

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Events – July 2019

**Monday July 1, 2019**



### **Iran: Bushehr**

**Eight Christian converts were arrested by Ministry of Intelligence MOIS agents in the early morning, all but one were placed in solitary and denied access to attorneys**

Fatemeh Talebi (aged 27, wife of Pooriya Peyma)

Habib Heydari (aged 38)

Khatoon Fatolahzadeh (aged 61, mother of Sam Khosravi and Sasan Khosravi, released)

Marjan Falahi (aged 33, wife of Sasan Khosravi)

Maryam Falahi (aged 35, wife of Sam Khosravi)

Pooriya Peyma (aged 27, husband of Fatemeh Talebi)

Sam Khosravi (aged 36, husband of Maryam Falahi, son of Khatoon Fatolahzadeh, brother of Sasan Khosravi)

Sasan Khosravi (aged 35, husband of Marjan Falahi, son of Khatoon Fatolahzadeh, brother of Sam Khosravi)

<https://articleeighteen.com/news/860/>



### **United Kingdom: Trent College**

Rev Dr Bernard Randall (aged 46, school chaplain, discovered that his school had reported him to the police as a possible terrorism risk after he gave a homily telling students that they were free to respectfully disagree on Christian principles with the school's new LGBT curricula, later stated: "I was terrified. I did not sleep. What was I supposed to tell my family? Being reported as a potential terrorist, extremist and a danger to children are arguably the worst crimes you could be accused of...When I found out that they had reported me without telling me, my mind was blown trying to comprehend it. I had gone

to such lengths in the sermon to stress that we must respect one another no matter what, even people we disagree with”)

<https://christianconcern.com/news/school-chaplain-reported-to-terrorist-watchdog-for-sermon-on-identity-politics/>

**Tuesday July 2, 2019**



### **India**

Dr John Dayal (**UPDATE:** commented on released statistics that show the highest rate of unemployment is among Christian men "Prime Minister Narendra Modi was against giving the rights and status of 'recognized caste' to Christian Dalits and excluded the community from scholarship...[In the collective imagination, the Christian community in India remains] the owner of rich plantations in Kerala or is identified with the nurses and working women in the cities of Goa and Mumbai. No one remembers and recognizes the Dalits, tribals, miners")

[http://www.fides.org/en/news/66286-ASIA\\_INDIA\\_Unemployment\\_rate\\_among\\_Christian\\_men\\_is\\_the\\_highest\\_in\\_the\\_nation](http://www.fides.org/en/news/66286-ASIA_INDIA_Unemployment_rate_among_Christian_men_is_the_highest_in_the_nation)



### **Pakistan: Lahore**

Benish Imran (aged 14, daughter of Imran Masih, abducted and forced into an Islamic marriage)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-girls-continue-to-be-abducted.-The-latest-case-involves-a-14-year-old-in-Lahore-converted-under-threat-47615.html>

**Wednesday July 3, 2019**



### **Uganda: Kampala**

Br Norbert Emmanuel Mugarura (aged 46, **killed** by a university student)

[http://www.fides.org/en/news/66338-AFRICA\\_UGANDA\\_Catholic\\_priest\\_killed](http://www.fides.org/en/news/66338-AFRICA_UGANDA_Catholic_priest_killed)



### **United Kingdom**

Felix Ngole (aged 41, reported on [February 29, 2016](#) to have been expelled from graduate school at Sheffield University after he posted a defense of traditional Christian morality on Facebook; dismissal from graduate school upheld in court on [October 27, 2017](#), the court ruled that the dismissal was extreme but the law gave him no protection; **UPDATE**: the Court of Appeals overturned the previous court decision and stated the grounds for expulsion were wrongful, said “This is great news, not only for me and my family, but for everyone who cares about freedom of speech, especially for those working in or studying for caring professions. As Christians we are called to care for and serve others, and publicly and privately we must be free to express our beliefs, especially when asked, without fear of losing our livelihoods...I have suffered tremendously as a result of how I was treated by the University of Sheffield and I feel that four years of my life have been taken away from me. Despite all this, I feel overwhelming joy that what I have lost will be so much gain to Christians today and in the future as a result of this important ruling for freedom”)

<https://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/freedom/felix-ngole-wins-appeal-in-victory-for-christian-freedoms>

<https://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/freedom/a-victory-for-christians-everywhere>

**Thursday July 4, 2019**



### **Congo, Democratic Republic: Ouesso**

Fr Paul Mbon (abducted on [June 29, 2019](#); **UPDATE**: **decomposing body found with wounds, buried**)

[http://www.fides.org/en/news/66312-AFRICA\\_CONGO\\_The\\_body\\_of\\_a\\_priest\\_kidnapped\\_at\\_the\\_end\\_of\\_June\\_has\\_been\\_found](http://www.fides.org/en/news/66312-AFRICA_CONGO_The_body_of_a_priest_kidnapped_at_the_end_of_June_has_been_found)



### **United Kingdom: Westminster**

Bishop Angaelos (UK resident, Egyptian national, **UPDATE**: said "When we advocate, it must be about them [the martyrs] and their suffering, not us. We must not patronize the communities there. Let us not export our own visions of who they must be, but honor who they are. We need to listen to them. Labelling martyrs as victims dishonors what they are doing. They don't see themselves as victims, but witnesses. We should recognize their vulnerability, but vulnerability is different to victimhood...We are all completely fed by the media. It is important for the media to be responsible in how they report persecution")

