

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2019-04-14 through 2019-04-20



### China

Fr Peter Zhang Guangjun (arrested in 2011, held for 2 months; **UPDATE**: pulled from his automobile after Mass by plainclothes government agents, disappeared)

Date: April 14, 2019

Location: Hebei province

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/underground-priest-in-china-arrested-as-holy-week-begins/84988>

Bishop Vincent Guo Xijin (aged 60, underground bishop, told by the government **on or before April 3, 2019** that he could not engage in public ministry until he joins the Patriotic Association, [the government controlled church]; **UPDATE**: the local government apparently reversed itself under pressure from Beijing, allowed to concelebrate the Chrism Mass with the government appointed bishop)

Date: April 18, 2019

Location: Mindong, Fujian province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/-Mindong,-Msgr.-Guo-Xijin-and-Msgr.-Zhan-Silu-celebrate-the-Chrism-Mass-together-46806.html>



### India

**Event: Christian leaders spoke after the Supreme Court postponed a hearing on the Rajasthan state High Court's ruling establishing 'guidelines' to regulate religious conversion**

A C Michael (**UPDATE**: said the Rajasthan Court's decision “infringes upon the fundamental rights of all persons” and violated of the Indian constitution, added "The act of accepting any religious belief or doctrine is a private affair and is exercised only within a person's conscience. The act of conversion is a personal act and does not require the state to be notified of such an act of conversion")

Joseph Dias (**UPDATE:** said “Choosing faith is not a crime. The court in its order tried to restrict individual liberty and it conflicts with the idea of a secular state where freedom of religion is guaranteed in the constitution itself”)

Allen Brooks (**UPDATE:** said “The constitution of the country is very clear about this. The right to freedom is a very fundamental right of the people living in India. I hope the Supreme Court will reject the guidelines set for conversions by Rajasthan court”)

Date: April 5, 2019

Location: New Delhi

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-christians-look-to-supreme-court-for-religious-freedom/84919>

Pastor Satyen Biswakarma (church in Siddharth Nagar district, Uttar Pradesh state ordered closed by state officials on September 16, 2018; **UPDATE:** the state High Court ordered the state to allow the church to reopen)

Tehmina Arora (attorney, **UPDATE:** said “The court’s order is a welcome stop towards protecting the rights of all religious minorities to be able to freely practice and profess their faith...The court has protected the idea of India as outlined in the constitution. No one should be targeted for their faith”)

Jenis Francis (attorney, educationalist; **UPDATE:** said radical Hindu groups have increased persecution against Christians since Yogi Adityanath was elected Chief Minister)

Date: April 12, 2019

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/court-orders-indian-states-govt-to-reopen-church/84975>

Anthony Francisco Duarte (won a suit against the administrators of former Portuguese colonies Daman and Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli who had removed Good Friday as a public holiday)

A C Michael (**UPDATE:** quoted the court as ruling that the administrators' decision to remove Good Friday as a holiday was "against the secular principles of the country...Christmas is celebrated with much bonhomie by all communities. People of all castes, creed and communities commemorate Good Friday")

Date: April 15, 2019

Location: Mumbai

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-court-restores-good-friday-as-public-holiday/84981>

Prakash Lakra (**beaten** by a mob along with three others for allegedly slaughtering a cow, **died hours later from his injuries**)

Fr Cyprian Kulla (said that Prakash Lakra and his companions did not kill a cow, they took a hide from an already dead ox, added “A group of people came back by evening and began beating the four involved. They also took them to a nearby police station, where Lakra’s condition deteriorated. He was rushed to a nearby hospital but was declared dead”)

A C Michael (**UPDATE:** later said “Such violence is nothing but a strategy to terrorize minorities and polarize the country in the name of religion for votes”)

Date: April 10, 2019

Location: Jhurmu village, Gumla district, Jharkhand state

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/christians-muslims-protest-over-indian-cow-vigilantes/84985>

Fr Antony Madasserry (arrested along with five others, police seized US\$2.2 million in Indian currency, all were released after questioning, the police were later charged with theft)

Fr Peter Kavumpuram (diocesan spokesman, said the money was for the 100 schools managed by the diocese and that the police reported seizing only US1 million, said “It was a loot by the police, not recovery of unaccounted money, [which was] fully accounted with bills and receipts”, the police were later charged with theft)

