

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – December 2018

Saturday December 1, 2018



India: Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh state

Christians demonstrated at a peace rally against the closure of hundreds of house churches

Rev David (said "[Varanasi] is the spiritual and religious capital of India. Most of the cases of persecution have taken place around the district of Varanasi. In the main city of Varanasi one of the very old Methodist churches was also attacked by right wing Hindus. Churches are being attacked because high caste Brahmins think that the all scheduled castes and other backward communities will be converted. They look at it as a threat. Because then they cannot take advantage of these communities")

Rev P S Nehemiah Christie (**UPDATE:** said the peace rally “was successful. [Christians] came out to speak up against the oppression and violence [with] more than 1,100 people attending”)

www.asianews.it/news-en/Christians-stage-peace-rally-in-Varanasi-against-forced-church-closures-45641.html



Iraq: Bartella

Fr Behnam Benoka (church occupied by Iraqi military forces for several hours on [July 12, 2018](#); **UPDATE:** verbally abused and threatened by Iraqi military personnel who blocked access to the church while claiming to use the service of a neighboring photo studio for wedding photography and who fired automatic weapons into the air for 30 minutes)

<http://www.aina.org/news/20181130191449.htm>



Central African Republic: Bossangoa

Bishop Desire Nongo Aziagbia SMA (reported: “Following the incidents which led to the destruction of camps for displaced persons, private homes in the districts of Tarabanda and Yabende as well as the Catholic presbytery in the parish of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in Batangafo, from 12 to 16 November 2018, I went on a fact finding mission to assess the situation, assisted by the Joint Protection Team [JPT] of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic [MINUSCA], 8 members of which come from the Office of Bossangoa and 6 from headquarters in Bangui...Despite efforts on the part of our local Church to promote peace and fraternal relations, despite our total solidarity with those in need regardless of beliefs or political conviction, we have been targeted. Priests killed, church buildings torched or desacralized, sacred objects stolen or destroyed. These actions can be interpreted as a method used by countless enemies to plunge us into a religious crisis...”)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/65190-AFRICA_CENTRAL_AFRICA_Local_Church_denounces_episodes_of_violence_in_past_two_months

Sunday December 2, 2018



China: Pingxiang, Jiangxi province

Liao Hongcong (military veteran, church raided by police, Bibles and furniture seized, said “I am an old Chinese soldier and dedicated my youth and made my contribution to the country. However, I don’t have religious freedom now and couldn’t even protect my religious freedom. We seniors worshipped at home. What law did we violate? We sang hymns and read the Bible. What law did we break? We need religious freedom. I love Jesus, I love China, and I love all people...The stools and Bibles were looted on the morning of Dec. 2. At that time, only more than 10 seniors were holding a worship service in my home. I have already made a police report, but the police station hasn’t sent anyone out yet”)

China: Xuzhou, Jiangsu province

Zhang Baoluo (home raided by police without warrant, entire family detained, Bible and other items seized, all were released after being held for 30 minutes)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/jiangsu-police-detain-entire-christian.html>
<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/i-dont-have-religious-freedom-chinese.html>



Iran: Ahvaz

Farzad Behzadzadeh (convert, arrested at his place of employment)

Abdollah Yousefi Sheikh Robot (convert, arrested at his home, Bibles and other materials seized)

Two sisters were arrested and beaten under interrogation

Shima Zanganeh (convert, sister of Shokoufeh Zanganeh)

Shokoufeh Zanganeh (convert, sister of Shima Zanganeh)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=4136>

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=4142>

Monday December 3, 2018



Iran

Ebrahim Firouzi (convert, aged 33, welder, rearrested on [August 21, 2013](#) while visiting two other Christians in [Karaj](#); reported on [May 1, 2015](#) to have been sentenced to five additional years' imprisonment for "action against national security through collusion and gathering", the gathering in question was a meeting where he met with friends to say goodbye before the beginning of his original prison term; **UPDATE**: denied a furlough to attend the funeral of his mother)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/12/iran-staggering-number-of-christians-arrested-114-in-a-week/>



Ukraine: Rivne province

Archpriest Alexander Bakhov (head of the Ukrainian Church [Moscow Patriarchate]'s legal department; **UPDATE**: responded to the summoning of questioning of over 20 priests by Ukrainian counterintelligence: "Given the systematic nature, the simultaneity, and the mass character, these actions are aimed at the bishops with the purpose of pressuring and forcing them to participate in the 'unification council'")

Archpriest Ivan Savchuk (summoned by Ukrainian counterintelligence, said "I called a lawyer and together we drove up to the office, the summons was given, but not charges were pronounced. At this point, I still don't understand what is going on")

Archpriest Vasily Nachev (summoned by Ukrainian counterintelligence, said “I was trying to figure out why I was summoned, but to no avail. Am I surprised? No, such actions are expected in light of recent Church events. In fact, this is the beginning of what the Holy Fathers warned about”)

<http://orthochristian.com/117624.html>



United Kingdom: Keighley, Bradford, West Yorkshire, England

Rev Jonathan Pritchard (church vandalized by Muslim teens)

<https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/17893352.teen-admits-part-39-mindless-vandalism-39-church/>

Tuesday December 4, 2018



Philippines: Manila

Bishop Antonio Ablon (**UPDATE:** protested the continuation of martial law in Mindanao which would "terrorize people in cities and in the countryside...The future of [the people of Mindanao] is dark and murderous under [President] Duterte's martial law")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/filipino-protestant-prelate-leads-anti-martial-law-protest/84021>



Pakistan: Muslim Town, Gujranwala district, Punjab province

Farhan Aziz (aged 26, brother of Amir Aziz, arrested on blasphemy charges on [August 1, 2018](#) after an ex-girlfriend sent a text message from his phone to a Muslim radical; **UPDATE:** still jailed despite the arrest of his ex-girlfriend and her brother)

<https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/gujranwala-decelerated-justice-leaves-christian-youth-accused-of-blasphemy-in-limbo/>



Niger

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)

Bishop Djalwana Laurent Lompo (**UPDATE**: reported that information had been received that Fr Pierluigi Maccalli was alive and well)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/65198->

