

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – July 2020

Wednesday July 1, 2020



Iran: Tehran

Masoumeh Ghasemi (aged 51, convert, mother of Somayeh 'Sonia' Sadegh, arrested without charge at Evin Prison after inquiring about her daughter's condition)

<https://mohabatnews.com/?p=40019>

Thursday July 2, 2020



India: Dassmora village, Azamgarh district, Uttar Pradesh state

Rev Vikas Gupta (aged 21, abducted, dragged into a Hindu temple and forced to bow before the idols)

<http://asianews.it/news-en/Christian-families-attacked,-threatened-and-forced-to-flee-their-village-50548.html>



Iran: Malayer, Hamedan province

Sohrab (convert, arrested on [June 30, 2020](#); **UPDATE**: released on US\$1,500 bail)

Ebrahim (convert, arrested on [June 30, 2020](#); **UPDATE**: released on US\$1,500 bail)

Yasser (convert, arrested on [June 30, 2020](#); **UPDATE**: released on US\$1,500 bail)

<https://www.meconcern.org/2020/07/06/iran-coordinated-arrests-of-christians/>

Friday July 3, 2020



India: Dassmora village, Azamgarh district, Uttar Pradesh state

Rev Vikas Gupta (aged 21, abducted on [July 2, 2020](#), dragged into a Hindu temple and forced to bow before the idols; **UPDATE**: home ransacked, threatened with death, wife threatened with rape, two other Christian families suffered the same)

<http://asianews.it/news-en/Christian-families-attacked,-threatened-and-forced-to-flee-their-village-50548.html>

Saturday July 4, 2020



India: Dassmora village, Azamgarh district, Uttar Pradesh state

Rev Vikas Gupta (aged 21, abducted on [July 2, 2020](#), dragged into a Hindu temple and forced to bow before the idols; home ransacked on [July 3, 2020](#), threatened with death, wife threatened with rape, two other Christian families suffered the same; **UPDATE**: church attacked)

<http://asianews.it/news-en/Christian-families-attacked,-threatened-and-forced-to-flee-their-village-50548.html>

Sunday July 5, 2020



India: Kulgada village, Latehar district, Jharkhand state

Pastor Arsel Tirkey (accused of perpetrating forced conversions)

Ranjit Bhuyan (convert, refused to recant under pressure from the village council)

Lallu Bhuiyan (husband of Anju Devi, same account, threatened with eviction and disinheritance)

Anju Devi (wife of Lallu Bhuiyan, same account)

Jogindra Bhuiyan (same account)

Rajendra Bhuiyan (same account)

Situ Bhuiyan (same account)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Hindu-extremists-use-false-evidence-against-Christian-pastor-50678.html>



Iran: Shiraz

Ismail Maghrebi-Nejad (aged 65, convert of 40 years, widower of Mahvash Mahmoudian, arrested on [January 23, 2019](#), charged with 'propaganda against the state' and 'insulting the sacred Iranian establishment'; accused by a judge on [October 22, 2019](#) of apostasy, bail increased to US\$9,000; sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment on the 'insulting the sacred Iranian establishment' charge on [January 11, 2020](#), other charges still pending; sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment in [February 2020](#) on a charge of 'membership of a group hostile to the regime'; sentenced to an additional year's imprisonment in [May 2020](#) on the 'propaganda against the state' charge; **UPDATE:** the 3 years sentence was overturned on appeal, the 1 year sentence was reduced to 8 months, the 2 years sentence was upheld despite his membership in a different church)

<https://www.meconcern.org/2020/07/16/iran-christian-convert-prison-sentences-appealed/>

Wednesday July 8, 2020



Montenegro: Berane

Fr Stefan Milovanovic (husband, father, Serbian citizen, ordered to leave the country for alleged quarantine violations despite the fact that his wife is a citizen, denied he had violated any regulations)

<https://orthochristian.com/132481.html>

Thursday July 9, 2020



Iran: Tehran

Somayeh 'Sonia' Sadegh (aged 36, convert, daughter of Masoumeh Ghasemi, sports coach, gym owner, arrested on [June 30, 2020](#); **UPDATE**: released on US\$22,700 bail)