[http://www.fides.org/en/news/66337-AFRICA\\_EGYPT\\_Coptic\\_Archbishop\\_Angaelos\\_martyrs\\_are\\_not\\_victims\\_but\\_witnesses](http://www.fides.org/en/news/66337-AFRICA_EGYPT_Coptic_Archbishop_Angaelos_martyrs_are_not_victims_but_witnesses)

**Sunday July 7, 2019**



### **China: Chengdu, Sichuan province**

Gou Zhongcan (disappeared from his home on [March 15, 2019](#), the day after police attempted to inspect it; **UPDATE**: reported to still be in detention in a police basement because he has refused to give police his computer and cell phone passwords, has been singing hymns)

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/07/early-rain-covenant-church-affiliate.html>



### **Russia: Verkhnebakanskiy, outside Novorossiysk**

Presbyter Yevgeny Kokora (church service interrupted by police on [April 6, 2019](#); **UPDATE**: reported on the closure of a house church by the local government: "In Russia, at the behest of the state, most communities in the Evangelical churches gather in private households, since it is impossible to obtain official permission to build a house of worship")

Pastor Vitaly Bak (filed suit against the local government's order to cease religious activities at his house church on [May 8, 2019](#); suit rejected without consideration on [June 5, 2019](#); **UPDATE**: house church closed by the local government)

[http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2505](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2505)



**Nigeria: Kperie village, Kwall district, Bassa county, Plateau state**

Di Zere (aged 63, **killed** by Fulani Muslims while sleeping in his home, 10-year old daughter shot but survived)

Ezekiel Audu (aged 25, **killed** by Fulani Muslims while riding his motorcycle)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/07/pregnant-mother-among-five-christians-slain-in-north-central-nigeria/>



**Venezuela: Caracas**

Bishop Jose Luis Azuaje Ayala (**UPDATE**: denounced government mismanagement of the economy, and complicity in violence and the flight of 11% of the population from the country)

[http://www.fides.org/en/news/66345-AMERICA\\_VENEZUELA\\_The\\_Church\\_will\\_continue\\_to\\_remain\\_on\\_the\\_side\\_of\\_the\\_people\\_mainly\\_alongside\\_those\\_who\\_suffer\\_the\\_most](http://www.fides.org/en/news/66345-AMERICA_VENEZUELA_The_Church_will_continue_to_remain_on_the_side_of_the_people_mainly_alongside_those_who_suffer_the_most)

**Monday July 8, 2019**



**China: Chengdu, Sichuan province**

**A Christian family had been reported to have fled the country to Taiwan, had been harassed and pressured to denounce Pastor Wang Yi**

Liao Qiang (father of Ren Ruiting)

Ren Ruiting (daughter of Liao Qiang)

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/07/early-rain-covenant-church-members.html>



### **Thailand: Bangkok**

#### **Immigration officials detained 48 Pakistani Christian refugees, 14 had UN refugee status**

John family (3 members)

Tariq family (6 members)

Anil family (6 members)

Moosa family (3 members)

Joseph family (5 members)

George Naz

Maryam family (5 members)

Sam family (5 members)

Tipu family (5 members)

Sohail family (4 Members)

David Daniel (aged 8 months, detained)

Mrs Arshad Masih (detained, released after discovered to have a valid visa)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/harsh-raid-on-pakistani-christian-asylum-seekers-illustrates-thai-government-hatred-for-the-other-fa>



### **Syria: al-Yaqoubiyeh village, Idlib province**

Suzan Der Kirkour (aged 60, retired gardener and Arabic teacher, church volunteer, abducted by jihadists, tortured and repeatedly raped for nine hours, **stoned to death**)

<https://www.persecution.org/2019/07/17/christian-woman-stoned-death-syria/>



### **Cuba**

Ruth Rigal (aged 13, daughter of Pastor Ramon Rigal and Ayda Rigal, sister of Daniel Rigal, now resides with her father's grandmother while her parents are in prison for homeschooling her and her brother, said "It all started when I was in fourth grade, I suffered bullying at school because I was a Christian. I was kicked in the belly, so he [my father] decided to get me out of school. They began to chase us, to threaten us, saying

that if we did not go to school, they would take us to the house of children without parental protection, and they were going to put my parents in jail”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/09/christian-pastoral-couple-in-cuba-imprisoned-for-homeschooling-children/>

**Tuesday July 9, 2019**



### **Iran**

Fatemeh "Mary" Mohammadi (aged 20, convert, arrested in [November 2017](#) while attending an underground house church; sentenced in [April 2018](#) to 6 months' imprisonment, released with time served; **UPDATE**: assaulted on a bus by a woman who objected to way she wore her headscarf, arrested by police when she attempted to file a complaint against the woman and held until 3 AM)

<https://articleeighteen.com/news/4242/>

**Wednesday July 10, 2019**



### **Pakistan: Faisalabad**

Saima Sardar (aged 30, nurse, fiancée, **shot dead** in her hospital by an 'ex-boyfriend' because she would not convert to Islam)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Nurse-killed-by-ex-boyfriend-in-Faisalabad-because-she-refused-to-convert-to-Islam-47543.html>