[AFRICA NIGER Bishop of Niamey Fr Maccalli is alive and well we continue to pray for his release](#)



Nigeria: Ginden Dutse village, Jema'a county, Kaduna state

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”)

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

Wednesday December 5, 2018



China: Pu'er, Yunnan province

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 on [March 23, 2018](#), fined US\$3,168; **UPDATE**: appeal postponed)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/north-carolina-pastors-appeal-postponed.html>



Pakistan: Karachi

Pastor Sharjeel Shafqat (aged 31, husband of Sarah Sharjeel, father of a 6 year old son, son of Pastor Shafqat Masih Sagar, church attacked by a mob on [October 26, 2018](#); **UPDATE**: attacked by up to 17 Muslims who had been involved in the [October 26, 2018](#) attack, severely beaten with axes and sticks)

Sarah Sharjeel (wife of Pastor Sharjeel Shafqat, mother of a 6 year old son, church attacked by a mob on [October 26, 2018](#); **UPDATE**: along with her son witnessed the attack on her husband)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/church-attack-in-karachi>



Iran

Mansour Borji (Article 18 advocacy director; **UPDATE**: reported that the government had arrested 142 Christians in the past month in “10 or 11 different cities” - 114 in the past week - and released most after hours or days “as they had arrested so many of them and didn’t know what to do with them all”, the released Christians were all told to expect phone calls from military intelligence)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/12/iran-staggering-number-of-christians-arrested-114-in-a-week/>



Nicaragua: Managua

Fr Mario Guevara (aged 59, attacked with acid while hearing confessions, hospitalized with severe burns on his face, arms, and shoulders)

Cardinal Leopoldo Jose Brenes Solorzano (aged 69; **UPDATE**: deplored the attack on Fr Mario Guevara)

Auxiliary Bishop Silvio Jose Baez Ortega (**UPDATE**: deplored the attack on Fr Mario Guevara)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/nicaraguan-priest-attacked-with-acid-during-confession-60341>



United States – Nebraska: Omaha

Brian C Buescher (Federal Court nominee, accused in a letter of bias toward "extreme positions" by Senators Mazie Hirono and Kamala Harris for his continuing membership in the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal and charitable organization that upholds traditional Christian beliefs)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/dc-knights-of-columbus-respond-to-senators-criticism-41354>

Thursday December 6, 2018



Australia: Newcastle

Archbishop Philip Edward Wilson (aged 68, charged by police in [March 2015](#) with concealing a serious offence regarding child sexual abuse in the Hunter region" in 1976, some of the charges were made by a former priest who had been convicted of pedophilia; convicted on [May 22, 2018](#); **UPDATE**: conviction overturned on appeal, the appellate court ruled there was no evidence that a crime had been committed)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Wilson_\(bishop\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Wilson_(bishop))



China: Henan province

Cao Nan (**UPDATE**: reported to have been recently released after a 10 day detention)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/jiangsu-police-detain-entire-christian.html>



Cameroon: on the road between Kumba and Buea

Auxiliary Bishop Michael Miabesue Bibi (held by armed insurgents on [December 5, 2018 on the road near Batibo](#), said "They saw that I was a Roman Catholic bishop, but they were not willing to listen to me, they demanded my phone and the phones of my driver and his brother", released; **UPDATE**: held by armed insurgents for four hours, said "It was actually scary. Finally by the grace of God they liberated us", the leader ordered the return of their cell phones)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/65303-AFRICA_CAMEROON_The_auxiliary_Bishop_of_Bamenda_kidnapped_twice_by_sep_aratists

Friday December 7, 2018



China: Humiao village, Zhecheng county, Henan province

Ding Mei (aged 73, official church director, church 'repurposed' into a banquet hall on [August 29, 2018](#), began almost daily visits to the Religious Affairs Bureau [RAB] to reverse the decision, publicly blamed herself for the closure of the church, lost appetite and often wept; **UPDATE**: told by the RAB that no leniency would be shown to her church because it was national policy to shut down all churches, became distraught, vomited blood and fainted the next day, diagnosed with a brain hemorrhage)

<https://bitterwinter.org/government-persecutions-result-in-church-workers-deaths/>

Saturday December 8, 2018



Indonesia: Medan

Archbishop Anicetus Bongsu Sinaga OFM Cap (said on [March 13, 2018](#) that recent attacks have made Christians more vigilant; **UPDATE**: resignation accepted)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/65227-ASIA_INDONESIA_Resignation_of_the_Archbishop_of_Medan_and_appointment_of_successor

Sunday December 9, 2018



China: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Abel (pre-born child, **died in a miscarriage** after his mother had been dragged from her bed by police)

Police raided a seminary and detained more than 50 students, all were forced to return to their hometowns

Xiao Yue (seminary student, detained, later sent to her home)

Zhou Xiaojuan (seminary student, detained, later sent to her home)

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/persecution-of-early-rain-covenant.html>

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/01/government-abuse-results-in-death-of.html>

Monday December 10, 2018



China: Chengdu, Sichuan province

At least 100 Christians were detained after police raids on their homes, at least three of both sexes were raped by police

Pastor Wang Yi (husband of Jiang Rong; **UPDATE**: detained)

Jiang Rong (wife of Pastor Wang Yi; **UPDATE**: detained)

Guo Hai (detained along with his wife, two children left behind at home)

Qin Defu (church elder, forced to the ground during a police search of his home)

Song Enguang (husband, detained along with his wife, electricity shut off from his home)

Jiang Ruolin (detained)
Ge Yingfeng (detained)
Zhu Hong (detained)
Xiao Hongliu (detained)
Ye Yin (detained)
Zhang Jianqing (spouse of Yu Zhixue, detained)
Liu Yingxiu (detained)
Assistant Deacon Zhang Guoqing (detained)
Su (church elder, husband, detained along with his wife)
Xiao Yingshan (husband, detained along with his wife)
Xiao Baoguang (detained)
Zhou Xiaojuan (detained)
Liu Daxuan (detained)
Zhou Yong (detained)
Li Yingqiang (church elder, husband of Zhang Xinyue, father of two, **UPDATE**: evaded police, contacted foreign media)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/associated-press-group-says-dozens.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/breaking-80-church-attendees-in-custody.html>



