

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – January 2019

Friday January 4, 2019



Ukraine

Patriarch Kirill aka Vladimir Mikhailovich Gundyayev (aged 72, Russian citizen; **UPDATE:** printed Christmas homily reported to have been seized by custom officials)

<http://orthochristian.com/118408.html>



United Kingdom: High Green, Sheffield

Fr Andrew Browne (received a letter threatening that his church would be firebombed if he did not stop services)

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

Saturday January 5, 2019



India

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

Shibu Thomas (**UPDATE:** wrote 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”)

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/politics-suspected-in-burning-of-marian-stature-in-india/84451>
<http://persecutionrelief.org/persecution-relief-annual-report-2018/>



Uzbekistan: Bukhara

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

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



Central African Republic: Bangui

Sr Luigia Coccia SMC (reported on the nighttime robbery of three missionary sisters)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/65344->
[AFRICA CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC Comboni Missionaries attacked and robbed in their community](#)

Sunday January 6, 2019



Bolivia: Trinidad

Fr Adam Bravo Mendoza (aged 78, stabbed in the abdomen during a robbery, hospitalized)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/65349->
[AMERICA BOLIVIA Priest stabbed by thieves who entered the parish](#)

Monday January 7, 2019



Pakistan: Chak Jhumra district, Faisalabad

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)

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



Turkmenistan: Danew, Lebap region

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

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



Netherlands

Kees van der Staaij (member of parliament, reported to have had a criminal complaint filed against him for signing the Nashville Statement in favor of traditional Christian marriage)

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/250-dutch-christians-sign-nashville-statement-prosecutors-to-decide-if-declaration-breaks-law.html>

Tuesday January 8, 2019



Vietnam: Loc Hung

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")

Fr Anton Le Ngoc Thanh CSSR (**UPDATE**: complained after a home owned by his order was demolished and 18 disabled war veterans were thrown out on the street - some without crutches and prosthetic limbs, religious statues were also seized, the veterans relocated to his monastery)

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")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/disabled-vietnam-veterans-evicted-from-church-run-home/84252>

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



India: Delhi

Dr Christo Thomas Philip (aged 36, U.S. citizen of Indian birth, deported on [April 26, 2016](#) for 'evangelical and subversive activities', had been forcibly separated from his wife and three children, spent 24 hours in detention in Turkey after deportation; **UPDATE**: High Court ruled he has a right to practice his faith by providing pro bono medical services)

Mrs Tehmina Arora (attorney; **UPDATE** said "This is a landmark judgment [that] protects the rights of foreign nationals working in Christian organizations to freely live out their faith in India")

A. C. Michael (**UPDATE**: said the Court held the government "had acted without any complaints of law and order problems")

Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX (**UPDATE**: said the ruling was an important precedent "If one's faith motivates one to volunteer for social service, one is free to do so. There is no law in India that stops people from doing so")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-court-rules-in-favor-of-christian-missionary/84265>
<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/02/christians-in-india/>



Netherlands: Free University, Amsterdam

Piet De Vries (theologian, signer of the Nashville Statement in favor of traditional Christian marriage, reported to have said “When the Nazi ideology was forced on, the churches were silent, now that gender ideology has begun, churches are silent too often, and we have to make ourselves heard”, following that statement was told by his university that ‘a line had been crossed’ and that he would be brought up on disciplinary charges, prosecutors have been considering criminally charging him and the other 250 Dutch signers)

<https://www.nu.nl/binnenland/5671832/vu-overweegt-stappen-tegen-bij-nashvilleverklaring-betrokken-docent.html> - with translation



United Kingdom: Oxford University

John Finnis (aged 88, Australian citizen, Professor Emeritus of Law and Legal Philosophy, reported to be the object of a student petition to prohibit him from teaching due to his Christian defense of natural law)

<https://www.oxfordstudent.com/2019/01/08/petition-launched-to-remove-law-professor-for-discriminatory-comments/>

Wednesday January 9, 2019



India: Narnepadu village, Muppalla Mandal, Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh state

Pastor Koteswara Rao (new church demolished because it did not conform to Hindu building principles)

Pastor Konda Lazarus (said “That morning the village president’s husband, also a local political leader, telephoned church pastor Koteswara Rao and asked him to be present at the meeting to discuss the matter, but Rao declined the invite as he was pre-occupied with his tasks for the day and said that he can be available the following day. This annoyed the leader, and he ordered the tribal men to demolish the church”)

