

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – April 2021

Thursday April 1, 2021



Sri Lanka

Bishop Rayappu Joseph (aged 80, **UPDATE: died of natural causes**)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mgr-Rayappu-Joseph,-advocate-for-peace-and-defender-of-Tamils,-has-died-52782.html>

Saturday April 3, 2021



Egypt: Minya province

Mary Sa'd (mother of two including Karas, **killed with a machete** by a Muslim in a random street attack, four year old daughter escaped)

Karas (aged 6, son of Mary Sa'd, **killed**)

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2021/04/07/muslim-man-butchers-coptic-christian-mother-and-child/>

Sunday April 4, 2021

Easter [Pascha] – Western Calendar



India: Mandsaur district, Madhya Pradesh state

Rajendra Dwivedi (Archdiocesan Education Commission coordinator, arrested for a blog post comparing the salvation of Jesus to Hindu scriptures)

Fr Maria Stephen (**UPDATE:** said “This is a new sign of religious intolerance, contrary to the values of the constitution such as freedom of expression and the right to bear witness to one's religion...More and more arrests of this kind are taking place after the latest laws, and fundamentalists are taking full advantage of them”)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Protestant-pastor-arrested-at-Easter-under-Madhya-Pradeshs-anti-conversion-law--52806.html>



Uganda: Bukoba B village, Mayuge district

Salimati Naibira (aged 37, convert from Islam, church attacked by her husband and his relatives, abducted and driven to a forest, beaten, stabbed, and left for dead, found hours later and hospitalized)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2021/04/mother-of-seven-wounded-loses-family-for-becoming-christian/>

Monday April 5, 2021



India: Halaga village, Belgaum district, Karnataka state

Pastor Sanjay Bhandari (husband, attacked and beaten by a Hindu mob while visiting his in-laws, hospitalized, said “While we were still having tea, a few men barged inside the house and, grabbing me by my shirt collar, they dragged me outside, accusing me of carrying out conversions. I tried very hard to explain that it was my relatives’ house, and that we were only paying them a casual visit, but the men refused to listen...They continued to hit me as they dragged me. They abused me and Jesus Christ in filthy language and pressured me to hail, ‘Jai Sri Ram [Hail lord Ram],’ as they beat me...They hit me on my private parts, my face, chest and all over my body, accusing me of trying to convert my sister-in-law. I tried telling them that the home belongs to my sister-in-law, and that they are already Christians and members of my church...They warned that they would chop me to pieces if I conduct church again. Saying that, they dispersed and disappeared”)

Santosh Satpute (convert, beaten, said “When we tried to rescue Pastor Sanjay, the mob assaulted me along with Pastor Sanjay, his wife, and his brother Bhimshen. I was hurt on

my chest and my ear...They tortured Pastor Sanjay physically and mentally. He was forced to perform Hindu rituals against his free will. The harassment and torture he went through is beyond description”)

Bhimshen Bhandari (aged 42, beaten)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2021/04/christian-pastor-paraded-injured-forced-into-hindu-ritual/>



Uganda: Raraka village, Oloki sub-county, Pallisa district

Pastor Yolonim Oduchu (**murdered with poison** after he refused to sell land intended for a church to Muslims who wanted to build a mosque)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2021/05/muslims-allegedly-poison-pastor-over-plans-for-church-building/>

Wednesday April 7, 2021



Pakistan: Karachi

Huma Younus (aged 15, daughter of Nagina and Younus Masih, abducted in [Zia Colony \[Ghetto\], Karachi](#) and forced into an Islamic marriage on [October 10, 2019](#); **UPDATE**: still missing)

Nagina (wife of Younus Masih, mother of Huma Younus; **UPDATE**: said "If it had happened to her daughter would [Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony] Shunila Ruth have said equally that she feels more protected, safe and at peace in Pakistan than in any other country in the world? What do these politicians answer about conversions and forced marriages in this country? I pray that what happened to me will not happen to anyone else in Pakistan”)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Huma's-mother-takes-Punjab-governor-to-task-over-forced-marriages-52804.html>