Malaysia

Pastor Joshua Hilmy (husband of Ruth Sitepu, apparently abducted in [March 2017](#); **UPDATE**: still missing)

Ruth Sitepu (wife of Pastor Joshua Hilmy, apparently abducted in [March 2017](#); **UPDATE**: still missing)

Pastor Raymond Koh Keng Joo (aged 63, husband of Susanna Liew, father of Jonathan Koh, 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**: still missing)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/12/raymond-kohs-wife-expects-justice-as-inquiry-into-malaysian-pastors-abduction-ends/>



Kenya: Kiambu

Fr John Njoroge Muhia (aged 56, **shot dead** in his automobile during an armed robbery while travelling to a bank)

http://www.fides.org/en/news/65239-AFRICA_KENYA_Kenyan_priest_killed_in_a_robbery

Tuesday December 11, 2018



Australia: Melbourne, Victoria

Cardinal George Pell (aged 77, charged in **Melbourne, Victoria** with multiple child sex abuse crimes in **June 2017**, the police had opened a case against him a year before a complainant was found, most charges were then dismissed for "fundamental defects in evidence"; **UPDATE**: reported to have been convicted on five counts despite the trial having been held in secret, a previously unreported trial had ended in mistrial after 10 jurors voted to acquit, trial witnesses anonymously reported extensive prosecutorial misconduct, U.S. based reporters were threatened with extradition and imprisonment for having released news of the conviction on the internet)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/after-guilty-verdict-questions-raised-about-pell-trial-88675>

<https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/australian-prosecutor-threatens-church-militant>



China: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Li Yingqiang (church elder, husband of Zhang Xinyue, father of two, evaded police during the **December 10, 2018** detentions of his fellow parishioners, contacted foreign media; **UPDATE**: detained)

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/associated-press-group-says-dozens.html>

<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/breaking-80-church-attendees-in-custody.html>



India: Delhi

Michael Williams (parochial school principal, reacted to government withdrawal of school accreditation: "We are a private institution and we can [legally] self-regulate ourselves. We do not depend upon anyone. Now 250 teachers and thousands of children are at risk. Their decrees will not be recognized...I received a notice that the decrees issued by our school will no longer be valid. In the letter the government warned me that students will be gradually transferred to public schools. [The pretext was the raising fees for the 2016 academic year without government permission. This fee change] happened two years ago, whilst the warning arrived just now...every Indian state has its own local educational law. The only schools that can be managed freely and independently are those of minorities, as laid out in Art 30 of the Indian Constitution...we have great autonomy in educational matters, on teaching methods...The goal is to control minority schools...we should have greater freedom. India needs more schools, to educate its children. Why close a good school? It is in the country's greater interest to keep schools that work open")

Sunita Howell (principal)

India: Kismatpur area, Telangana state

Noah Gunti (aged 51, father of three, veterinarian, vehicle cut off by another on a side road, said "We stopped, and the person driving the car could see the Bible verses written on the van, and he started abusing us in vulgar language. He made some calls, and within a few minutes, about 15 to 20 people had gathered. Then they started beating me and unloaded the van, dumped all the Bibles and Christian literature at one place and lit fire...At least 350 Bibles were burned, but we did not stop. That week we continued sharing gospel. We must seek strength from the Lord and must strive to do more work. They target us because they are ignorant, they do not know what they are doing. Governments cannot protect us from persecution. Any kind of protests or representation to the authorities will not help. We should not be afraid to be used by the Lord, in fact we must be prepared to be persecuted")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Government-targets-Delhis-biggest-Christian-school-45760.html>

<http://www.mountcarmeldelhi.com/De-RecognitionNoticeResponse.pdf>

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/01/hindu-version-of-feng-shui-leads-to-demolition-of-church-building-in-southern-india/>



Belarus: Minsk

Pastor Vyacheslav Novakovsky (application for church registration withdrawn in 2017 after the church landlord said he could not wait for approval; church registration denied on July 16, 2018 on the grounds that their denomination was 'previously unknown' in the country; church registration denied on September 4, 2018 due use of the church mailing address at an educational institution; **UPDATE**: most recent application for church registration

unanswered despite the expiration of the legal time period, said "Community registration requires at least 20 believers, but if they gather they won't sit and wait [to hold worship meetings] until the registration is done...We have been applying for the registration of our community since 2017 and have already received four denials. We want to comply with the law and gather for religious meetings without fear of raids, fines or detentions")

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2436

Wednesday December 12, 2018



China: Beijing

Bishop Vincent Guo Xijin (aged 60, imprisoned in 1990; released in 1992; imprisoned in 1993, released in 1994; imprisoned and released in 1996; detained in Fuan on April 6, 2017 for 20 days to 'to study and learn'; released on May 6, 2017; **UPDATE**: demoted to auxiliary bishop as part of an concordant between the Chinese government and the Vatican, will serve under a government sponsored bishop)

China: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Pastor Wang Yi (husband of Jiang Rong, son of Chen Yaxue; **UPDATE**: mother presented with a notice that her son had been charged with "inciting subversion of state power", released a pre-arranged statement: "...I accept and respect the fact that this Communist regime has been allowed by God to rule temporarily. As the Lord's servant John Calvin said, wicked rulers are the judgment of God on a wicked people, the goal being to urge God's people to repent and turn again toward Him. For this reason, I am joyfully willing to submit myself to their enforcement of the law as though submitting to the discipline and training of the Lord...At the same time, I believe that this Communist regime's persecution against the church is a greatly wicked, unlawful action. As a pastor of a Christian church, I must denounce this wickedness openly and severely. The calling that I have received requires me to use non-violent methods to disobey those human laws that disobey the Bible and God. My Savior Christ also requires me to joyfully bear all costs for disobeying wicked laws...If God decides to use the persecution of this Communist regime against the church to help more Chinese people to despair of their futures, to lead them through a wilderness of spiritual disillusionment and through this to make them know Jesus, if through this he continues disciplining and building up his church, then I am joyfully willing to submit to God's plans, for his plans are always benevolent and good...And so, respectable officers, stop committing evil. This is not for my benefit but rather for yours and your children's. I plead earnestly with you to stay your hands, for why should you be willing to pay the price of eternal damnation in hell for the sake of a lowly sinner such as I?...")