Masoumeh Ghasemi (aged 51, convert, mother of Somayeh 'Sonia' Sadegh, arrested without charge at Evin Prison on [July 1, 2020](#) after inquiring about her daughter's condition; **UPDATE**: released on US\$14,000 bail, has refused to contact the media due to intelligence agencies' threats)

<https://mohabatnews.com/?p=39961>

<https://mohabatnews.com/?p=40019>



United States - New York: Brooklyn

Fr James Kuroly (secondary school principal, condemned the desecration of a statue to Mary the mother of Jesus as “an act of hatred”)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/statues-of-mary-vandalized-in-weekend-of-church-attacks-24779>

Friday July 10, 2020



China: Zhengding, Hebei province

Bishop Julius Jia Zhiguio (aged 85, underground bishop, released from prison in [2010](#); **UPDATE**: reported to have refused to sign an agreement with the government that would allow the reopening of churches after the COVID-19 pandemic on the condition that no children would be allowed to attend, has been threatened with seizure of his orphanage if he does not sign)

<http://asianews.it/news-en/Msgr.-Jia-Zhiguio:-The-Church-must-be-open-to-everyone,-even-those-under-the-age-of-18-50549.html>



India: Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra state

Munshi Dev Tado (aged 28, convert, husband, father of three daughters and a son, missionary, former Maoist Naxalite guerrilla, **shot dead** likely by his former Naxalite comrades)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Young-Indian-missionary-killed-by-a-member-of-a-Maoist-group-50568.html>

<https://news.barnabasfund.org/Indian-Christian-missionary-who-shared-Gospel-despite-Naxalites--threats-found-shot-dead/>



United States – Tennessee: Chattanooga

Fr Manuel Perez (found that a statue to Mary the mother of Jesus had been desecrated)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/statue-of-virgin-mary-beheaded-at-tennessee-catholic-parish-74407>

Saturday July 11, 2020



United States – Florida: Ocala

Fr Patrick J. O'Doherty (church attacked by an arsonist while parishioners were gathering for Mass, no one was injured)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/florida-man-lights-catholic-church-on-fire-with-parishioners-inside-81945>

Monday July 13, 2020



Bangladesh: Dhaka

Archbishop Moses M Costa CSC (aged 70, said of the [September 29-30, 2012](#) anti-Buddhist violence in [Chittagong](#) "We Christians could become the next targets"; stated on [October 5, 2012](#) that hundreds of Christian children are taken from their families, Islamized in madrassas, and often sold abroad as slaves, and that 105 such children escaped their captors in the last few months alone; said in [Chittagong](#) on [September 12, 2017](#) "Last year a thousand Bengalis attacked a parish in Chittagong, because many miles away two business men had been killed and we Christians were accused of having had something to do with it"; condemned violence on [August 19, 2018](#) near [Chittagong](#) in which 7 tribal hills people were shot dead; hospitalized in [Dhaka](#) on [June 13, 2020](#) in critical condition with a SARS-CoV-2 infection; **UPDATE**: **died**)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Covid-19:-Abp.-Moses-Costa-of-Chittagong-has-died-50561.html>



Ukraine: Zolochev

Fr Maxim Joenko (home reported to have been defaced with Nazi graffiti by nationalists)

<https://spzh.news/ru/news/73045-dom-kirika-upc-v-zolocheve-raspisali-oskorblenijami-i-nacistskoj-simvolikoj>

Tuesday July 14, 2020



Pakistan

Samson Salamat (chairman of the interfaith Rawadari Tehreek [Movement for Tolerance]; **UPDATE**: reported to have criticized an Islamic cleric who called Christians the worst infidels in the world and that they should be expelled from the country to the U.S. where they could shine President Trump's shoes)

[http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Lahore-interfaith-leader-slams-hate-campaign-against-minorities-\(videos\)-50579.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Lahore-interfaith-leader-slams-hate-campaign-against-minorities-(videos)-50579.html)

Wednesday July 15, 2020



United States – Colorado: Colorado Springs

Fr David Price (cathedral rector, condemned the desecration of a statue to Mary the mother of Jesus)

United States – Florida: Miami

Archbishop Thomas Wenski (condemned the desecration of a statue of Jesus, asked police to treat it as a hate crime)

Fr Edvaldo DaSilva (said the statue of Jesus was overturned after the pedestal screws had been tampered with)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/catholic-church-statues-continue-to-be-attacked-in-florida-and-colorado-38551>