Turkey: Mardin

Fr Aho Bilecen (Dayro d' Mor Yakoub d' Qarnao Monastery, arrested on [January 9, 2020](#), reason unknown; released on [January 15, 2020](#), reason determined to be that he had given bread to a suspected Kurdish separatist; **UPDATE**: convicted in a closed trial of participation in a terrorist group, sentenced to 25 months' imprisonment)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Assyrian-monk-gets-two-years-in-a-Turkish-prison-for-giving-a-piece-of-bread-52809.html>

Friday April 9, 2021



Pakistan: Faisalabad

Two Christian hospital nurses were accused of blasphemy after they were ordered to clean a cabinet and they removed a sticker that read "peace be upon him")

Mariam Lal (accused of blasphemy, stabbed in the arm by a co-worker)

Nehwish Urooj (accused of blasphemy)

[http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Faisalabad,-two-Christian-nurses-accused-of-blasphemy.-One-is-injured-\(VIDEO\)-52836.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Faisalabad,-two-Christian-nurses-accused-of-blasphemy.-One-is-injured-(VIDEO)-52836.html)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2021/04/christian-nurses-arrested-under-blasphemy-law-in-pakistan/>

Tuesday April 13, 2021



Canada: Vancouver, British Columbia

Robert Hoogland (arrested and jailed on [March 19, 2021](#) on a charge of family violence after he refused to refer to his 14 year old daughter with male pronouns and for defying a court ban on publicly describing her gender transition; **UPDATE**: pled guilty to contempt of court charges in a plea bargain, judge accepted the plea but rejected the plea bargain, the Crown prosecutor apparently had prior knowledge of this maneuver and began to present evidence in favor of a harsher sentence than that agreed upon in the plea bargain)

[no mainstream media coverage available](#)

Wednesday April 14, 2021



Pakistan: Gujjar Khan, Punjab province

Adnan Bashir (aged 40, husband, father of two, brother of Fayyaz Bashir, mentally challenged, tricked into converting to Islam)

Fayyaz Bashir (brother of Adnan Bashir, said “One Mumtaz Ahmed and some others forced him to publicly recite the Kalima and converted him to Islam”, added that the conversion has brought harassment upon the family: “The callers congratulated us over Adnan’s conversion and asked when the rest of us would also embrace Islam. Some others are threatening us with serious consequences in case we ‘force’ Adnan to revert, warning that apostasy is punishable with death in Islam...Our lives have become miserable due to the threats and surveillance by TLP [Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan Islamist] activists. Our children keep asking what will happen to them, as their Muslim friends keep raising this issue. We can neither seek help from the police or any other government or religious leader, because everyone is fearful of the TLP, and also because this matter can easily be turned into a religious issue”)

Safdar Chaudhry (Raah-e-Nijaat Ministry chief executive, said “When Adnan’s family contacted me for support, I brought him to Rawalpindi and admitted him to a hospital for treatment. When I asked Adnan about his conversion to Islam, he outright denied it, saying he’s a Christian. It’s obvious that Mumtaz Ahmed exploited Adnan’s mental condition for ulterior motives, but this has put the entire family and community members at serious risk”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2021/04/islamists-forcibly-convert-catholic-threaten-family/>

Thursday April 15, 2021



Canada: Vancouver, British Columbia

Robert Hoogland (arrested and jailed on [March 19, 2021](#) on a charge of family violence after he refused to refer to his 14 year old daughter with male pronouns and for defying a court ban on publicly describing her gender transition; pled guilty to contempt of court charges in a plea bargain on [April 13, 2021](#), judge accepted the plea but rejected the plea bargain, the Crown prosecutor apparently had prior knowledge of this maneuver and began to

present evidence in favor of a harsher sentence than that agreed upon in the plea bargain;
UPDATE: sentenced to 6 month's imprisonment and fined CAN\$30,000 [US\$23,912])

[no mainstream media coverage available](#)