<http://asianews.it/news-en/Mindong:-Msgr.-Guo-Xijin,-underground-bishop,-gives-way-to-formerly-excommunicated-Msgr.-Zhan-Silu-45738.html>

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/breaking-early-rain-covenant-church.html>

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/arrested-early-rain-covenant-church.html>



Iran: Ahvaz

Two sisters were arrested on December 2, 2018 and beaten under interrogation; UPDATE: US\$50,000 bail approved for each, the court refused to accept payment for the likely reason to allow time for the beatings to heal

Shima Zanganeh (convert, sister of Shokoufeh Zanganeh)

Shokoufeh Zanganeh (convert, sister of Shima Zanganeh)

Iran: Rajai Shahr prison, Karaj

Jamshid Derakhshan (convert, disappeared on November 30, 2018 while travelling to a church service; **UPDATE**: allowed to call relatives from jail, said he would be released on bail soon)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=4139>

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=4136>



Egypt

Abdo Adel (aged 43, baker, arrested in Membal village, Minya province on July 6, 2018 on 'contempt of religion' charges after making a post to Facebook comparing Muhammad and Jesus; **UPDATE**: convicted, sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment)

Egypt: Minya

Two Copts were shot dead by a policeman while he guarded their church, the policeman was charged with 'beating which led to death' so as to avoid the death penalty

Imad Kamal Sadeq (aged 49, father of David, **shot dead**)

David (aged 21, son of Imad Kamal Sadeq, **shot dead**)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/12/---egypt-copt-sentenced-to-three-years-in-prison-for-blasphemous-facebook-post/>

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2018/12/14/hundreds-of-egyptian-christians-protest-at-police-killing/>

Friday December 14, 2018



India: Chapatoli, near Duliajan, Assam state

Bishop Joseph Aind (condemned the desecration of a church in which a crucifix and statue of Mary the mother of Jesus were damaged)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Assam-statue-of-the-Virgin-desecrated:-two-people-arrested-45758.html>



Pakistan: Lahore, Punjab province

Qaiser Ayub (aged 40, professor of computer science, brother of Amoon Ayub, husband of Amina, father of three, arrested in [Lahore](#) in the [week prior to November 17, 2014](#) on blasphemy charges dating from 2011, had been a fugitive for 3 years; **UPDATE:** sentenced to death)

Amoon Ayub (brother of Qaiser Ayub, husband of Huma, arrested on blasphemy charges in [Lahore](#) while trying to leave the country on [November 14, 2014](#); **UPDATE:** sentenced to death)

<http://asianews.it/news-en/Two-Christian-brothers-sentenced-to-death-for-blasphemy-in-Punjab-45748.html>

Saturday December 15, 2018



Pakistan: Quetta, Balochistan

Christians attended a memorial of the [December 17, 2017 Quetta church attack](#)

Bishop Sadiq Daniel (**UPDATE**)

Rev Saimon Bashir Masih (**UPDATE**)

Aleeza Ashra (aged 2, daughter of Ashraf Masih and Shamim Bibi, injured with shrapnel in her abdomen and left foot during the [December 17, 2017 Quetta, Balochistan](#) church attack; as of [January 7, 2018](#) had developed multiple gangrene infections, left foot amputated; **UPDATE:** has regained mobility and engaged in active play with the help of an artificial leg)

Shamim Bibi (mother of Aleeza Ashra and Rimla Ashraf, injured with shrapnel in the abdomen during the [December 17, 2017 Quetta, Balochistan](#) church attack, hospitalized; **UPDATE:** said "It is hard to describe my joy at knowing that Aleeza can live a normal life with the help of an artificial leg. I was hopeless before when the incident took place and thought maybe Aleeza would never have the opportunity to develop like other children...By the Grace of God and efforts of BPCA [British Pakistani Christian Association], Aleeza can walk and enjoy life as a normal child. Her next limb upgrading will happen in March or April depending on how fast Aleeza grows and I am praying you all continue your support - I thank all of you")

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/anniversary-update-of-quetta-church-attack-at-christmas>



Ukraine

Patriarch Kirill aka Vladimir Mikhailovich Gundyayev (aged 72, Russian citizen, attacked at the [Kiev airport](#) on [July 26, 2012](#) by a half-naked FEMEN protestor; **UPDATE:** appealed to Pope Francis and the United Nations concerning the political pressure on Ukrainian members of the Moscow Patriarchate to leave and join with the new Kiev Patriarchate: "Recently, the interference of the leaders of the secular Ukrainian state in church affairs has grown into a blatant pressure on the episcopate and clerics of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, what allows us to speak of the beginning of the large-scale persecutions")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Kirill-appeals-to-the-pope-and-UN-against-the-'systematic-persecution'-of-Russian-churches-in-Ukraine-45753.html>

Sunday December 16, 2018



China: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Cao Qingen (church minister; **UPDATE:** arrested for attending a worship service along with about 60 fellow parishioners including a baby, beaten)

Tang Shuangfei (wife of Wang Jun, mother of a one year old, arrested for attending a worship service along with about 60 fellow parishioners including her child, beaten)

Wang Jun (husband of Tang Shuangfei, father of a one year old, arrested for attending a worship service along with about 60 fellow parishioners including his child, beaten, later sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment)

China: Hebei province

Fr Stephen (underground priest; **UPDATE**: said "The head of the religious affairs bureau under the United Front Work Department came along with township and village cadres. When they arrived at the church, I had just given a homily at the Mass", told that he would have to 'enter into discussions' after Christmas regarding his underground status, said he would not join the official church)