**Thursday July 11, 2019**



## Thailand: Bangkok

Faraz Pervaiz (Pakistani refugee, fled Pakistan in 2014 along with 10 family members after blasphemy accusations were made against them; a bounty of US\$62,000 was placed on his head in 2018; another bounty of US\$124,000 was placed in January 2019; **UPDATE:** his address was posted online, stirring more death threats, said “This huge [prize] amount can easily attract any jihadis to come and deliver me to hell, according to their faith. This is fear. I don’t want to be killed by jihadis. For them, we are infidels, we are Christians. There’s too many organizations who just want to terminate me because of my faith in Jesus and we are risking our lives. We are risking our lives every day...Despite all this, the UNHCR is not helping us. They are saying, ‘It is better if you cross the border and you go to a neighboring country’...They [the UNHCR] are resettling all the Muslims [who are refugees] because the people who are the translators for UNHCR, they [are Muslims who] are misquoting our statements. They are misrepresenting to the interviewer...I want the American nation to wake up for Christians. Our only hope is America. I don’t know why our voice is not heard by the American nation. We pray for them...”)

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/pakistani-christian-refugee-in-hiding-over-blasphemy-charge-calls-on-trump-un-to-help.html>



## India

Fr Cedric Prakash SJ (**UPDATE:** reported to have condemned the growing number of lynchings against Muslims and Christians "The tragedy of lynching in India today is that they apparently have the official sanction by the government of the day. In fact, some of the central [federal] ministers have publicly anointed and garlanded those responsible for these bloody murders")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Fr-Cedric-Prakash-calls-lynching-a-crime-of-terrorism-47512.html>



## Pakistan: Faisalabad

Badal Masih (aged 11, son of Shareefan Bibi and Shahzad Masih, scrapyard worker, **beaten to death** by his employer when he gave notice to end his employment)

Shareefan Bibi (mother of Badal Masih, witnessed her son's beating, said "I am very poor, but I have faith in God. I will fight for justice till my last breath")

Shahzad Masih (father of Badal Masih, unemployed drug addict)



<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/An-11-year-old-Christian-child-killed-by-his-boss-over-a-paltry-sum-of-money-in-Faisalabad-47520.html>



### **Uganda: Kirinda, Wakiso district**

Sharifa Kasozi Nakamate (aged 49, convert, widow, received threats by text after her husband was buried in a Christian ceremony, said “I realized my life was now in danger, so I sought refuge at the church...I never expected such thing to happen to me. I have lost everything that I did in developing the homestead for more than 30 years of our married life, only to lose everything just like that because of following Jesus...Two days ago a Muslim from my home village came and bought items from me. I am afraid that she will go back and spread news of my new place of residence. This new place is not safe for me”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/07/christian-widow-driven-from-home-in-central-uganda/>



### **Venezuela: Caracas**

**The bishops of the country published a pastoral exhortation stating "There are reasonable grounds to believe that serious violations of economic and social rights have been committed...for over a decade, Venezuela has adopted and implemented a series of laws, policies and practices that have limited democratic space...the State has systematically denied the rights of victims of violations of human rights to truth, justice and reparation...The immense majority of the inhabitants of the country reject this situation because it is in open contradiction with the traditional civil, cultural and religious values that have characterized our people...Venezuelans continue to bet on a pluralist and peaceful civil coexistence in justice, freedom and solidarity, as established by the constitution...political regimes, ideologies, organizations or institutions must be at the service of fundamental principles. This requires a decisive promotion and defense of human rights and a permanent denunciation of abuses and violations of these rights, from the moment that all abuses of this dignity are abuses for God himself...The ethical and spiritual renewal of the country is everyone's task...in the face of the reality of an illegitimate and failed government, Venezuela cries out for a change of direction, a return to the constitution...This change requires the exit of those who exercise power illegitimately and elections, as soon as possible, of a new President of the Republic"**

Archbishop Jesus Gonzalez De Zarate (aged 58, **UPDATE**: presented the pastoral exhortation)

Bishop Jorge Anibal Quintero (presented the pastoral exhortation)

Bishop Jose Manuel Romero (presented the pastoral exhortation)

[http://www.fides.org/en/news/66352-AMERICA\\_VENEZUELA\\_The\\_Bishops\\_Venezuela\\_cries\\_out\\_for\\_a\\_change\\_of\\_direction\\_a\\_return\\_to\\_the\\_constitution](http://www.fides.org/en/news/66352-AMERICA_VENEZUELA_The_Bishops_Venezuela_cries_out_for_a_change_of_direction_a_return_to_the_constitution)

**Friday July 12, 2019**



### **India: Kurla, Mumbai**

Fr N Robert D'Souza (secondary school principal, school invaded by Congress Party agents protesting the denial of admission to some prospective students, said "The group organized a morcha [protest] without a police permit. For unknown reasons, the police allowed the crowd to enter my office...I want to point out that some students were excluded for lack of places. We have considered the proportion of the student-teacher in accordance with government regulations")

<http://asianews.it/news-en/Catholic-school-in-Mumbai-receives-threats,-told-to-enrol-more-students-47533.html>



### **United Kingdom**

Dr David Mackereth (aged 56, reported on [July 8, 2018](#) to have been fired from the National Health Service for claiming that gender has a biological basis; **UPDATE**: reported to have attended a court hearing, told that his Christian beliefs were not legitimate because other Christians did not hold them)

Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chief Executive of Christian Concerns, **UPDATE**: said "I have been in court with Dr David Mackereth this week...What really upset me though, as a member of the Church of England's General Synod, was that the people who sacked Dr Mackereth for his Christian beliefs relied on the Church of England's position to justify their actions. I have spent a lot of time trying to tell Christians, of all denominations, that our public witness to the Truth – all aspects of it – is vital. When we are on TV, radio, or even in court we are often told that our brand of Christianity is not what lots of other Christians think. But, this week, for the first time, what the Church of England says was used as evidence against a Christian in court. For me it was another stark reminder of the damage caused by the Church of England's abandonment of truth...The evidence deployed against Dr Mackereth included reference to the House of Bishops Guidance for welcoming transgender people, and the Pastoral Guidance for use in conjunction with the Affirmation of Baptismal Faith in the context of gender transition. I criticized these

moves towards acceptance of transgenderism at the time...What is important for Dr Mackereth's case is that the Pastoral Guidance says that transgender people should be referred to using their chosen name and pronoun. The guidance is therefore that Christians should not tell the truth about the biological sex of a transgender person. I think that, at the very least, in a civilized and fair society all people should accept this is, at least, a freedom of conscience issue...A member of the tribunal, asking for a clarification on the Christian view of gender, asked Dr Mackereth about the position of the Church of England as shown in the evidence presented. Dr Mackereth had to explain that he does not agree with the position of the Church of England and that he is not a member of it. He said that the position of the Church of England was evidence that cultural Marxism had entered the Church...If he had been a member of the Church of England this would have seriously weakened his position. The muddled position of the established Church on this issue fundamentally weakens the witness of Christians who want to speak and witness to the foundations of Christian truth")

<https://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/church-and-state/cofe-teaching-used-as-evidence-against-christian-in-court>

**Saturday July 13, 2019**



### **Eritrea: Asmara**

Fr Mussie Zerai (**UPDATE**: spoke after the government closed 29 Catholic hospitals and clinics "The Catholic Church in Eritrea has always collaborated and cooperated with the institutions. With regards to healthcare, the quality of the service offered by our facilities was considered by the government itself as an excellence of the Country. Indeed, we do not understand on what basis the government has made this decision, our hospitals treated two hundred thousand people a year, about 6% of the entire Eritrean population...Already last year, another eight hospitals had been closed without apparently plausible reasons. This represents yet another violation of freedom of choice, as well as damage to the poorest population that cannot afford to pay medical expenses for treatment...The authorities recognize only four religions: Orthodox Christianity, the Roman Catholic Church, the evangelical-Lutheran Church and Sunni Islam. Any other activity carried out outside our places of worship is subject to strict control by the security forces. Furthermore, since 2001 the government has also prevented us from printing all our newspapers...In Asmara, about a month ago, more than 140 people belonging to the Pentecostal Christian Churches were arrested by the police while they were gathered in prayer...The restrictions and violations of fundamental rights and the limited opportunities for work and education push thousands of Eritreans every year to try to escape from the Country...Many prisoners have disappeared. Their families do not know

exactly where they are and, in many cases, they have no news. The United Nations estimates that at least 10,000 people are involved")

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/66325->

[AFRICA ERITREA Father Zerai The international community must not be silent i  
n the face of the tragedy of the Eritrean people](http://www.fides.org/en/news/66325-)

**Sunday July 14, 2019**



**Nigeria: Tafigana village, Plateau state**

Thomas Wollo (aged 46, father of Ngwe Thomas Wollo, **killed** by Fulani Muslims while returning home from church)

Ngwe Thomas Wollo (aged 7, son of Thomas Wollo, **killed**)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/07/pregnant-mother-among-five-christians-slain-in-north-central-nigeria/>



**Cuba: Havana**

**Two Christian leaders were prevented from leaving the country to attend a religious freedom event in Washington DC**

Rev Moises de Prada Esquivel

Rev Alida Leon Baez

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/07/officials-in-cuba-forbid-church-leaders-to-attend-religious-freedom-event/>

**Monday July 15, 2019**



**Pakistan**

Farazana (aged 21, daughter of Ilyas Masih, sister of Serish, abducted and gang raped on [December 3, 2014](#) in [Jaranwala district](#), laughingly told by her attackers that hers' was the fate of 'poor Christian girls', released half naked; moved to a safe house, worked as a domestic in [Faisalabad](#), reported on [June 28, 2016](#) to have been falsely accused of theft, accusations likely resulted after the discovery of funds donated to help the family relocate; **UPDATE:** married Shahid Masih, said "Today I start my new life free of the despair that once consumed me. The bond of marriage is a sacred one and I thank God for his work in me that has led to this day and a much brighter future. Shahid is a wonderful man and I now dedicate my life to him and to God our protector - may He bless our union")

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/rape-survivor-starts-new-life-with-husband-after-god-releases-her-from-depression>



**Nigeria: Ancha village, Plateau state**

Margaret Wakili (aged 27, mother of two, expectant mother, **killed** by Fulani Muslims)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/07/pregnant-mother-among-five-christians-slain-in-north-central-nigeria/>

**Tuesday July 16, 2019**



**Philippines: Manila**

Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Soncuaco Pabillo (**UPDATE:** welcomed the UN vote to begin a human rights investigation of the government's war on drugs)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Filipino-Church-supports-the-UN-investigation-into-the-deaths-in-the-war-on-drugs-47537.html>



**Pakistan: Sargodha**

Laiba Shahzad (aged 15, daughter of Venus Angela, abducted as she arrived at school, forced into an Islamic marriage)