Thursday July 16, 2020



Lebanon

Patriarch Beshara Boutros al-Rai (**UPDATE**: said "Lebanon is a meeting place for religions and sects that live orderly according to the constitution, the National Pact and the Taef Accord. What's new today is that there is some sort of hegemony by Hezbollah over the government and Lebanese politics, due to engaging in Arab and international wars and events that Lebanon does not want in the first place...Everyone [internationally] says that they cannot help Lebanon because, by helping Lebanon, they would help Hezbollah which controls [the nation]")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Card-Ra%C3%AF-slams-Hezbollah's-'hegemony'--50598.html>



Egypt

Ranya Abd al-Masih (aged 39, wife, mother of three, secondary school English teacher, disappeared [north of Cairo](#) on [April 22, 2020](#), later reappeared in a video tearfully claiming to have converted to Islam and rejecting her family, statement appeared coerced and possibly under the influence of drugs; **UPDATE**: returned to her family, denied that she had converted to Islam, thanked her bishop for his support)

<https://www.coptsunited.com/Details.php?I=2706&A=42126>



United States – Connecticut: New Haven

Fr John Paul Walker OP (church vandalized with Satanic graffiti)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/satanic-symbol-painted-at-church-in-parish-where-knights-of-columbus-began-17819>

Saturday July 18, 2020



France: Nantes

Fr Hubert Champenois (cathedral rector, called on the Catholics of the diocese to unite in prayer after the cathedral was heavily damaged in fire, arson was suspected because the fire started in three separate locations)

<https://catholicherald.co.uk/french-cathedral-burns-in-suspected-arson-attack/>

Sunday July 19, 2020



India: Redhadi village, Khunti district, Jharkhand state

Suman Munda (aged 25, convert of six years, falsely accused of witchcraft, **killed**)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Hindu-extremists-use-false-evidence-against-Christian-pastor-50678.html>



Saint Lucia: Pierrot village, Vieux-Fort

Deacon Harris Wilfred (church attacked by a man with Molotov cocktails who yelled Rastafarian slogans, exterior crucifix burned but largely undamaged, said “The guy came inside the church where I was standing saying 'fire burn, fire burn'...What I had to do was to hold a cross in front of me and tell him, 'Look, go back, go back’”, the man was restrained by parishioners and arrested)

Archbishop Robert Rivas (called for forgiveness and dialog with Rastafarians, accused of insulting Rastafarians by Rastafarian leaders)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/arson-at-caribbean-church-sparks-tension-between-catholic-and-rastafarian-leaders-31821>

Monday July 20, 2020



Philippines

Bishop Pablo Virgilio David (**UPDATE**: signed a letter as acting president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines: "A few days ago, we received a letter from His Eminence, Charles Cardinal Maung Bo...It was an ardent request for prayers for Hong Kong, on account of the signing into law of a new National Security Act...Apparently, the Chinese government assures the people of Hong Kong that they have nothing to be afraid of, as long as 'they don’t get involved in any activity that threatens national security.' Why does this sound eerily familiar to us Filipinos? Because we are in a similar situation...we also asked him [Cdl. Bo] to pray for the Philippines and explained why we are as seriously in need of prayers as the people of Hong Kong. Like them, we are also alarmed about the recent signing into law of the Anti-Terror Act of 2020...We are still in disbelief about the manner in which the contentious Anti-Terror Bill was fast-tracked and approved in both Houses of Congress...In particular, the legal experts and constitutionalists in our country are seriously concerned that this newly signed law has many elements that are 'oppressive and inconsistent with our Constitution.' They have pointed out convincingly how this new law poses a 'serious threat to the fundamental freedoms of all peaceful Filipinos'...")