Friday April 16, 2021



Pakistan: Lahore

Salamat Mansha Masih (aged about 26, accosted by Muslims while reading the Bible in a public park on [February 13, 2021](#), physically assaulted, arrested for blasphemy; **UPDATE:** presented in court, two months later than required by law)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2021/04/police-in-pakistan-torture-christian-into-false-confession/>



Colombia: Bogota

Pamela Delgado (Moms 40 Coalition for Life Foundation director, pregnancy help center vandalized by abortion supporters)

Leidy Parra (aged 27, mother of Violeta, pregnancy help center client, said "When I saw the graffiti I was outraged and felt helpless because that's not the way it is. We then went to erase that lie. By what [they] wrote they're telling us they believe that when faced with a crisis pregnancy, the only thing to do is to have an abortion. They believe we're incapable of turning unwanted motherhood into something happy and desired, [also] several people could have seen the graffiti and doubted that we're being helped there. So I thought of raising my voice and showing the kind of help we're getting from the foundation")

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/247362/young-mothers-respond-after-pro-life-pregnancy-center-tagged-in-colombia>

Sunday April 18, 2021



Egypt: Bir Al-Abd, Sinai

Nabil Habashy Salama (aged 62, father of three including Marina and Peter, businessman, philanthropist, abducted in front of his home in [Bir Al-Abd, Sinai](#) on [November 8, 2020](#) by ISIL; **UPDATE**: reported to have been **shot dead** most likely in March 2021 for having financed a church construction)

Peter (son of Nabil Habashy Salama, said the video of his father's murder showed signs of torture)

Marina (daughter of Nabil Habashy Salama, said she was proud of her father: “He lived and died a great man. He is now in a better place, with Jesus whom he loved and served”)

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2021/04/19/coptic-man-executed-by-daesh-in-north-sinai/>

Thursday April 22, 2021



China: Hong Kong

Rev Lo Hing-choi (aged about 70, Baptist Convention president, reported to have announced his resignation and move to Great Britain in protest of government repression)

Pastor Wong Siu-yung (reported to have previously left the country after accusations of subversion were levelled)

Pastor Yeung Kin-keung (reported to have previously left the country after accusations of subversion were levelled)

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Baptist-pastor-leaves-Hong-Kong:-'Freedom-is-shrinking-52934.html>

Friday April 23, 2021



Pakistan: Lahore

Salamat Mansha Masih (aged about 26, accosted by Muslims while reading the Bible in a public park on [February 13, 2021](#), physically assaulted, arrested for blasphemy; presented in court on [April 16, 2021](#), two months later than required by law; **UPDATE**: allowed to

meet with his attorney, alleged he had been tortured into confessing and implicating fellow Bible study members)

Aneeqa Maria Akhtar (attorney, **UPDATE**: said of Salamat Mansha Masih: “During this period [of illegal confinement], he was kept in at least three different police stations and illegal torture cells, where he was mentally and physically tortured to confess to the baseless accusation...he told us that he had suffered immense torture and verbal abuse during his illegal confinement. The police investigators forced him to admit to blasphemy. They also tortured him into naming other members of the Bible study circle”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2021/04/police-in-pakistan-torture-christian-into-false-confession/>

Tuesday April 27, 2021



Turkey

Garo Paylan (aged 49, Member of Parliament; **UPDATE**: threatened with death after he tweeted "106 years later, we are walking the streets named after Talat Pasha, the architect of the [Armenian] genocide. We teach our children in schools called Talat Pasha...what kind of a Germany it would be if there were streets named after Hitler in Germany today and if children there studied at schools named after Hitler. That's the Turkey we are living in today", the threat from Member of Parliament Umit Ozdag stated "...you too will and must have a Talat Pasha experience" and received more than 12,000 likes, later said "Ozdag takes this courage from the climate of hate. I am not afraid of it...My father was subjected to the same hate speech. And I am subjected to hate speech as a member of the third generation...We have been living the Talat Pasha experience for 106 years")

<https://www.jihadwatch.org/2021/05/turkish-mp-threatens-armenian-mp-with-murder>

