

Today's Martyrs
2015-02-01 through 2015-02-07



Belarus

Andrei Kuzin (home raided by police during a worship service, fined US\$250, has appealed)

Dates: November 20, 2014 and December 23, 2014

Location: Borisov, Minsk region

Aleksei Shchedrov (aged 30; **UPDATE**: homeless shelter inspected by the authorities and ordered closed despite their admission they had no authority to do so, has refused)

Date: January 12, 2015

Location: Aleksandrovka village, Grodno region

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2035



China

Bishop Cosma Shi Enxiang (aged 94, arrested at his niece's home on April 13, 2001; disappeared while in police custody; **UPDATE**: family notified of his death, no body or ashes have been produced)

Shi Chunyan (aged 42, grandniece of Bishop Cosma Shi Enxiang)

Bishop James Su Zhimin (disappeared while in police custody in 1997; **UPDATE**: still missing)

Date: January 30, 2015

Location: Baoding

Source [with photo]: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/chinese-prelate-held-in-secret-for-14-years-dies-at-age-94/72910>



Egypt

Nabil Mahrous (aged 50, husband of Enas Reda Boulos, killed by gunmen in front of his family during a home invasion)

Enas Reda Boulos (widow of Nabil Mahrous, said "My husband was killed because he is a Christian")

Date: January 30, 2015

Location: El-Arish, Sinai

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59318>

and <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59402>

Sarah Fahmy Latif (aged 15, abducted)

Date: January 31, 2015

Location: Senouras district, Fayoum province

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59385>

Michael Monir Bishay (aged 26, brother of Lucy Monir Bishay, arrested on contempt of Islam charges after he shared a video on YouTube of a Muslim scholar, home attacked and motorcycle burnt, police refuse to confirm his whereabouts, every attorney contacted by the family has refused to take his case;

UPDATE: police allowed him to meet with his family after six days, legal counsel has been obtained)

Lucy Monir Bishay (sister of Michael Monir Bishay, described his arrest on contempt of Islam charges)

Eshak Ibrahim (Egyptian Initiative for Human Rights researcher, said that the family of Michael Mounir Bishay is in need of police protection)

Date: February 1, 2015

Location: Dakahlia

Source [with photo]: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59414>

and <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59426>

and <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1308&A=17515>

and <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59432>

and <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59434>

Remon Bishara Attiah (aged 23, dentistry student, abducted by gunmen, US\$262,000 ransom demanded)

Date: February 4, 2015

Location: Al-Sagha area, Dishna, Qena province

Source [with photo]: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59413>

Michael Ashraf Saad (aged 20, abducted from his home, ransom paid, not returned)

Date reported: February 6, 2015

Location: Kosya, Assiut

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59438>



Germany

Ruth Levin (said that a new tax regulation requiring the payment of 8 or 9 percent of capital gains by church members has caused up to 200,000 Protestants to resign from their churches in 2014, similar numbers are believed to have left the Roman Catholic Church)

Date reported: February 2, 2015

Source: <http://www.ecumenicalnews.com/article/german-protestants-and-catholics-flee-churches-after-compulsory-taxes-imposed-28183>



India

Fr Savarimuthu Sankar (**UPDATE**: church vandalized, tabernacle forced open and consecrated hosts scattered on the altar and floor, said “It is getting very disturbing now. The community is left with no option but to come out on streets and protest”, police dismissed the case as simple theft)

Vivien Ashima Kaul (retired history professor, commented on the recent church desecration "It's so sad")

Fr Mathew Kojickal (chancellor of the Archdiocese of New Delhi; **UPDATE**: spoke on the continuing attacks on churches in the Delhi-New Delhi area “There has been no attempt from the prime minister’s side to condemn the attacks...[If he did] we would be comforted, we would know we have a prime minister who cares about us”)

Date: February 2, 2015

Location: New Delhi

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Delhi,-another-Catholic-church-vandalized.-The-fifth-in-two-months-33346.html>

and <http://www.ucanews.com/news/catholic-church-vandalized-in-delhi/72912>

and http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/03/world/asia/catholics-fear-campaign-of-church-attacks-in-india.html?_r=1

Chellakani Umashankar (aged 51, convert, Indian Administrative Service member with 25 years in government administration, prohibited by police from holding a prayer meeting, attacked by a Hindu mob along with 100 other Christians, automobile damaged;

Dates: January 16, 2015

Location: Pudukadai, Kanyakumari district, Tamil Nadu state

UPDATE: told in writing that his Christian preaching and evangelical conventions are a violation of the service rule that 'every member of this service shall at all times maintain absolute integrity and devotion to duty and shall do nothing which is unbecoming of a member of this Service', has cancelled an upcoming three day convention and said “The government is acting at the behest of some groups. To please them they are infringing my fundamental right. I have every right to preach my faith...This is nonsense. I am going to challenge it in the court”)

Dates: January 24, 2015

Location: Tamil Nadu state

Source: https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2015/02/article_3663162.html/

Sajan K George (president of the Global Council of Indian Christians; **UPDATE:** said "The Indian Government this week denied entry permits [visas] to Archbishop Arthur Roche and Archbishop Protase Rugambwa , who were scheduled to attend a conference on 'Liturgy and Life' in Bangalore between 3 and 9 February. The two Vatican officials had applied for their visa's in mid-December but were turned down. No reason is cited for the denial of visas")

Date: February 5, 2015

Location: Delhi

Sources: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Peaceful-march-in-Delhi:-police-beat-and-stop-priests,-nuns-and-children-33385.html>