Venus Angela (aged 38, mother of Laiba Shahzad, abandoned by her husband, beautician, reported her daughter's abduction to police)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/15-year-old-christian-girl-abducted-and-forced-into-muslim-marriage>



### **Congo, Democratic Republic**

Fr Pierre Akilimali (abducted in [Bunyuka, North-Kivu province](#) on July 17, 2017 by persons unknown; **UPDATE**: still missing)

Fr Charles Kipasa (abducted in [Bunyuka, North-Kivu province](#) on July 17, 2017 by persons unknown; **UPDATE**: still missing)

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/66387->  
[AFRICA DR CONGO The diocese of Butembo Beni remembers the two priests kidnapped two years ago of whom there is no news](#)



### **Cuba**

Rev Dariel Llanes (passport reported to have not renewed)

Rev Alain Toledano Valiente (husband of Marilyn Alayo Correa; church and home in [Santiago de Cuba](#) were demolished by state security on [February 5, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: reported to have been prevented from leaving the country)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/07/officials-in-cuba-forbid-church-leaders-to-attend-religious-freedom-event/>

**Wednesday July 17, 2019**



### **China: Shangqui, Henan province**

Rev Song Yongsheng (husband, chairman of the local government sanctioned church, **committed suicide by jumping from a building**, left a note stating he hoped his 'martyrdom' would draw attention to government persecution)

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/07/christian-leader-commits-suicide-over.html>  
<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Exhausted-by-Party-control,-official-Christian-pastor-commits-suicide-47572.html>



### **Iraq: Basra**

Archbishop Habib Hormouz al-Naufali (**UPDATE**: stated "[We Christians] must be equal in dignity and rights with other Iraqi citizens. Too often we have seen how Christians are treated and considered second-class citizens. Sometimes even as infidels. For this reason it is necessary to prevent the formation of a second class citizenship, especially for Christians and other minorities that are affected and relegated to the margins by the Constitution and a sectarian culture...[the nation] is in pieces [due to] widespread and visible corruption")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/-Archbishop-of-Basra:-the-Pope's-visit,-an-opportunity-for-rebirth-for-Christians-and-Iraq-47544.html>



### **Nigeria: on the Numeh-Nenwe Highway, Nkanu East county, Enugu state**

Fr Ikechukwu Ilo (shot by Fulani Muslims, hospitalized, said "As we drove towards the village, the Fulani killer herdsmen, who spoke both in English and Fulani languages, opened fire, trying to force us to stop. Seeing that we were not ready to cave into their intimidation, they started raining bullets on our vehicle at close range, and in the process, shot me at my ankle and shoulder while the other victim was shot in her leg and waist")

Chika Egbo (shot by Fulani Muslims, hospitalized)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/07/pregnant-mother-among-five-christians-slain-in-north-central-nigeria/>

**Thursday July 18, 2019**



### **Pakistan: Dostpur village, Punjab province**

## **Twenty-four Christian families have continued a legal battle to evict a Muslim land mafia from their property**

Mehak (reported to have been 'mocked' by a Muslim on her way to school, family filed a complaint, Muslims in retaliation destroyed two Christian homes)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-owned-lands-in-Punjab-held-by-Muslim-mafia-for-30-years-47560.html>



## **Eritrea: July 18, 2019 [the day after Christian former prisoner Helen Berhane met U.S. President Donald Trump]**

Patriarch Abune Antonios (aged 90, disappeared in 2007, reportedly detained by the government in a darkened room, diabetic condition requires medical attention; allowed to attend a July 16, 2017 public Divine Liturgy at the Asmara cathedral, returned to house arrest; **UPDATE:** 'excommunicated' by a group of bishops who are loyal to the government)

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/coe/eritrea-orthodox-patriarch-antonios-expelled-for-heresy/>



## **Nigeria: Damasak, Borno state**

Grace Taku (aid worker, captured in an attack on a convoy by ISWAP)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2020/01/boko-haram-executes-brethren-pastor-in-northeast-nigeria/>



## **United Kingdom**

Lord David Alton (**UPDATE:** criticized Parliament for voting to legalize abortion and same sex marriage in Northern Ireland: “We know that the last vote to be held in the United Kingdom in any of the jurisdictions was in Northern Ireland, where they said they didn’t want these laws...But they have been imposed by the metropolitan classes at Westminster, over and above the beliefs of the people of Northern Ireland...To me, it feels more like ideology-driven colonialism of the worst kind. I have been contacted by people in Northern Ireland who are resolutely appalled by the way they feel they have been treated. 100% of those voting to change its laws represented constituencies from outside Northern Ireland and 100% of Northern Ireland Members of Parliament who were present voted against it. How can the British Parliament treat part of the United Kingdom



with such utter contempt?...Regardless of what one thinks about abortion, there is no human right to abortion. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has 30 articles, none of which suggests that there is a human right to abortion”, added that the effort to legalize abortion in Northern Ireland is “[part of a broad] liberal intolerance [to impose secular values that] gets pretty close to being a form of persecution”)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/lord-alton-abortion-law-imposed-on-n-ireland-by-uk-parliament-39096>



### **United States – Tennessee: Hohenwald**

Pastor James Mitchell (church spray painted with Satanic and anti-Semitic slurs, said "God forgives us, so we forgive them")

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/tennessee-church-vandalized-with-racial-slurs-graphic-images>