Wednesday April 28, 2021



Nepal

Rev Mukunda Sharma (Nepal Christian Society executive secretary; **UPDATE**: reported to have decried a false document that proposed dividing Hindus in an upcoming census to enable Christian conversions and which has been cited by Hindu leaders as reason to revoke church licenses: “The police officials orally concluded that the Hindu nationalist political

party leaders have forged the document, but they have refused to file cases and initiate action against them. Hence, both the organizations decided to publish a press release refuting the claims”)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2021/04/campaign-launched-to-discredit-christian-groups-in-nepal/>

Thursday April 29, 2021



Finland: Helsinki

Dr Paivi Maria Rasanen (aged 61, Member of Parliament, former Interior Minister and chair of the Christian Democratic party, reported on [August 24, 2019](#) to be the subject of a police investigation after she criticized her church in a June 17, 2019 tweet for supporting Pride events, prosecution is unlikely due to the legal requirements necessary to strip her of her parliamentary immunity; **UPDATE:** reported on [April 29, 2021](#) to have been notified by prosecutors that she would be charged with three counts of 'incitement against a group of people' for her 2019 tweet, for disputing on television that homosexuality has a genetic basis, and for authoring a 2004 pamphlet defending traditional marriage, replied "The decision of the Prosecutor General is surprising, even shocking. I do not think I have committed threatening, defaming or insulting a minority group. In all these three cases, the question is about the Bible's teaching about marriage and sexuality. Ultimately, the three charges brought against me have to do with whether it is allowed in Finland to express your conviction that is based on the traditional teaching of the Bible and Christian churches. I do not see I would have in any way defamed homosexuals whose human dignity and human rights I have constantly said to respect and defend. The Bible's teaching is, however, very clear in the teaching that marriage is a union between man and wife and that practicing homosexuality is against God's will...This sort of judgement would open up an avenue leading to further publication bans for similar texts and modern book burnings...The police stated in their decision [to drop the original investigation]: 'if some of the views in the Bible were to be regarded as per se fulfilling the criteria of an agitation offense, the dissemination of or making the Bible available would in principle be punishable as an offense of agitation'...I will go to the court with a peaceful and brave mind, trusting that Finland is a constitutional state where the freedoms of speech and religion, which both are guaranteed in international agreements and in our constitution, are respected. A conviction based on the Christian faith is more than [a superficial] opinion. The early Christians did not renounce their faith in lions' caves, why should I then renounce my faith in a court room. I will not step back from my conviction nor from my writings. I do not apologize for the writings of the Apostle Paul either")

Rev Dr Juhana Pohjola (Dean of Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland, reported on [April 29, 2021](#) to have been notified by prosecutors that he would be charged with 'incitement against a group of people' for his publication of Dr Paivi Maria Rasanen's

2004 pamphlet defending traditional marriage, said “As a Christian, I do not want to and cannot discriminate against or despise anyone created by God. Every human being, created by God and redeemed by Christ, is equally precious...this does not remove the fact that, according to the Bible and the Christian conception of man, homosexual relations are against the will of God, and marriage is intended only between a man and a woman. This is what the Christian church has always taught and will always teach”)

<https://syyttajalaitos.fi/-/paivi-rasaselle-ja-luther-saation-juhana-pohjolalle-syytteen-kiihottamisesta-kansanryhmaa-vastaan> - with translations
<https://ilc-online.org/2021/04/30/finnish-bishop-elect-charged-over-historic-christian-teachings-on-human-sexuality/>

April 2021, date unknown



Pakistan: Lahore

Sakina Mehtab (nurse, accused of blasphemy in the [last week of April 2021](#) after sharing a video of a Pakistani Muslim who supported a European Union parliament resolution that was opposed by other Pakistanis, said “There was no religious element in it, but a group of nurses spread lies that the video was anti-Islamic and accused me of blasphemy. My life has been put at serious risk with this false allegation, and I don’t know how I’ll be able to resume work at the hospital with the fear that someone might attack me from nowhere. My fear is not unfounded”, in hiding)

<https://morningstarnews.org/2021/05/another-christian-nurse-falsely-accused-of-blasphemy/>

Today’s Martyrs

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

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