Date: March 29, 2019

Location: Jalandhar, Punjab state

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-priest-claims-he-was-abducted-at-gunpoint-by-police/84867>

and <https://www.ucanews.com/news/police-charged-over-cash-seized-from-indian-priest/84996>

Rev Ram Vachan Bind (church attacked by 200 Hindu radicals, beaten with sticks along with congregants, police stood by and did nothing, fled the village with his family)

Rev P David (said “No arrest so far but police are cooperating. [The] Situation in Khetasarai is tense because Christians think that they can be targeted again. We need to keep exerting pressure on police authorities so that they will provide security. The worst thing is that people think that they can do anything in the name of religion and get away with it without consequences”)

Date: April 14, 2019

Location: Jamdaha, Khetasarai, Jaunpur district, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: [http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Uttar-Pradesh:-The-Passion-of-churches-at-Easter-\(photos-and-video\)-46797.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Uttar-Pradesh:-The-Passion-of-churches-at-Easter-(photos-and-video)-46797.html)

Bishop Joseph Suren Gomes (**UPDATE**: resigned upon reaching retirement age)

Date: April 17, 2019

Location: Krishnagar, West Bengal state

Source: <http://mattersindia.com/2019/04/krishnagar-bishop-resigns/>

### **Event UPDATE: prayer service in a home attacked by 25 Hindu radicals, Bibles burned**

Ranjeet Kumar Gautam (husband of Bindu, father of Swasti and five others, home attacked, said “Before the Thakurs [high caste members] attacked the worship service, they took two photos of Hindu idols from my neighbor’s house and tore it and threw it in my backyard. They tried to create havoc alleging that we are insulting their gods, but we defended ourselves saying that they must enquire from the villagers about our conduct...They seized each worshipper – men and women – and beat us with wooden sticks, with their legs and fists. They spared nobody except children. Every single Christian was surrounded by five or six men and, taking turns, they ruthlessly beat us. It seemed that the ordeal will never come to an end, and that we will all get killed. The Thakurs forced us to lick their feet with our tongues, threatening to assault us further if we did not comply.

Eight of us did what they said, to save ourselves from their brutality. They forced us to say, 'Jai Shri Ram [Hail, lord Ram],' to which three Christians complied, but the rest of us refused and said that we would rather die...In their barbarousness, they threw Mukesh [Kumar] into the manhole that was filled with human excrement, and when he struggled to escape, they pulled him back and threw him in again. Then they pulled him up and started to kick him. They tossed him among each, using him like a football with their feet. As a result of the brutal assault, blood began to ooze out of Mukesh's ears and eyes", went into hiding, later said "Nearly every day the attackers come and threaten my family, saying that if I register a complaint with police, they will kill me. My family is very scared")

Bindu (wife of Ranjeet Kumar Gautam, mother of Swasti and five others, home attacked, later unable to find work while her husband was in hiding)

Swasti (aged 19, daughter of Bindu and Ranjeet Kumar Gautam, recently engaged, home attacked, beaten with sticks, slapped, kicked in the abdomen)

Pastor Om Prakash (said "They were not expecting so many of us there and so got busy beating all of us and could not focus on Gautam alone...They snatched our bags, cell phones and collected all the Bibles – about 45 in number, and tore them apart...The assailants chased us away from the hospital. We somehow reached the local police station to report the matter to the police at 10 in the night, and a group of Bajrang Dal [the RSS paramilitary youth wing] people were standing outside the police station. They threatened to kill us if we filed a complaint against them, and we had to flee for our lives", suffered injuries to his head, shoulder, ribs, and hip, later said "I start to feel dizzy, and my head spins even after a little amount of work. I have developed breathing difficulty and cannot tolerate loud sounds. I am also unable to walk without a back-support belt")

Gyanmati Nishad (aged 35, blind, slapped and punched, later hospitalized)

Mukesh Kumar (aged 26, beaten, pushed into a cesspool, kicked until he bled from eyes and ears, later hospitalized)

Pastor P David (**UPDATE:** later said "It is a matter of shame that peaceful people, meeting and fellowshiping inside their own homes, are attacked by religious extremists. Not only their fellowship is disrupted, but they are beaten mercilessly and are not allowed to get their medical examination nor even allowed to register a police complaint. It is a mockery of law and order, there is chaos in the country")