### **Nicaragua: Terrabona**

Bishop Rolando Jose Alvarez Lagos (**UPDATE**: attacked by an armed group, escaped)

[http://www.fides.org/en/news/66397-AMERICA\\_NICARAGUA\\_Mgr\\_Rolando\\_Alvarez\\_walking\\_together\\_praying\\_for\\_Nicaragua\\_and\\_seeking\\_the\\_truth](http://www.fides.org/en/news/66397-AMERICA_NICARAGUA_Mgr_Rolando_Alvarez_walking_together_praying_for_Nicaragua_and_seeking_the_truth)

**Friday July 19, 2019**



### **Philippines**

**Sedition and other charges were brought against Christian leaders, the vice president, and 35 opposition leaders**

Fr Albert Alejo SJ (**UPDATE**: charged)

Br Armin Luistro (charged)

Fr Flavie Villanueva SVD (**UPDATE**: charged)

Bishop Honesto Ongtioco (charged)

Bishop Pablo Virgilio David (**UPDATE**: charged)

Fr Robert Reyes (**UPDATE**: charged, said "It's a pathetic attempt to distract people from the serious issue of the shift to totalitarianism...a wake-up call for the undecided and the indifferent")

Archbishop Socrates Villegas (**UPDATE**: charged)

Bishop Teodoro Bacani Jr (**UPDATE**: charged)

Fr Jerome Secillano (**UPDATE**: said "The move is obviously meant to scare the hell out of these churchmen and eventually silence them")

Bishop Romulo Valles (wrote that the charges were "beyond belief" added the clergymen's "sincerity, decency, respectfulness and love for our country and our people are beyond doubt")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Sedition-charges-against-four-bishops-and-three-priests-are-beyond-belief-47589.html>

<https://www.ucanews.com/news/sedition-charges-against-philippine-bishops-priests/85674>



### **China: Hong Kong**

#### **Two Christian leaders signed a letter calling for the withdrawal of the extradition bill and an end to violence**

Cardinal John Tong Hon (**UPDATE**)

Rev Eric So Shing-yit (Christian Council president)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-leaders-call-for-an-end-to-violence-and-a-return-to-dialogue-47564.html>



### **India**

Sajan K George (Global Council of Indian Christians president; **UPDATE**: applauded the government's new support programs for religious minorities but decried the continued exclusion of Dalit [untouchable] Christians: "The caste system is not just a religious system...If a crime is committed against Hindu, Sikh or Buddhist Dalits, they can turn to the law. The same does not happen for Christian Dalits, who are not considered among the disadvantaged castes. Therefore, they are exposed to forms of oppression, exploitation and atrocities")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/New-minority-programme-leaves-out-Dalit-Christians,-says-Sajan-K-George-47566.html>



### **Pakistan: Lahore**

Benish Imran (aged 14, daughter of Imran Masih, abducted on [July 2, 2019](#) and forced into an Islamic marriage; **UPDATE**: appeared in court and told the judge she was 19 and had willingly converted, the judge did not order her return to her family despite a birth certificate that proved the illegality of the marriage)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-girls-continue-to-be-abducted.-The-latest-case-involves-a-14-year-old-in-Lahore-converted-under-threat-47615.html>



### **Iraq: Basra**

Archbishop Habib Hormouz al-Naufali (**UPDATE**: expressed hope that a church closed in 1981 during the war with Iran would be completely reopened, it has been reopened "only as a sanctuary")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Archbishop-of-Basra:-the-reopening-of-the-Church-of-the-Virgin-Mary-a-sign-of-hope-47569.html>

**Saturday July 20, 2019**



### **Iran**

Sevada Aghasar (aged 30, arrested on [August 21, 2013](#); released from prison on [March 2, 2014](#), never charged; reported on [May 1, 2015](#) to have been sentenced to five years' imprisonment for "action against national security through collusion and gathering", the gathering in question was when he met with Ebrahim Firouzi to say goodbye before the beginning of Firouzi's original prison term; began serving his prison term on [July 4, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: conditionally released from prison)

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=4207>

**Sunday July 21, 2019**



**Pakistan**

Nabeel Masih (aged 19, arrested on blasphemy charges in [Dina Nath village, Kasur district, Punjab province](#) on [September 18, 2016](#) after accused of posting a photo of the Kabaa in Mecca on his Facebook page near a photo of a pig, family fled their home; denied bail in [Kasur](#) on [February 7, 2017](#); sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment on [May 17, 2018](#); **UPDATE:** still imprisoned, searching for an attorney to file an appeal)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-man-convicted-of-blasphemy-as-a-teenager>

**Monday July 22, 2019**



**China: Shenzhen, Guangdong province**

Cheng Yuan (husband of Shi Minglei, father of a three year old daughter, arrested on a charge of 'inciting subversion of state power')

Shi Minglei (wife of Cheng Yuan, mother of a three year old daughter, charged with 'inciting subversion of state power', placed under 'residential surveillance', later wrote “I am a Christian, and God is with me, which enables me to calm down even in the midst of this horrible event. I am not subject to anyone. I believe that Cheng Yuan, my husband, loves mercy and justice and pursues social justice and righteousness, and he doesn’t deserve the treatment [he has received]. In regards to me, the charge is absolutely made up”)

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/07/mother-recounts-horrible-threats-to.html>

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2021/03/shi-minglei-wife-of-cheng-yuan-human.html>