China: Humiao village, Zhecheng county, Henan province

Ding Mei (aged 73, official church director, church 'repurposed' into a banquet hall on [August 29, 2018](#), began almost daily visits to the Religious Affairs Bureau [RAB] to reverse the decision, publicly blamed herself for the closure of the church, lost appetite and often wept; told by the RAB on [December 7, 2018](#) that no leniency would be shown to her church because it was national policy to shut down all churches, became distraught, vomited blood and fainted the next day, diagnosed with a brain hemorrhage; **UPDATE**: [died](#))

<https://bitterwinter.org/government-persecutions-result-in-church-workers-deaths/>

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/60-more-christians-arrested-as-church.html>

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/01/officials-continue-abuse-of-early-rain.html>

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/chinese-church-suppression-before-christmas/84183>



Iran: Karaj

Jamshid Derakhshan (convert, disappeared on [November 30, 2018](#) while travelling to a church service; **UPDATE**: released on bail, had developed a stress related eye disorder while in prison)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=4147>



Nigeria: Ungwan Pa Gwandara, Jema'a county, Kaduna state

Siman Markus (aged 42, said "At about 9 p.m., there was a marriage feast that was going here at Ungwan Pa Gwandara. From behind the hill overlooking this village emerged armed Fulani herdsmen who shot indiscriminately at Christians from various churches here at

the venue of the feast. Twelve Christians who are members of various churches were shot dead instantly, while another five Christians were injured”)

Yohanna Dauda, 47, witnessed the attack on the wedding banquet)

Samuel Markus (aged 28, **killed**)

Glory Bala (aged 12, **killed**)

Chore Garba (aged 12, **killed**)

Beyan Avong (aged 12, **killed**)

Kasham Manasseh (aged 22, **killed**)

Tanania Francis (aged 25, **killed**)

Murna Irimiya (aged 38, **killed**)

Victoria Solomon (aged 22, **killed**)

Bathsheba Emmanuel (aged 35, **killed**)

Yohanna Filibus (aged 12, **killed**)

Friday Yohanna (aged 13, **killed**)

Oyo Dauda (aged 10, **killed**)

Francis Markus (aged 25, wounded)

Boyi Kyau (aged 45, wounded)

Akwaru Danladi (aged 30, wounded)

Samaila Bala (aged 17, wounded)

Veronica Clement (aged 23, wounded)

Golon Sam (aged 20, wounded)

Ishaku Boyi (aged 14, wounded)

Briskila Solomon (aged 7, wounded)

Felicia Solomon (aged 9 months;

Kato Kadima (aged 14, wounded)

Wawa Kadima (aged 12, wounded)

Judith Samuel (aged 2, wounded)

Esther Dauda (aged 50, wounded)

Charity Samaila (aged 20, wounded)

Samaila Garba (aged 41, wounded)

Janet Shadrach (aged 22, wounded)

Precious Emmanuel (aged 6, wounded)

Paul Akore (aged 17, wounded)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/02/killing-of-christians-continues-in-run-up-to-national-elections-in-nigeria/>



Germany: Garding, Nordfriesland district, Schleswig-Holstein

Pastor Thomas Knippenberg (church smeared with Islamic slogans by a Middle Eastern asylum seeker, Star Singers [Christmas carolers] were also "molested" by the asylum seeker, said "Obviously, he has something against Christian Christmas")

<http://zeitung.shz.de/holsteinischercourier/1971/article/828770/4/4/render/?token=c12a759a22557e7fb164518fe30aac83> - with translation

Monday December 17, 2018



Indonesia: Pringgolayan, Yogyakarta

Albertus Slamet Sugihardi (**died from natural causes**, burial ceremony interrupted by Muslims who demanded the top of his burial cross be removed before he would be buried, widow forced to sign a document stating her approval of the cross desecration)

Fr Paulus Christian Siswantoko (Bishops' Commission for the Laity executive secretary; **UPDATE**: said the cemetery cross decoration was another example of "growing and deepening religious intolerance...The government needs to address the issue immediately, before it spirals out of control...All people must respect other religious symbols, such as the cross")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/indonesian-church-slams-funeral-cross-desecration/84169>



China: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Pastor Wang Yi (husband of Jiang Rong, son of Chen Yaxue, reported on [December 12, 2018](#) to have been charged with 'inciting subversion of state power'; **UPDATE**: author of a newly released statement **In the Face of Persecution, What Will I Do?** in which he wrote "I prayed before Christ and after careful consideration, I have determined to resist by peaceful means when the government oversteps the boundary of the secular power God has given – attacking and usurping the spiritual affairs that belong to God and his

church...I will not cooperate with the police banning, shutting down, dissolving, or sealing up the church and its gathering... I will not use the slightest power God has given me to cooperate with the police's attack on the church and worship...I will not obey any of the police's command when it comes to persecuting and banning the church...I will not sign any document of administrative decision sent by the Religious Affairs Bureau, nor will I sign any documents by any other government agencies partnering to persecute the church...With the exception of sharing the gospel, I will not accept or answer any question related to the church and faith from the administrative investigation by the Religious Affairs Bureau. Except for providing my personal information and sharing the gospel, I will not answer any questions the police ask or interrogate me with regarding my faith and the church...If I cannot acquire or am forbidden to read the Bible, I will disobey in a peaceful manner and will not cooperate with the police's inquiry and questioning, either until I acquire the Bible or until the police torture me brutally to the point of crushing my health and spirit...I will not admit to any crimes imposed against me on matters of faith and church...I will physically obey any unjust sentences and submit to the prison's discipline. But even though I serve this term, I will not be reformed ideologically. I will neither plead guilty nor repent...I will not, for the sake of faith and the church, pay one penny of penalty, fine or bail...I will not accept additional penalty of the so-called deprivation of political rights; as soon as my personal freedom is restored, I will do my utmost to preach the gospel, shepherd or plant churches, write and publish articles, and live out the Great Commission given by the Lord Jesus Christ, until I lose my freedom again...I will do my utmost in my detention to practice the gospel commission...Under no circumstances, will I accept a defense lawyer designated by the government...I will not accept interviews and filming arranged by the prison authorities, official media, or any other domestic media, I will not record any video either under police control or anywhere outside the interrogation room to avoid being distorted...I will demand the court for a public trial of my case...May the Lord bless me with so much reverent fear for him to the point where I am not afraid of any power that does not fear him..."