Date: February 7, 2019

Location: Chapar village, Sultanpur district, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2019/03/after-terrifying-attack-in-uttar-pradesh-india-host-of-house-church-in-hiding/>



**Indonesia**

**Event: Church leaders reported on security measures taken for Easter**

Fr Aloysius Barut (said “Catholics in Sibolga are on high alert following the incident [last month when a terror suspect's home was raided and his wife and child died in a suicide explosion]. Police and military personnel will secure the church. Parishioners will also help”)

Date: April 17, 2019

Location: Sibolga, North Sumatra

Paternus Telyohud (church security coordinator, said “We have coordinated with them [police, military, and Muslim volunteers] to secure Holy Mass at the church”)

Date: April 17, 2019

Location: Matraman, East Jakarta, Java

Benediktus Yulita (church secretary, said “About 100 security officers will secure the church” as well as members of the youth wing of Nahdlatul Ulama, the moderate Islamic organization)

Date: April 17, 2019

Location: Surabaya, East Java

Fransisca Ita (church secretary, said “This will be the first Easter this parish will be guarded by the police and military”)

Date: April 17, 2019

Location: Pringgolayan, Yogyakarta, Java

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indonesian-churches-tighten-easter-security/84986>



## Malaysia

Pastor Raymond Koh Keng Joo (aged 62, husband of Susanna Liew, father of Jonathan Koh, questioned in 2011 for converting Muslims to Christianity, case dropped for lack of evidence; abducted by 5 armed and masked men in [Petaling Jaya](#) on [February 13, 2017](#), police initially refused to file a report despite witness accounts of the abduction; **UPDATE:** A human rights investigation concluded that he had been abducted by the Special Branch, the national police intelligence gathering unit)

Date: April 3, 2019

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/police-accused-of-abducting-malaysian-pastor-activist/84895>



## 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**: still in country, Prime Minister Imran Khan announced that she would be leaving within weeks)

Date: April 10, 2019

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/asia-bibi-still-in-pakistan-pm-khan-says/84941>



### **Sri Lanka**

Bishop Asiri Perera (accosted by 25 young people as he arrived for services, told he could not enter the church, locked into the church with the congregation, church pelted with rocks during the service, rescued by police, said of the congregation "[They are] heart-broken. They have no place to pray, or celebrate the Easter Triduum. We all pray that God may give them courage and keep them steadfast in the face of persecution")

Date: April 14, 2019

Location: Kundichcham Kulam, Anuradhapura district

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Methodist-Church-attacked-in-Anuradhapura;-bishop-held-hostage-with-the-faithful-46790.html>



### **United States - South Carolina**

Bob Harrell (church elder, described church vandalism in which 125 year old windows were broken and Islamic slogans were painted on outside walls: "It was very disturbing because we feel like this was an individual act and we don't hold any religious group responsible for it. We think it most likely was some misguided young people. However, we do take it very seriously and we'll do everything we can to assist law enforcement")

Date: April 14, 2019

Location: Anderson county

Source: <https://www.wspa.com/news/vandals-spray-paint-messages-break-windows-at-anderson-co-church/1925708015>



### **Vietnam**

Francis Nguyen Nam Phong (aged 39, husband of Nguyen Thi Yen, father of Nguyen Hai Giang, convicted of 'resisting officials on duty' for helping fishermen sue a Taiwanese steel plant for pollution, sentenced in [Dien Chau district, Nghe An province](#) on [February 6, 2018](#) to 2 years' imprisonment; **UPDATE**: daughter diagnosed with cancer)

Nguyen Thi Yen (wife of Francis Nguyen Nam Phong, mother of Nguyen Hai Giang)

Nguyen Hai Giang (aged 16, diagnosed with cancer, doctors recommended her leg be amputated, family cannot afford surgery)

Fr John Baptist Nguyen Dinh Thuc (**UPDATE**: has begun a collection for Nguyen Hai Giang's medical expenses, said "Please pray for Giang and her family to be in peace and overcome this difficult time")

Date: [April 2, 2019](#)

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnamese-priest-seeks-support-for-convicts-ailing-child/84891>

## **Today's Martyrs**

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

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