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



Algeria: Ain-Soltane village, Ain-Defla province

Ahmed Beghal (aged 32, alias, convert, father of two girls, reported to have said that after his divorce “They took my two daughters to prevent me from seeing them – whenever I asked to see my daughters in accordance with the rights granted by the judge, my wife’s brothers created impediments and threatened me. This happened to me several times...Today I am far from my family, my wife, and my two daughters, without work or home. Such is the lot of a Muslim who converts to Christianity in Algeria today”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/01/christian-in-algeria/>

Thursday January 10, 2019



China: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Zha Changping (church elder, church raided and declared illegal by officials, books seized, expressed fears the church will be shut down)

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/01/church-declared-illegal-elder-fears-it.html>

Friday January 11, 2019



United States - New York: Albany

Bishop William H Love (aged 61, has been placed under a partial restriction by his presiding bishop after refusing to allow same sex marriages in his diocese, the refusal was sent in a letter to his diocese in November 2018 and stated that his church's 2018 General Convention requiring that all bishops approve same sex weddings was “in direct conflict and contradiction to God’s intent for the sacrament of marriage as revealed through Holy Scripture”)

https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2019/01/us-bishop-faces-partial-restriction-on-ministry-over-same-sex-marriage-stance.aspx?utm_source=Christian+Concern&utm_campaign=4f69a375f9-WN-20190118&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_9e164371ca-4f69a375f9-127548989

Saturday January 12, 2019



China

Hu Shigen (church elder, disappeared on [July 10, 2015](#); formally arrested in [Tianjin](#) on [January 8, 2016](#) on a charge of 'subversion of state power'; sentenced in [Beijing](#) to 7 years' imprisonment on [August 3, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: reported to be currently held in a prison hospital, forced to take unknown medications, health apparently not in decline but release on medical parole delayed until another prisoner has been prosecuted)

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/01/imprisoned-church-elders-family-hopes.html>



Egypt: Manshyet Zaafarana, Minya province

Bishop Makarios (**UPDATE**: issued a statement after police allowed Muslim protestors to close a house church and arrested two priests, later taking them to the police station in an animal control vehicle “This is not the first time a place used for worship by Copts in Minya is closed. The common factor among all closures, however, is that they were done to appease fundamentalists and extremists to the detriment of the Copts. It appears to indicate that extremists now hold the upper hand, and appeasing them is the easy way out of problems...This comes in the wake of declarations by the Grand Imam of al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmad al-Tayyeb in favor of churches, also positive talk and actions by President Abdel-Fattah a-Sisi that every Egyptian has the right to practice his or her religion of choice, and to Pope Tawadros’s efforts on that front”)

Andro (attorney, said “The police behaved by an offensive way. They behaved with the priests as [they would with] killers. How dare the police cuff the priests!”)

Fr Sami (said “What happened frightened us. I am a priest and it is possible for the police to cuff me if the extremist neighboring Muslims protest or gathered in front of my church. Things are getting worse, but let us pray to make God keep us in peace”)

Mina (photographer, said “We could build the biggest cathedral in the desert! Now let us close the churches which are in poor places, where the poor and weak people can pray. The hate has become more direct and clear towards Christians”)

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2019/01/13/minya-manshiyet-zaafarana-copts-attacked-church-closed/>

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2019/01/16/egyptian-authorities-close-four-churches/>

Sunday January 13, 2019



United States – Mississippi: Jackson

Pastor Anthony Finch Longino (aged 63, **shot dead** while opening his church for services in a robbery attempt)

<http://www.wlbt.com/2019/01/14/year-old-arrested-charged-after-pastor-gunned-down-sunday-morning/>

Tuesday January 15, 2019



India: Ranapur, Madhya Pradesh state

Fr Prakash Damor (arrested on charges of abetting a suicide, the teen girl reportedly left a note accusing him of pressuring her into conversion and marriage)

Fr Rocky Shah (diocesan spokesman, **UPDATE**: said the diocese believes Fr Prakash Damor was framed and that "He will be exonerated in a court of law")

Fr Julian Toppo (attorney, said police had not produced the alleged suicide note and that "As per the tribal culture, a boy and girl from the Damor community never marry as they are considered brother and sister. It can never happen")

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/catholic-priest-arrested-over-indian-teens-suicide/84342>



Pakistan: Kasur district

Pervaiz Masih (husband of Zarina Bibi, father of Amir, Prem, Anmol, and Sanam, construction material supplier, accused of blasphemy by a business rival in [Kasur district](#), arrested on [September 1, 2015](#); released on bail on [October 10, 2015](#); **UPDATE**: acquitted)