<http://www.chinapartnership.org/blog/2018/12/in-the-face-of-persecution-what-will-i-do>



Myanmar: Kanta Kawn township, Magway region

U Wah Daw (home attacked by Buddhists during a Christmas service, several including the pastor were injured: "We were afraid and didn't make noise while they threw stones into my house. They threw stones at my house while we held prayer. My house has minor damages. I filed a lawsuit to police and let them handle the case")

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/12/six-christians-injured-in-stoning-of-christmas-service-in-burma/>



Iraq: Mosul

Fr Amanuel Adel Kloo (said of the events during Islamic State [ISIL] occupation and after "It was sad to see the city destroyed. Two of my churches were hit by airstrikes, while two others were damaged. And what was left was looted. Daesh [ISIL] sold the windows and doors and light fixtures. Nothing was left but the walls. But I don't feel hopeless. I have returned to Mosul to rebuild and carry the cross high...There are almost no Christians in Mosul at night. During the day, there may be 60 or 70 Christians who come here to work, along with up to a thousand Christian students at the University of Mosul, but they go back to safer towns at night")

<http://www.aina.org/news/20181217184331.htm>

Wednesday December 19, 2018



Turkmenistan: Dashoguz

Eziz Atabayev (aged 20, conscientious objector, sentenced to two years' imprisonment)

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



Iraq: Bartella

Fr Behnam Benoka (**UPDATE:** reported via FaceTime that in recent weeks the Shia Shabak militia had blocked the road to his church to prevent worshippers from attending, strafed the church with gunfire, held a handgun to his face, and threatened Christians in **Qaraqosh**: "They are the new ISIL [Islamic State]. We are really vulnerable")

<http://www.aina.org/news/20181218190408.htm>

Thursday December 20, 2018



Australia: Newcastle

Archbishop Philip Edward Wilson (aged 68, charged by police in [March 2015](#) with concealing a serious offence regarding child sexual abuse in the Hunter region" in 1976, some of the charges were made by a former priest who had been convicted of pedophilia; convicted on [May 22, 2018](#); conviction overturned on appeal on [December 6, 2018](#), the appellate court ruled there was no evidence that a crime had been committed; **UPDATE**: prosecutors announced they would not appeal the overturning of the conviction because they had no reasonable grounds under the law)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Wilson_\(bishop\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Wilson_(bishop))



China: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Su Bingsen (home raided by police, detained along with fellow worshippers)

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/01/officials-continue-abuse-of-early-rain.html>

Friday December 21, 2018



China: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Several Christians were reported to have been criminally charged and to have been prevented from meeting with their attorneys

Jiang Rong (wife of Pastor Wang Yi; **UPDATE**: charged with 'inciting subversion of state power')

Qin Defu (church elder; **UPDATE**: charged with 'illegal business operations')

Deacon Ge Yingfeng (**UPDATE**: charged with 'illegal business operations')

Fu Lijun (charged with 'illegal business operations')

Lu Jinheng (charged with 'illegal business operations')

Li Xiaofeng (charged with 'illegal business operations')

Huang Yaling (charged with 'stirring up trouble')

Wang Fei (charged with 'stirring up trouble')

Li Yingqiang (church elder, charged with 'stirring up trouble')

Li Zhu (church elder, charged with 'stirring up trouble')

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2018/12/early-rain-covenant-church-detainees.html>



India: Jagathgir Gutta, Telangana state

Pastor Allageshan (asked Hindus to stop dumping construction debris on his church property, the request triggered an attack on the church, beaten)

Pramod (aged 36, said “They refused to clean their trash and told the pastor to go complain against them. I went to meet my pastor and told him that now that they have become violent, he must inform the police, but he refused to do so...They mocked the [Christian] youths [and encircled them on their motorbikes], saying, ‘Hey look at these cowards – spineless fellows! We attacked their pastor, but they have no guts to speak up. There was a clash between the groups. The youths managed to escape from there and went to church, back to their work of cleaning and unrolling the carpets, making preparations. But they did not share about the attack, and within 10 to 15 minutes, a mob of over 40 Hindu extremists struck the main gate. I rushed to rescue the youths and tried to videotape what was happening. But they pinned me down like wrestling champions and bruised my left eye. My phone was taken away, and I was lying there helplessly. They pushed [my father], and he too collapsed. They were heavily drunk and attacked us like wrestling or boxing champions in rage. I’m sure they must be professionals. I lifted my 62-two-year old father, and we both went to Jagathgir Gutta police station in that condition...Then, a day later, the area’s circle inspector changed the version, and filed it as a dispute between both parties so they could book cases against me and my dad. I was shocked when the inspector told me that he has no other option but to send my dad and me to remand. They booked an FIR against us”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/01/hindu-version-of-feng-shui-leads-to-demolition-of-church-building-in-southern-india/>

Saturday December 22, 2018



Pakistan: Islamabad

Bishop Joseph Arshad (**UPDATE:** stated "In a world where darkness reigns, humanity desperately needs the light of peace and hope. The world continues to suffer from cruel

acts of terrorism, senseless crimes, violence and brutality. Bombardment, seizures and attacks continue to occur in different parts of the world and even in our land...All of us experience situations where we can easily be overwhelmed by the darkness and evil in our world and in our personal lives. But the birth of an innocent child in a small, poor kingdom in the Roman Empire, two thousand years ago, gives us hope”)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/65309->

[ASIA_PAKISTAN Archbishop Arshad God make us an instrument of your peace in Pakistan](http://www.fides.org/en/news/65309-)



Iraq: Mosul

Fr Najib Mikhael Moussa OP (aged 63, election as archbishop announced)

