistan

Pakistan: Lahore Shafaqat Emmanuel (aged 40, husband of Shagufta Bibi, father of two, handicapped, arrested on [July 27, 2013](#) for allegedly sending a blasphemous text message; confessed sending the blasphemous text message after being tortured and told by the police that his wife would be tortured; moved to the jail hospital with multiple bed sores which are reportedly more than 3 inches deep, will require surgery if he survives; found guilty at trial on [April 4, 2014](#), sentenced to death; **UPDATE**: still imprisoned on death row)

Shagufta Kauser (aged 40, wife of Shafaqat Emmanuel, mother of two, school worker, arrested on [July 27, 2013](#) for allegedly sending a blasphemous text message; forced along with her children to watch the torture of her husband by the police; found guilty at trial on [April 4, 2014](#), sentenced to death; **UPDATE**: still imprisoned on death row)

Date: February 9, 2019

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/head-line-news-details/7039>

Senator Kamran Michael (**UPDATE**: arrested on corruption charges)

Date: February 8, 2019

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/head-line-news-details/7038>

Zafar Bhatti (aged 49, husband of Nawab Bibi, unemployed due to health reasons, illiterate, arrested on blasphemy charges on [July 23, 2012](#) for allegedly sending 3 blasphemous text messages to extremist Islamic cleric Molvi Abrar Ahmed; convicted in Rawalpindi on [May 3, 2017](#), sentenced to life imprisonment; **UPDATE**: appeal underway, said "I've been suffering in jail for over 5 years for something I did not do. The isolation and hardship of jail has caused me to develop diabetes. I was arrested under questionable circumstances, and despite there being no evidence found against me I am still in the jail...There are many security concerns within jail but I still stand firm in the faith. I believe God will provide justice to me soon")

Nawab Bibi (aged 70, wife of Zafar Bhatti, housemaid, abused by her employer, hospitalized due to poor health, released)

Date: February 9, 2019

Location: Rawalpindi

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/falsely-accused-zafar-bhatti-a-waits-appeal-of-life-sentence-for-blasphemy>



## Philippines

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

Fr Ricky Bacolcol (reported to be in shock and unable to speak about the attack)

Date: January 27, 2019

Location: Jolo, Sulu province

Source: <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/13658/philippines-christians-slaughtered>



### **Russia**

Dennis Christensen (aged 46, Danish citizen, husband of Irina, arrested on [May 25, 2017](#) for 'continuing the activities of a banned extremist organization', ordered held for 2 months pending trial; detention extended on [July 20, 2017](#) to November 23, 2017; denied bail on [November 20, 2017](#), detention extended to February 23, 2018; **UPDATE**: convicted, sentenced to 6 years' imprisonment)

Irina Christensen (wife of Dennis Christensen, said "It is terrible, a 6-year jail sentence for believing in God. I couldn't believe that such a thing could happen in Russia")

Yaroslav Sivulsky (said "The sentence causes only great regret. They have convicted a man who has committed no crime. It is sad that in Russia it has again become a crime to read the Bible, to keep its commandments, and to talk about your faith with other people")

Date: February 6, 2019

Location: Oryol

Source: <https://www.ecumenicalnews.com/article/jailing-of-jehovahs-witness-triggers-warning-of-a-crackdown-on-russian-minorities/60647.htm>  
and [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2450](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2450)



### **Sweden**

Pastor Micael Grenholm (wrote against the government asylum test 'Am I a Christian' which only 60% of Swedish citizens could pass, one application was denied asylum because he could not explain Halloween, another was deported over a minor mistranslation of the Our Father, wrote in particular "Most people agree that the questions converts face are too hard and do not really say anything about whether someone's faith is genuine or not. Several questions display a secular bias and an ignorance of what true Christian faith is about...This is a full-blown catastrophe. Genuine Christians are being deported to countries where Christians are persecuted simply because Swedish government officials are incompetent and hostile towards Christianity")

