

Today's Martyrs
2014-04-13 through 2014-04-19



Central African Republic

Bishop Nestor-Desire Nongo Aziagbia (**UPDATE**: abducted by Seleka rebels at a checkpoint along with three priests, released)

Date: April 17, 2014

Location: Batangafo

Source: <http://www.misna.org/en/other/bishop-of-bosangoa-and-three-priests-free-17-04-2014-813.html>



China

Zhang Feng (husband of Yong Jun, house church leader, detained for distributing Christian literature, sentenced to 10 days administrative detention, released, threatened with loss of his job after he filed a court case to reconsider his conviction)

Yong Jin (wife of Zhang Feng, sentenced to 10 days administrative detention, released, filed a court case to reconsider her conviction)

Dates: March 18 and April 7-9, 2014

Location: Batang county, Sichuan province

Source [with photo]: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2014/04/sichuan-couple-threatened-by-husbands.html>



Egypt

Michael Mohsen (abducted while returning home from work)

Date: April 12, 2014

Location: Assiut

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=53504#.U0oB-8LQcfg>

Bishoy Armiya (Egypt's 'most famous' convert, arrested before December 5, 2013 and charged with "inciting sedition by communicating to a US-based [Coptic] channel unfounded

information on Copts persecution in Egypt"; **UPDATE:** has been attacked in prison and threatened with death in an attempt to revert him back to Islam)

Date: April 14, 2014

Location: Minya

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=53540#.U0ywXMLQcfg>

Milad Fawzi Lutfi (shot and injured in a failed abduction attempt)

Date: April 15, 2014

Location: Minya

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=53573#.U032X8LQcfg>

Maher Hanna Al-Koms (aged 60, taxi driver, abducted by two masked men)

Date: April 17, 2014

Location: Malawi, Minya province

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=53624#.U1HdzMLQcfg>



India

Event: Hindu nationalist Prime Minister candidate Narendra Modi said in a television interview that he was unaware of any attacks on Christians and their places of worship in India

Rev Richard Howell (Evangelical Fellowship of India general secretary, **UPDATE:** said "What he said was an utter lie. The onslaught against Christians by Right-wing groups has always been cause for concern. The Bajrang Dal, the youth wing of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, has been attacking members of the Christian community and vandalizing churches across India...How can he forget the gruesome attacks on tribal Christians in Gujarat's Dangs district in 1998 during the NDA regime when members of the Right-wing cadres burnt down churches?")

Vijayesh Lal (Religious Liberty Commission national director, said "Surprisingly, Modi pretends to be ignorant and unaware about such attacks on Christians. If this is the case then why should we trust his promises of a secular India as mentioned in the BJP's election manifesto?")

Date: April 17, 2014

Source: <http://www.ucanindia.in/news/christian-leaders-condemn-modi%E2%80%99s-ignorance-on-antichristian-attacks/24633/daily>



Kyrgyzstan

Vakhtang Fyodorov (Russian citizen, catechist, accused of 'illegal missionary work', asserts that he is not breaking the law since he teaches only to church members, is concerned that if he visits Russia he will be denied re-entry to the country)

Yuliya Farbstein (declined to comment on a police raid on a Lenten service held in the Russian Orthodox cathedral in the capital)

Date reported: April 17, 2014

Location: Bishkek

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=1949



Nigeria

Fr Patrick Tor Alumuku (deplored an apparent Boko Haram suicide bombing in the capital that killed dozens of commuters "The place where the attack was carried out today is one of the largest suburbs of Abuja and is located 15-20 km from the center of Abuja. The bus depot where the explosion took place is normally used by a large number of commuters to get to work in the center of the capital. The victims are therefore normal people, who belong to the working class, who were on their way to work")

Date: April 14, 2014

Location: Abuja

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/35576->

[AFRICA NIGERIA Bombing in Abuja the victims of the Boko Haram and Al Qaeda alliance are poor workers said a priest#.U0yqvcLQcfg](http://www.fides.org/en/news/35576-)

Bishop Dashe Doeme (criticized the government following the abduction of over 100 schoolgirls from Chibok by Boko Haram "First the attack against the bus station in Abuja, then the kidnapping of the schoolgirls: Nigeria is paying a price for this extremism, but also the corruption that impedes the government and army to efficiently combat the Boko Haram")

Fr Timothy Cosmas (said that the schoolgirls were abducted "to become slaves")

Date: April 17, 2014

Location: Maiduguri

Source: <http://www.misna.org/en/other/kidnapped-schoolgirls-bishops-accusations-17-04-2014-813.html>

and <http://www.misna.org/en/economy-and-politics/orno-girls-abducted-to-become-slaves-16-04-2014-813.html>



Pakistan

Asia Bibi (mother of five still incarcerated in jail on blasphemy charges after a November 2010 death sentence; **UPDATE**: appeal hearing begun and then adjourned after a presentation of arguments, no date set for the next hearing)

Date: April 14, 2014

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Lahore:-third-postponement-in-Asia-Bibi's-appeal-as-Islamist-threats-against-judges-continue-30828.html>

Sunny Hyder aka Haroon (aged 22, son of Hyder Masih, father of two aged 2 years and 10 months, bank custodian, **shot dead** by a security guard after refusing to convert to Islam, assailant is in custody but police are delaying the opening of a case because they are trying to report it as a suicide)

Hyder Masih (father of Sunny Hyder, said "There is no other staff in the bank, because the branch is being renovated. On April 15, my son told me that [security guard] Farooq had mocked his Christian faith and had asked him to 'embrace' Islam. He told my son, 'You are a good-looking boy, and I don't like to see you sweeping floors and cleaning the washrooms. If you embrace Islam, I'll connect you with people who will take good care of you, provide you with a decent job and even get you married into a wealthy Muslim family.' ...My son told me that when he snubbed Farooq, the guard had threatened him that he would have to face the consequences for refusing the Dawaat [an invitation to accept Islam]...Little did I know that my son would end up in a mortuary a day later")