<http://www.aina.org/news/20181222200722.htm>



Nigeria: Benin City

Archbishop Augustine Obiora Akubeze (**UPDATE:** said "How do we celebrate Christ the King of Peace when some of our brothers and sisters in Northern Nigeria and, especially in the North Eastern part are constantly being attacked unprovoked? How do we celebrate when we have witnessed many mass burials of our people killed by Islamic fundamentalists? How do we celebrate when our Churches and Mosques come under attack; and soldiers are being killed? How do we celebrate under these conditions?...We celebrate Christmas because we do not place our hopes in mere mortals. Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth")

www.fides.org/en/news/65307-

[AFRICA_NIGERIA Despite violence we celebrate Christmas because we place our hope not in men but in the Lord](http://www.fides.org/en/news/65307-)



United Kingdom: Ilford town, Redbride borough, London

Hannah Chowdhry (Christmas nativity display vandalized with US\$1,012 in damages, statue of baby Jesus decapitated, local officials initially showed no interest but a Muslim policeman on his own initiative later promised an investigation)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/baby-jesus-beheading-in-borough-shocks-locals-but-cannot-destroy-christmas-1>

Sunday December 23, 2018



India: Kowad village, Kolhapur district, Maharashtra state

Sixteen Christians were injured by Hindu radicals who attacked a Christmas service, seven were hospitalized in intensive care, three underwent surgery

Milton Norenj (fellowship coordinator, described the attack “They barged into the worship hall and began to throw big stones and empty beer bottles at the worshippers”)

Pastor Bhimsen Ganpati Chavan (aged 36, husband of Swati Chavan, said “As soon as they entered, they began to shoot empty beer bottles and stones at the congregation. As they stepped forward, they attacked us with swords, iron rods and knives mercilessly, men and women alike...My mother had just ground fresh red pepper. She took handfuls of the powder and threw it on the faces of the attackers. It got into the eye of one of the attackers, and they began to withdraw and fled...I have been living here since the year 2000. We have faced some opposition before, but never an attack of this kind”)

Swati Chavan (wife of Pastor Bhimsen Ganpati Chavan, injured, hospitalized, released the next day, said “I was hit by an iron rod on my hand and received a head injury. They hit my back repeatedly with their fists, which caused swelling. I had to undergo a head scan to rule out clotting”)

Maruti Patil (aged 69, head injured, hand fractured, hospitalized)

Arjun Mutkekar (injured, hospitalized)

Vittal Jadhav (aged 48, father of Sachin Jadhav, shoulder fractured, finger partly amputated, lost significant amounts of blood)

Sachin Jadhav (aged 25, son of Vittal Jadhav, hand and elbow fractured, hip injured, hospitalized, underwent surgery for the fractures)

Sachin Bagde (aged 23, hospitalized, blood clot removed from his head)

Ashok Mane (hand fractured, head and neck injured)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/12/christians-hospitalized-after-terrifying-christmas-attacks-in-india/>



Lebanon: Beirut

Wilson Yonan (husband, father of two girls aged 3 and 6, Iraqi refugee, said "In my opinion, it won't be safe [to return to Iraq] in the near future. It needs a long time to be safe again. So that Christians can go back and live there again...We are going through some bad circumstances here because the living is really expensive. We're waiting to travel to one of the hosting countries, like Australia, Canada, the U.S.")

Issa (aged 15, Iraqi citizen, refugee since he was a small child, expressed hope to join two of his sisters in Canada "soon")

<http://www.aina.org/news/20181224014651.htm>



Nicaragua: Managua

Auxiliary Bishop Silvio Jose Baez Ortega (beaten by pro-government paramilitaries in [Diriamba](#) on [July 9, 2018](#); **UPDATE**: condemned the arrest of the owners and staff of a television station: "I know Miguel, we're friends and brothers in the faith. I have talked with Miguel Mora many times and have also prayed with him many times, and I know that he is a man of peace, that he is a man who respects human rights and who deeply loves his people. He is a good person, I could say the same of Lucía Pineda. I consider her a close friend...it is deplorable that in a society freedom of speech, freedom of the press, are trampled on. A society needs the truth to be communicated, accurate information, raising awareness through editorials. All of this contributes to a free and democratic society. Every trampling of the press is profoundly injurious to society")

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/nicaraguan-bishop-criticizes-arrest-of-journalists-16018>

Monday December 24, 2018



Germany: Garding, Nordfriesland district, Schleswig-Holstein

Pastor Thomas Knippenberg (church smeared with Islamic slogans by a Middle Eastern asylum seeker on [December 16, 2018](#), Star Singers [Christmas carolers] were also "molested" by the asylum seekers, said "Obviously, he has something against Christian Christmas"; **UPDATE**: hired security removed the returning asylum seeker, said "The precautions proved to be correct: the young man also showed up, but was successfully expelled...The people of Garding did not allow themselves to be deterred from coming to the service")

<http://zeitung.shz.de/holsteinischercourier/1971/article/828770/4/4/render/?token=c12a759a22557e7fb164518fe30aac83> - with translation

Tuesday December 25, 2018
Christmas – Western Calendar



Iran: Ahvaz

Shokoufeh Zanganeh (convert, sister of Shima Zanganeh, arrested on [December 2, 2018](#) and beaten under interrogation; bail approved on [December 12, 2018](#), the court refused to accept payment for the likely reason to allow time for the beatings to heal; **UPDATE:** released on bail of nearly US\$100,000)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=4152>



Algeria: Bouira

Rachid Ouali (convert, appeared in court on [October 9, 2018](#) after his wife accused him of attempting to convert her from Islam, denied the accusation, said his wife had said she was pressured by relatives into making the accusation; **UPDATE:** acquitted)

Ali Larchi (aged 67, husband, father of five, appeared in court on [October 9, 2018](#) after the wife of Rachid Ouali accused him of attempting to convert her from Islam, denied the accusation; **UPDATE:** acquitted along with his wife and daughter)

Mohand (acquitted)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/12/christians-in-algeria-acquitted-of-conversion-charge/>

Wednesday December 26, 2018



Iraq: Ankawa, Kurdistan

Archbishop Bashar Matti Warda CSSR (**UPDATE**: expressed thanks to the U.S. government for direct humanitarian aid: "This is the first administration we've seen that's close to us. We now have people on the ground from USAID [Unites States Agency for International Development] to follow up with the churches and everyone affected by the ISIL genocide")