<https://chinachange.org/2021/03/09/fighting-terror-with-faith-the-road-walked-by-a-human-rights-defenders-wife/>



**Pakistan: Sargodha**

Laiba Shahzad (aged 15, daughter of Venus Angela, abducted as she arrived at school on [July 16, 2019](#), forced into an Islamic marriage; **UPDATE**: still held captive in a forced marriage)

Venus Angela (aged 38, mother of Laiba Shahzad, abandoned by her husband, beautician, reported her daughter's abduction to police on [July 16, 2019](#); **UPDATE**: presented with a Muslim marriage certificate of her daughter, later went with police to the mosque where the wedding took place, the imam cancelled the marriage certificate upon her display of her daughter's true birth certificate)

<https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/15-year-old-christian-girl-abducted-and-forced-into-muslim-marriage>

**Tuesday July 23, 2019**



**Russia: Verkhnebakanskiy, outside Novorossiysk**

Presbyter Yury Korniyenko (church service interrupted by police on [April 6, 2019](#), later charged with illegal missionary activity; convicted, fined US\$154 on [June 13, 2019](#); **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

[http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2505](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2505)

**Wednesday July 24, 2019**



**China: Chengdu, Sichuan province**

Pastor Wang Yi (husband of Jiang Rong, son of Chen Yaxue, detained on [December 10, 2018](#), charged with 'inciting subversion of state power'; **UPDATE**: still jailed, reported to have been charged with 'illegal business activities')

Jiang Rong (wife of Pastor Wang Yi; detained on [December 10, 2018](#); **UPDATE**: reported to have been released on bail after six months of 'residential surveillance' in an unofficial jail)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/07/china-adds-charge-against-pastor-coerces-christians-to-accuse-him-falsely-sources-say/>

**Thursday July 25, 2019**



**China: Pu'er, Yunnan province**

Rev John Cao San Qiang (husband of Jamie Powell, father of Amos and Ben, 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:** sentence upheld on appeal)

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/07/the-court-sustains-previous-sentence-of.html>



**Vietnam: Nam Ha prison, Ha Nam province**

Peter Ho Duc Hoa (aged 45, convicted on [January 9, 2013](#) for 'carrying out activities aimed at overthrowing the people's administration', sentenced to 13 years imprisonment; **UPDATE:** still imprisoned, has been denied medical care for fatigue and abdominal and spinal pain)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Free-H%E1%BB%93-%C4%90%E1%BB%A9c-H%C3%B2a:-Hanoi-denies-medical-care-to-jailed-Catholic-activist-47746.html>



**India: Rajasthan state**

Sajan K George (Global Council of Indian Christians president, **UPDATE:** responded to accusations by state legislator Vasudev Devnani that Christians run a 'conversion factory': "No conversion activity has taken place. Whatever has to do with the small Christian community is viewed with suspicion. Pentecostals are also poor: how can they convert someone by offering money, when they themselves do not have money? It is important to point out that the infamous anti-conversion law exists in Rajasthan, an instrument of harassment and intimidation against innocent Pentecostal Christians. Moreover, India is a secular democratic country with constitutional guarantees. Why then do Christians suffer discrimination and are arrested only for practicing their faith? The government census shows a decline in the Christian population, so the existence of a 'conversion factory' is a regrettable and outrageously false accusation")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Rajasthan-politician-accuses-Christians-of-running-a-conversion-factory-47629.html>



## Syria

**UPDATE: The U.S. State Department's Rewards for Justice has announced a US\$5 million reward for information on the abductions of still-missing prelates**

Bishop Boulos al-Yazigi

Fr Isaac Moawad

Fr Michel Kayyal

Fr Paolo Dall'Oglio SJ

Bishop Yuhanna Ibrahim

[https://rewardsforjustice.net/english/isis\\_kidnapping\\_networks.html](https://rewardsforjustice.net/english/isis_kidnapping_networks.html)

**Friday July 26, 2019**



## Philippines: Negros Oriental province

Bishop Geraldo Alminaza (**UPDATE:** announced that church bells would ring every day at 8 AM until the murders of farmers and human rights activists stops)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Church-bells-toll-against-extrajudicial-killings-in-Negros-Occidental-47614.html>



## India: Assam

**Church leaders in the country's Northeast accused the Federal government of undermining missionaries**

Allen Brooks (**UPDATE:** said “Not a single word about the significant contributions of Christian missionaries in providing and making quality education accessible to maximum number

of people has been mentioned in the entire voluminous draft New Education Policy [NEP] 2019...If implemented, the NEP-2019 will ensure that no one from the lower ranks will ever be able to go beyond their assigned level")

<http://mattersindia.com/2019/08/design-to-undermine-role-of-missionaries-ne-church-leaders/>



### **United Kingdom: London**

Oluwole Ilesanmi (aged 64, street preacher, retired dentist, arrested by police on [February 23, 2019](#) after a Muslim complaint, told by police "No one wants to hear that", taken over 5 miles away, 'de-arrested', and left in an isolated location; **UPDATE**: awarded US\$2,786 for wrongful arrest, said "When I came to the UK it was a free Christian country, but now preachers like me are being arrested for speaking the truth. Christians and freedom of speech must be protected, especially by the government and police. I hope this recognition of fault can lead to more Christians being protected and the police gaining greater insight into what it means to lawfully proclaim the Word of God on our streets")