Date: April 16, 2014

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/headlinenewsd.php?hnewsid=4822>
and <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/for-discussing-christian-customs-young-christian-boy-lost-his-life/>
and [with photo]: <http://morningstarnews.org/2014/04/family-of-christian-shot-dead-in-pakistan-doubts-suicide-claim/>



Palestine

Rifat Kassis (wrote on how large numbers of Palestinian Christians are denied permits to attend Holy Week services in Jerusalem)

Date: April 16, 2014

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/local-christians-barred-from-jerusalem-holy-week-events/70721>



Sri Lanka

Fr S.J. Emmanuel (aged 80, leader of the Global Tamil Forum, put on a government terrorist list because of his organization)

Date: April 11, 2014

Location: Colombo

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/35563->

[ASIA SRI LANKA The government also puts a priest in the list of terrorist because he defends the Tamil#.U0n6TcLQcfg](http://www.fides.org/en/news/35563-)



Syria

Fr Frans van der Lugt SJ (**UPDATE:** posted on Facebook just days before his **assassination** "Our faith helps us a lot to overcome this critical situation, provides us with hope and patience...Starving is threatening our lives, we miss the basic elements to survive, food and elementary needs...But somehow we are surviving, and push life forward. Moreover, we experience the goodness of people who are in need. They find some lentils and bulgur [all they can eat after two years] in front of their doors. Now, when we are poor and in need, we rediscover the goodness of human beings, when we receive from our brothers and sisters. We see evil is trying to find his way among us, but it can't turn us blind before the goodness...We are preparing ourselves to Easter, reflecting on crossing from death to resurrection. We feel like we are in the valley of the shadows, but we can see that light far away, leading us to life again")

Tony Homsy SJ (Syrian native, University of Aleppo graduate in biochemistry, wrote a reminiscence of his friend and mentor Fr Frans van der Lugt in which he quoted the murdered priest's last Facebook entry)

Date: April 14, 2014

Location: Omaha, Nebraska, United States

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/I-will-miss-you-Fr-Frans,-you-inspired-us-all,-says-Syrian-Jesuit-30826.html>

Fr George Bahi (described the death of a child and the wounding of 61 when a missile hit the Armenian Catholic School)

Date: April 15, 2014

Location: Bab Tuma, Damascus

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/35588->

[ASIA SYRIA A missile on an Armenian Catholic school a child killed 61 injured #.U03zTMLQcfg](http://www.fides.org/en/news/35588-)

Archbishop Samir Nassar (**UPDATE:** said "This Holy Week was introduced by the murder of Fr Frans from Homs in the fourth year of war and violence. Shells raining down on our neighbourhoods, schools closed, we cannot give an account of the victims. We are abandoned to Providence...This small Syrian people, so kind, generous and patient, have become accustomed to suffering and die in silence. It is in this spirit that we live Holy

Week and Easter holidays, knowing that the Way of the Cross...has marked our lives for three years, accompanies the fourth year. The end of the tunnel is invisible”)

Date: April 13, 2014

Location: Damascus

Source: <http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2014/04/16/persecuted-facing-way-of-the-cross-this-easter/>

Hanna (wife and mother, **UPDATE:** wrote "Sometimes it seems like there is no end to all this misery. I know God is in control, but sometimes I feel so hopeless. I regularly fall on my knees and cry out to Him about why all of this is happening...While I'm telling you this, we're in the middle of a bombing. My husband and two girls just saw one bomb falling down over 200 yards from our house. We hurried downstairs to be safer...A mortar falling down sounds like a very strong voice near you; it's the same pressure. We don't know what will happen in five minutes, or even one minute. One moment you're here, the next moment you can be gone. A few days ago my relative was preparing Easter snacks in the kitchen when suddenly her life was over; a bomb fell through her apartment. We didn't find her body...I told the children [in the school where I work]: no matter what bad things are happening around us, our God is still good; even if we're in danger of death, our God is still good and worthy of praise. So we raised our hands and started worshipping God. The parents of one of our Muslim pupils were present while we did that, and they were so impressed they said: 'Our child is safe here. He is under the protection of God'")

Date: April 16, 2013

Location: Damascus

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/syrian-christian-mother-praying-but-feeling-hopeless-as-bombings-occur-every-day-118160/>



United Kingdom

Lord David Alton (human rights advocate; **UPDATE:** said "Fr Frans van der Lugt [of Homs, Syria]...joins a long list of Jesuit martyrs – some martyred a stone's throw from where we are gathered – and who have sacrificed their lives truly believing that a man has no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends...Fr Franz's death in Syria is a stark reminder of the systematic campaign by jihadists intent on the destruction of the region's ancient churches and the contemporary Passion and suffering being inflicted on the Middle East's Christians...We in the West, who enjoy so many freedoms and liberties, need to ask ourselves some tough questions about the disproportionate nature of the causes which we so readily embrace whilst ignoring the systematic violent ideology of an Islamist "Final Solution" directed at the Christian minorities...Ultimately, [Western] parliamentarians are only as good as the people who elect them – so their electorates are also partly to blame for not organizing themselves in the way in which pressure groups do. If political leaders have been indifferent, where here are the western churches?")

Date: April 10, 2014

Location: Farm Street Jesuit Church, London

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2014/04/10/jihadists-are-embarking-on-final-solution-in-middle-east/>

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