Sanam (aged 3, child of Pervaiz Masih and Zarina Bibi; **UPDATE**: reported to have **drowned in a well while her parents were in police custody, anonymous callers said she had been killed in retribution**)

Zarina Bibi (wife of Pervaiz Masih, mother of Amir, Prem, Anmol, and Sanam, family has received threats after her husband's September 1, 2015 arrest; **UPDATE**: reported to have been beaten by enemies of her husband, has since been unable to walk upright)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-man-accused-of-blasphemy-due-to-business-rivalry-set-free-after-3-5-years>

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/65419->

[ASIA PAKISTAN A Christian acquitted after a trial for blasphemy](#)



Uzbekistan: Bukhara

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)

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



Turkmenistan: Dashoguz

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

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



Iran: Tehran

Two Christians were ordered by a court to renounce their faith to avoid prison, both refused

Fatimeh Bakherti (aged 37, convert, home raided by police during a [May 25, 2017](#) worship service, several Christians arrested; sentenced in [Tehran](#) on [September 22, 2018](#) to 12 months' imprisonment for 'spreading propaganda against the regime'; **UPDATE:** refused to renounce her faith)

Saheb Fadaie (convert, home raided by VEVAK agents on [February 16, 2015](#), religious items seized, warned on [February 17, 2015](#) to leave the country; arrested on [May 13, 2016](#); charged on [September 10, 2016](#) with acting against national security and consumption of communion wine; called into court in [Rasht](#) on [June 14, 2017](#) on charges of 'actions against national security, were accused of accepting a half million pounds from the British government, told they would receive a verdict in 20 days, a hardline judge then joined the hearings and said 'Christians make foolish claims'; sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment on [June 24, 2017](#); arrested in [Rasht](#) on [July 24, 2018](#), transferred to [Evin Prison in Teheran](#); sentenced in [Tehran](#) on [September 22, 2018](#) to 18 months' imprisonment for 'spreading propaganda against the regime', sentence to run concurrently with his current imprisonment; **UPDATE:** refused to renounce his faith)

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/iranian-christians-refuse-renounce-christian-faith-freedom-from-prison.html>



United States – Virginia: Springfield

Karen Pence (aged 52, wife of Vice President Michael Pence, criticized by two media outlets for returning to a part time art teaching position at a Christian school, the school was falsely accused in the headlines of 'barring' homosexual students)

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/15/politics/karen-pence-art-teacher/index.html>

Wednesday January 16, 2019



United Kingdom

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)

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

Thursday January 17, 2019



Ukraine: Dzhankoi. Crimea

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)

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

Friday January 18, 2019



Egypt: on the road to al-Arish, Sinai

Adeeb Nakhla Yassa (aged 55, abducted from a microbus)

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2019/01/18/coptic-man-abducted-by-sinai-islamists/>
<http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=2320&A=37306>

Saturday January 19, 2019



Myanmar: Rakhine state

Pastor Tun Nu (aged 41, convert, husband, father of three, abducted from his home by 5 armed men)

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

Sunday January 20, 2019



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)

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



United States – Kentucky: Covington

Nick Sandmann (parochial high school student, received death threats along with his family after returning home two days earlier from the March for Life in Washington DC, the threats originated from a video in which he was confronted by a Native American protestor at the Lincoln Memorial and from which several media outlets characterized his actions as racist, wrote in a statement "I was not intentionally making faces at the protestor. I did smile at one point because I wanted him to know that I was not going to become angry, intimidated or be provoked into a larger confrontation. I am a faithful Christian and practicing Catholic, and I always try to live up to the ideals my faith teaches me - to remain respectful of others, and to take no action that would lead to conflict or violence")

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/20/us/covington-kentucky-student-statement/index.html>

Monday January 21, 2019



China: Hebei province

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

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



Turkey

Gar0 Paylan (aged 47, Member of Parliament, beaten in Parliament in [Ankara](#) on [May 2, 2016](#) for refusing to vote to remove parliamentary immunity from some fellow members, called an 'Armenian bastard'; temporarily banned from Parliament after saying on [January 13, 2017](#) "Between 1913 and 1923, we lost four peoples: Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, and Jews were lost. They were either exposed to major massacres and genocides or subjected to population exchanges and exiles...We [Christians] used to account for 40 percent [of the country's population]. Now we are barely one out of a 1,000. It seems likely that something happened to us. I call it genocide. You can call it whatever you want. The Armenian people know very well what was done to them...I know very well what was done to my ancestors, my grandfather. To you, I am one of the 'leftovers of the sword'", the speech was deleted from the official record; beaten in Parliament on [March 6, 2018](#) for stating that Turkey was perpetrating "ethnic cleansing" of Kurds in Syria; **UPDATE:** prosecutors have been reported to have filed a motion to strip him of his parliamentary immunity so that he can be prosecuted for his January 2017 speech)