<https://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/freedom-of-speech/met-police-pays-damages-nigerian-street-preacher-wrongful-arrest>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7293257/Police-arrest-preacher-64-grab-Bible-promoting-Christianity.html>

**Saturday July 27, 2019**



### **India: New Delhi**

Bijay Kumar Sunseth (husband of Pabitra Sanseth, father of six, farmer, construction contractor; **UPDATE**: released on bail by order of the Supreme Court, said he had raised his education to the 10th grade while in prison "But the biggest gain was in my faith. I was a nominal Christian, knowing about Jesus but did not know Him. In the jail, I got to know the Lord closely. I read the complete Bible five times and started to understand the importance of the Word of God. I had the privilege of leading church in prison as well and thank God for it")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Orissa,-second-of-seven-Christians-imprisoned-for-pogroms-released-on-bail-47594.html>

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/08/second-wrongly-convicted-christian-released-in-kandhamal-india-case-counts-cost/>





**Russia: Moscow**

Fr Ioann Guaita (sheltered 100 protesting youths in his church after they fled an attack by OMON riot police)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Moscow,-Church-of-Saints-Cosmas-and-Damian,-a-refuge-for-opposition-protesters-47624.html>

**Sunday July 28, 2019**



**India: Kashiram Colony, Kanpur district, Uttar Pradesh state**

Rev Raju Prasad (attacked by Bajrang Dal members for saying prayers over a sick elderly woman, the woman and her daughter denied they had been converted)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Accusations-of-conversions-trigger-new-anti-Christian-violence-in-Uttar-Pradesh-47640.html>



**Poland: Szczecin**

Fr Aleksander Ziejewski (aged 68, beaten by robbers in his church sacristy along with two others)

<https://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2019/07/30/polish-priest-attacked-in-sacristy-during-apparent-robbery/>

**Monday July 29, 2019**



## **Syria: Aleppo**

Archbishop Antoine Audo SJ (**UPDATE**: marked the sixth anniversary of the disappearance of Fr Paolo Dall'Oglio)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Six-years-after-Fr-DallOglios-disappearance,-Syrian-Christians-ask-for-prayers-and-the-truth-47631.html>

**Tuesday July 30, 2019**



## **India: Bihar state**

Antu Das (reported to have been accused by Hindu extremists of being a Muslim [and thus threatened with violence])

## **India: Jamui, Bihar state**

Dinesh Das (reported to have been beaten by police along with his wife, falsely charged with a crime)

## **India: Maheshpur village, Bhagalpur district, Bihar state**

Krishna Kumar Suman (reported to have been said "The village council summons one family at a time to a public meeting where they force us to drink the water and food offered to the goddess. If we resist, they would beat us up. They don't care if it's a woman or minor or child...The villagers have been warned from socializing with us, and if they ever speak to us, the village council would impose a penalty. It is very difficult to survive there. They stopped the supply of water and electricity to our agriculture fields and have made life terrible for us. My elderly parents, who were highly respected once, endure humiliation daily for not giving up our faith...Youth members of the families have moved to different cities for work. Now they are troubling our elderly parents and women by digging holes in front of our homes. These holes would cause water clogging in rain, making it difficult for senior citizens to walk on a path full of puddles")

<https://morningstarnews.org/2019/07/reporting-persecution-to-police-a-vanishing-option-for-christians-in-india/>

**Wednesday July 31, 2019**



## **Vietnam**

Anne Nguyen Dang Minh Man (aged 34, convert, arrested in [August 2011](#) for photographing an anti-government demonstration; sentenced in [Nghe An](#) on [January 9, 2012](#) to 8 years' imprisonment followed by 5 years' house arrest; **UPDATE**: to be released from prison on August 2, 2019 and begin house arrest)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/After-eight-years-of-strict-prison,-Catholic-activist-to-purge-five-more-years-under-house-arrest-47648.html>



## **Nigeria: Abuja**

Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah (**UPDATE**: said "The blanket and continued hate speeches against the Fulani herdsmen as being currently done on the social media, constitute a threat to the unity and peace of Nigeria", added that the country was on a precipice)

[http://www.fides.org/en/news/66440-AFRICA\\_NIGERIA\\_Stop\\_inciting\\_hatred\\_against\\_the\\_Fulani\\_that\\_could\\_lead\\_to\\_a\\_civil\\_war\\_and\\_genocide\\_warns\\_Mgr\\_Kukah](http://www.fides.org/en/news/66440-AFRICA_NIGERIA_Stop_inciting_hatred_against_the_Fulani_that_could_lead_to_a_civil_war_and_genocide_warns_Mgr_Kukah)



## **Canada**

John-Henry Westen (LifeSiteNews web site Editor-in-Chief, reported that after a week of operation Apple News had deleted his news organization presumably for its positions favoring traditional Christian morality, said he would appeal)

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/breaking-apple-news-bans-lifesite-without-warning-shows-intolerance>

**July 2019, date unknown**



## **China: Wuhan, Hubei province**

**Authorities arrested three women on fraud charges for collecting church offerings, all face up to 10 years' imprisonment**

Pastor Hao Zhiwei (widow of Pastor Zhang, mother of two underage children)

Hong Ying

Wan Yuanxiang

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2020/01/christians-imprisoned-for-collecting.html>

<https://www.chinaaid.org/2020/01/si-wei-jiang-church-standing-by-chimney.html>

## **Today's Martyrs**

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

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