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Filipino-bishops:-Like-Hong-Kong,-we-too-are-sliding-towards-dictatorship-50615.html>



United Kingdom

Dr Michael Davidson (former homosexual, under professional investigation and suspension as of [January 22, 2013](#) for his views on homosexuality; professional membership has been revoked as of [October 17, 2013](#), can no longer practice psychotherapy; **UPDATE:** current leader of the non-profit Christian ministry Core Issues Trust, bank accounts closed by Barclay's bank, Twitter and PayPal accounts closed earlier in the month, subjected to rape and death threats, said “The term ‘conversion therapy’ is being used as a catch-all phrase designed to discredit any help that people may provide to those with mixed sexual attractions who prefer their heterosexual side. This could include a listening ear, formal counselling or spiritual support...This amounts to mob rule. If a social media mob can cause a bank to close the account of a Christian ministry, then there is nowhere for Biblically faithful Christian ministries to go...The UK is now becoming an intensely intolerant country. Key service providers have cancelled their services to a Christian charity because of a social media mob”)

Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chief Executive of Christian Concerns, **UPDATE:** said “If it is CIT [Core Issues Trust] first, it will be churches next...If banks and other service providers start to placate social media campaigns by unilaterally terminating their accounts then the UK will be a very difficult place for Biblically faithful Christian ministries...We call on the government to put a halt to this kind of mob rule and to assert the rights of Biblically-faithful Christian organizations to be serviced by businesses without facing such intolerant discrimination”)

<https://christianconcern.com/cccases/core-issues-trust/>



United States – Texas: El Paso

Pastor Charles Nieman (church vandalized, 27 windows and 7 doors shattered)

<https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/2020/07/22/abundant-living-faith-center-west-church-vandalized-el-paso/5488234002/>

Tuesday July 21, 2020



China

Teresa (reported to have said that the ban on the religious education of minors has been 'systematically applied' and all repressive policies "have not been loosened, in reality they have been further tightened" since the Sino-Vatican agreement of 2018)

[http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Two-years-after-China-Vatican-agreement.-Repression-against-minors-and-churches-\(II\)-50620.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Two-years-after-China-Vatican-agreement.-Repression-against-minors-and-churches-(II)-50620.html)

Wednesday July 22, 2020



Venezuela: San Carlos, Cojedes state

Bishop Polito Rodriguez Mendez (reported to have said after a study showed that 96% of households were in poverty and 79% in extreme poverty after years of Marxist rule: “The plagues of Egypt are nothing compared to what we are suffering here...Venezuela has entered a time of famine. Every day things get worse. The economy is paralyzed, there is no industry nor work in agriculture. The Gross Domestic Product is below zero. The most affected are the poorest who have nothing to eat and no chance to lead a decent life. We need help from abroad to give them something to eat at least once a week...A family earns about three or four dollars a month. A carton of eggs costs two dollars and a kilo of cheese costs three dollars. We’ve been under the lockdown for more than two months, and everything has become very expensive. It is impossible to go on like this...priests have nothing to eat...The other day, I met with a seminarian who was crying. His parents had been let go, they have nothing to live on and can’t send their son anything. We’re living on God's providence...We don’t want outside intervention, especially armed intervention, but we have to ask for international humanitarian and health care aid because if not, we have no other alternative: either COVID kills us or hunger kills us”)

<https://acninternational.org/bishop-of-san-carlos-the-plagues-of-egypt-are-nothing-compared-to-what-venezuela-is-going-through-now/>

Saturday July 25, 2020



Bangladesh

Fr Eugene Eduard Homrich CSC (aged 92, U.S. citizen, Bangladeshi resident since 1955, left the country on [August 16, 2016](#) due to health concerns and death threats from Islamic radicals; **UPDATE: died** from complications of a SARS-COV-2 infection, eulogized by Christians and Muslims for his ministry including his sheltering of hundreds in his church during the war for independence from Pakistan)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christians-and-Muslims-mourn-the-death-of-Fr-Homrich,-a-great-missionary-among-the-Garos-50665.html>



United States – California: San Francisco

Grace Andonian (school principal, school vandalized with Azeri and anti-Armenian graffiti, said "As I came today at 8 this morning, I saw the graffiti on the walls. I was shocked. I was appalled. The community is in shock. Our families, students, alumni, they were all in shock to see these hate messages on the wall")

<https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/SF-Armenian-school-community-center-vandalized-15434127.php>

July 2020, date unknown



Uganda: Budaca Town

Jalilu Kamutono (aged 20, convert, cousin of Ahmad Waisana, beaten by his family in **late July 2020** for converting to Christianity, rescued by passing Christians before he could be set on fire, hospitalized)

Ahmad Waisana (aged 23, convert, cousin of Jalilu Kamutono, same account)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2020/08/christian-dies-cousin-in-critical-condition-after-assault-in-uganda/>

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