<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/13569/unjust-turkey>

<https://armenianweekly.com/2017/01/14/paylan-suspended-for-referring-to-genocide/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gar0_Paylan



Egypt: Cairo

Al Hadi Izzalden Shareef Osman (aged 40, convert, Sudanese citizen, fled [Sudan](#) in [April 2014](#) after police accused him of apostasy and repeatedly arrested and tortured him, later said "One time they told me they were going to kill me if I do not return back to Islam. I fled Sudan for my life after I learned that my life was in danger"; apartment burglarized on [August 15, 2018](#), passport stolen; **UPDATE:** reported to have received death threats, in hiding, said "My life is in great danger as Egypt is becoming an insecure place for me")

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/01/facing-torture-death-in-sudan-convert-flees-to-egypt-and-more-death-threats/>

Tuesday January 22, 2019



India: Kolhapur, Maharashtra state

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")

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

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

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

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



Uzbekistan: Yashnobod district, Tashkent

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")

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



United States – California: Redding

Robert Whitman (aged 67, husband of Mindy Whitman, retired pastor, **stabbed to death** by a young man he had been counselling)

Mindy Whitman (widow of Robert Whitman, stabbed in the face, survived)

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/redding/obituary.aspx?n=robert-d-whitman&pid=191410350>

Wednesday January 23, 2019



India: Tripura state

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")

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



Iran: Esfahan

Sina Moloudian (aged 26, convert, arrested without warrant in his home, Bibles and CDs seized)

Iran: Shiraz

Ismail Maghrebi-Nejad (aged 65, convert of 40 years, widower of Mahvash Mahmoudian, arrested, charged with 'propaganda against the state and insulting the sacred Iranian establishment')

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

<https://www.meconcern.org/2019/11/11/iran-hearing-for-ismaeil-maghrebinejad/>

Thursday January 24, 2019



Indonesia: Deepok Prison

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")

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



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)

China: 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)

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

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



Pakistan

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")

http://www.fides.org/en/news/65441-ASIA_PAKISTAN_No_WYD_for_young_Pakistanis_blocked_in_their_homeland_by_the_Immigration_Office



Tajikistan

Daniil Islamov (aged 20, conscientious objector, forcibly conscripted in [April 2017](#) despite serious health issues; sentenced in [Qurghonteppa, Khatlon region](#) on [October 13, 2017](#) to six months' imprisonment, appeal underway; released in [October 2018](#); **UPDATE:** filed a complaint against the government with the UN Human Rights Committee)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2463

Friday January 25, 2019



United Kingdom

Asher Samson (aged 41, Pakistani refugee since [2004](#) after being beaten and threatened with death, reported to have been 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")

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

Saturday January 26, 2019



Nigeria: Garin Dogo, Taraba state

Rev Mark Jack (abducted, **killed**)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/06/fulani-herdsmen-in-nigeria-continue-campaign-for-territory-for-their-cattle-and-islam/>

Sunday January 27, 2019



Philippines: Jolo, Sulu province

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

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

Leo C Herbolario (**killed**)

Reynaldo Pescadera (**killed**)

Oscar E Asares (wounded)

Arturo E Ablay (wounded)

Vincent C Unding (wounded)

Roderick S Hoe (wounded)

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

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)

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

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

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

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

Source: Columbia Magazine, March 2019, pg 6



India: Chhattisgarh

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

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

Monday January 28, 2019



Tajikistan: Khujand

Shamil Rasulovich Khakimov (aged 68, widower, pensioner, harassed with repeated phone calls from police after his number was found on the phone of a detained Christian)

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2463

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2484

Tuesday January 29, 2019



China: Chengdu, Sichuan province

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)

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



Pakistan: Islamabad

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)

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



Iran: Rasht

Hossein Kadivar aka Elisha (arrested)

Khalil Dehghanpour (arrested)

<http://www.aina.org/news/20190313234623.htm>

Thursday January 31, 2019



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”)

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

January 2019, date unknown

Today's Martyrs

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Fairfield CT 06825-2400**

<http://todaysmartyrs.org/events/>

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