Date: February 12, 2019

Location: Uppsala

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/regional-news-details/1132>



## Syria

Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem II (aged 55, targeted by a suicide bomber dressed as a priest during a [June 19, 2016](#) Pentecost [Eastern calendar] commemoration of the Assyrian genocide in [al-Wusta district, Qamishli](#), escaped injury when the bomber was stopped by security and set off his bomb, 3 security guards were killed and 5 wounded; **UPDATE**: held a reception for diplomats who have been returning to re-open their embassies)

Cardinal Mario Zenari (apostolic nuncio [Vatican ambassador]; **UPDATE**: attended the reception)

Date reported: February 8, 2019

Location: Damascus

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/65535-ASIA SYRIA Embassies re open in Damascus Cardinal Zenari good sign](http://www.fides.org/en/news/65535-ASIA_SYRIA_Embassies_re_open_in_Damascus_Cardinal_Zenari_good_sign)



## United States - Alabama

Pastor Alan Cross (criticized the state prison system for not allowing Muslim clergy to attend to a Muslim prisoner who was about to be executed)

Date: February 7, 2019

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/10/opinion/alabama-domineque-ray-death-row.html>

## United States - Iowa

Jake Estell (member of the Business Leaders in Christ at the University of Iowa, the organization prevailed in Federal court against the banning of the group by the University, said "We are grateful the court protected our rights today—to let us have the same right as all student groups to express our viewpoints freely on campus")

Kristina Schrock (InterVarsity Graduate Christian Fellowship president, brought suit in Federal Court on [August 6, 2018](#) against the University of Iowa in [Iowa City](#) after it decertified all student groups that had restrictions on officers including adherence to an article of faith; **UPDATE**: thanked the court when it ruled in favor of Business Leaders in Christ, her Fellowship's suit is still pending)

Date: February 6, 2019

Location: Des Moines

Source: <https://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2019/02/11/judge-rules-in-favor-of-christian-club-kicked-off-iowa-campus/>

## United States - New York

Cardinal Timothy Dolan (**UPDATE:** responded to an attack on him by Governor Andrew Cuomo over his criticism of the governor for passage of a new abortion bill "Today...Governor Cuomo linked me with the 'religious right'...This is something new from the governor. He did not consider me part of the 'religious right' when seeking my help with the minimum wage increase, prison reform, protection of migrant workers, a welcome of immigrants and refugees, and advocacy for college programs for the state's inmate population, which we were happy to partner with him on, because they were our causes too. I guess I was part of the 'religious left' in those cases...The governor also continues his attempt to reduce the advocacy for the human rights of the pre-born infant to a 'Catholic issue', an insult to our allies of so many religions, or none at all...")

Date: February 7, 2019

Source: <http://cardinaldolan.org/index.php/hiding-behind-labels/>



## Vietnam

**Event: Authorities demolished church owned properties including a disabled veterans' home and homes of over 200 Christians families, all were offered inadequate compensation**

Ms Teresa H (said "They [The authorities] destroyed all our houses on the eve of Tet. Now we have to stay on the street. Where is the law in Vietnam?...After emigrating to southern Vietnam, my parents moved here in 1954, where we lived for four generations. Now, we are renting land in a cemetery")

Mr Joseph Binh (said "There is no happiness in this Tet. As a father of three children, I feel sad and left out in this modern city, which lacks compassion and love. We rely on priests, who care about us and comfort us in such a difficult circumstance")

Bishop Emeritus Michael Hoang Duc Oanh (**UPDATE:** later visited the homeless families, said "We must keep our faith in God, and listen to the Lord's words every day. We face many difficulties, but at the same time we are called to love and have compassion for others. Although Party cadres and local authorities have treated us with cruelty, we continue to love them as our brothers and sisters")

Date: January 8, 2019

Location: Loc Hung

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mgr-Oanh-visits-victims-of-expropriation-in-Ho-Chi-Minh-City,-offers-suffering-to-God'-46230.html>



## **Today's Martyrs**

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

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