<https://cruxnow.com/interviews/2018/12/26/iraqi-archbishop-voices-gratitude-to-trump-for-aid-to-nineveh-plains/>

Thursday December 27, 2018



Uzbekistan: Bukhara

Shukhrat Safarov (home raided by police without warrant, refused to go to the police station without a summons)

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



United Kingdom

Asher Samson (aged 41, Pakistani citizen, theology student, former assistant pastor, detained by immigration officials in [Birmingham](#) on [November 26, 2018](#) after he had been denied asylum despite threats of death and physical attacks in [Abbottabad, Pakistan in January 2007](#); **UPDATE**: released on bail)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/pak-christian-bailed-out-of-immigration-detention-after-christmas-alone-needs-asylum-in-the-uk>

Friday December 28, 2018



Colombia: Santa Rosa de Osos

Bishop Jorge Alberto Ossa Soto (**UPDATE:** reported that he had removed an unnamed priest from his assignment after two armed groups demanded payments in exchange for not killing him: "the diocesan Catholic Church will never give money to any outlawed group promoting violence. This would mean legitimizing actions that are in radical contradiction with the Gospel of Our Lord. Unfortunately Cuturu will remain without its priest. We do not want another dead among many other innocent people")

http://www.fides.org/en/news/65316-AMERICA_COLOMBIA_In_a_generalized_climate_of_fear_a_priest_threatened_with_death_by_an_armed_group

Saturday December 29, 2018



Laos: Nakanong village, Savannakhet province

Police twice raided a church and arrested a total of 7 Christians, destroyed the stage and sound system, cut off electricity, and seized cell phones

Akeo

Kert

Somwang

Boulai

Champee

Agae

Ayoung

http://www.fides.org/en/news/65328-ASIA_LAOS_Seven_Christians_arrested_during_a_Christmas_liturgy



Pakistan: Chak Jhumra district, Faisalabad

Saima (aged 24, daughter of Niaz and Rehana, cousin of Sinaha, domestic worker, arrested on false theft allegations after she informed her employer of her impending marriage, repeatedly detained and beaten, threatened with sexual assault by police who undressed in her presence)

Sinaha (aged 11, cousin of Saima, neice of Rehana, repeatedly detained and beaten, threatened with sexual assault by police who undressed in her presence)

Rehana (wife of Niaz, mother of Saima, aunt of Sinaha, beaten by police during the search of her home for the alleged stolen gold, repeatedly detained and beaten)

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



United Kingdom

Wilson Chowdhry (British Pakistani Christian Association; **UPDATE**: condemned internet threats by a Muslim taxi driver that he would forcibly sodomize Christian converts from Islam: "It beggars belief that Britain is willing to review global Christian persecution after Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt commissioned a report, yet we have failed to review very similar persecution within our own realm...Many commentators believe the report is a reaction to the international scorn placed on the UK after they failed to offer asylum to [Pakistani blasphemy victim] Asia Bibi, mainly due to the fact that Muslim radicalization in the UK has reached an all time high, despite attempts to curtail the growing social malaise...")

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-converts-threatened-with-sodomy-in-preston-uk-fails-to-recognise-growing-radicalisation-a>

Sunday December 30, 2018



Algeria: Ait-Jimaa village, Ait-Bouadou commune, Tizi Ouzou province, Kabylie region

Pastor Rabah Messaoudi (church ordered to close by a court ruling based on zoning, said he will appeal)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/01/authorities-order-closure-another-church-building-in-algeria/>

Monday December 31, 2018



India

Rev Vijayesh Lal (Religious Liberty Commission national director; **UPDATE**: reported to have said “We have documented many instances where the police, instead of protecting and safeguarding the religious freedom of Indian citizens, are actually stopping them from participating in worship. Even Christmas services were disrupted by policemen in uniform. Arbitrary arrests and detention of pastors and Christian leaders on the most frivolous of excuses seems to have become the order of the day”)

India: Kothagudem village, West Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh state

Pastor Shyam Sunder (temporary church wall destroyed, said “Within about 15 minutes, neighboring Hindu women barged inside and destroyed the wall, right in the presence of police. Yet we continued the prayer service and later filed a complaint in Ungaturu police station”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2018/12/christians-hospitalized-after-terrifying-christmas-attacks-in-india/>

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/01/hindu-version-of-feng-shui-leads-to-demolition-of-church-building-in-southern-india/>



Iran: Ahvaz

Shima Zanganeh (convert, sister of Shokoufeh Zanganeh, arrested on [December 2, 2018](#) and beaten under interrogation; bail approved on [December 12, 2018](#), the court refused to accept payment for the likely reason to allow time for the beatings to heal; **UPDATE**: released on bail of nearly US\$100,000)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=4152>



United States – Texas: Fort Worth

Pastor Evan D Risher (narrowly escaped a bullet fired into his church while standing at the pulpit, the bullet was likely fired as part of the New Year’s celebration)

<https://www.christianpost.com/us/bullet-narrowly-misses-pastor-during-watch-night-service-congregants-erupt-in-worship.html>

December 2018, date unknown



Indonesia: Magelang town and South Magelang sub-district, central Java

Rev Palti Panjaitan (**UPDATE**: condemned as intolerant the desecration of three Christian cemeteries in [late December 2018](#))

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/graves-with-crosses-desecrated-in-indonesia/84200>



China: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Dai Zhichao (**UPDATE**: detained)

Zhang Xinyue (wife of elder Li Yingqiang [who had been detained on [December 11, 2018](#)], mother of two, fled her home with her children for her native Gansu province after her husband's arrest)

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/02/spouses-child-of-arrested-house-church.html>

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/06/authorities-continue-to-harass-early.html>



United States

Rev Franklin Graham (son of the Rev Billy Graham; **UPDATE**: banned from Facebook for a 2016 post on same gender bathrooms, reinstated 24 hours later, said that he had been subjected to a “personal attack” but accepted Facebook's apology)

Date: [December 2018](#)

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/facebook-temporarily-bans-franklin-graham-over-2016-post-on-transgender-bat>

Today's Martyrs

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