Event: A peaceful march by hundreds of Christians to protest government and police inaction in the face of anti-Christian attacks was attacked by police who had invoked an anti-insurrection law, dozens or hundreds were beaten and detained including priests, nuns, elderly, and children

Cardinal Oswald Gracias (**UPDATE:** said "What happened today is a shameful stain on secular and democratic India...the way in which our women religious were treated, women who consecrated their lives to God dragged away like criminals. Not even children were spared...Christians constitute less than 2 per cent of India's population. In Delhi they are just over 100,000 [out of 25 million residents]. They are a peaceful and law-abiding community. Our educational institutions and health facilities are at the service of the nation. Yet, in response to tens of decades of nation building, our women religious, our priests and our people are treated like criminals. This is a shame, a disgrace and a stain on our motherland")

Sajan K George (president of the Global Council of Indian Christians; **UPDATE:** said "What happened today is a sign that the atrocities against the tiny Christian community continue to escalate, whilst the authorities remain silent before the growing intolerance")

Fr Savarimuthu Shankar (**UPDATE:** said "They did not even spare the women and the elderly. They were even kicking the people who fell down on the ground after the crackdown...We are not demanding [justice and protection] as Christians, we are demanding as citizens of India")

Samuel Jaykumar (National Council of Churches in India; **UPDATE:** attended as a protestor)

Fr Dominic Emmanuel (**UPDATE:** detained by police, said "We have all the right to make our voices heard. We were legitimately protesting against the harm done on our churches" and added that the police crackdown was "brutal and illegal")

Dr John Dayal (**UPDATE:** arrested along with 200 protestors, said in a phone call from the police station "Our protest demanded that the government inquire into the violence against Christians because we do not trust the police to investigate it properly. Police told us we were disturbing the peace and threatening the police, but we are always peaceful, that is the point")

Johnny Joseph (aged 52, protestor, said “Our churches are being destroyed and the government isn’t doing anything for us. We want to tell the government to safeguard our churches”)

Garry (said "All that we are asking is 'what are the police doing? What is the government doing?'")

Date: February 5, 2015

Location: Delhi

Sources: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Peaceful-march-in-Delhi:-police-beat-and-stop-priests,-nuns-and-children-33385.html>

and <http://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-police-crack-down-on-catholic-protesters/72942>

and <http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2015/02/05/police-detain-hundreds-of-christians-protesting-church-vandalism/>

and <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/02/05/us-india-protests-christians-idUSKBN0L90SS20150205>

Pramod Sahu (aged 38, convert, welder, beaten in his workshop by 25 members of the Bajrang Dal [the youth wing of the RSS paramilitary organization] when he refused to pray to a Hindu god, said “The attackers abused me in foul language and used the picture of Jesus Christ in my garage as an excuse to beat me up”, police initially refused to file a report, being treated for chest and back injuries)

Rev Vijayesh Lal (Religious Liberty Commission national director; **UPDATE:** said “It was only when interventions were made by lawyers and Christian leaders that an FIR [police report] was finally registered on Jan. 29. Pramod Sahu had to approach a private hospital by himself to take care of his injuries. Had the police taken the case seriously, the medical examination would have been sooner...I spoke to Sahu while he was getting his treatment done at the private hospital, and he was in much fear. He complained that people who beat him up were continuously following him and watching him closely. He feared for his life”)

Date: January 24, 2015

Location: Nalasopara, Mumbai

Source [with photo]: <http://morningstarnews.org/2015/02/hindu-extremist-mob-beats-christian-house-church-leader-near-mumbai-india/>



Iran

Vahid Hakkani (**UPDATE:** conditionally released from prison)

Date: January 26, 2015

Location: Adel-Abad prison, Shiraz

Source:

http://mohabatnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9824:christian-convert-conditionally-released-after-three-years-in-prison&catid=36:iranian-christians&Itemid=279



Iraq

Eliyas (husband of Rimista, father of two, abducted and freed after paying US\$25,000, Syrian refugee, split up his family and sent his wife to Europe but she became a refugee in Tanzania)

Date reported: February 4, 2015

Location: Erbil

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20150204140622.htm>



Kazakhstan

Yuri Morozov (director of a church operated drug and alcohol rehab center, fined US\$1,000 for illegal religious activities, fine upheld on appeal)

Dates: December 15, 2014 and January 19, 2015

Location: Sychevka

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2034



Macedonia

Archbishop Jovan of Ohrid aka Zoran Vraniskovski (aged 47, arrested on [December 13, 2011](#), at the Bitola border crossing, sentenced on [July 3, 2013](#) to three years in prison and church property seized for alleged money laundering, charges widely viewed as resulting from his efforts to reunify the Serbian and Macedonian Orthodox Churches; **UPDATE:** released from prison)

Date: February 2, 2015

Location: Skopje

Source [with photo]: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/77008.htm>



Nigeria

Archbishop Matthew Manoso Ndagoso (**UPDATE**: read a communique signed by the Catholic bishops of the north of the country which stated that the government should have crushed Boko Haram when it began in 2003, and added "the growth of the Boko Haram group is as a result of failure of government, because we have allowed them to build up to become a monster group that is now difficult to contain...Today, the destructive violence of Boko Haram and the state of uncertainty surrounding our democracy is the cumulative impact of these years of blind ambition, mismanagement and squander that have brought our nation almost to its knees...Ordinarily after four controversial but successfully concluded elections since our return to democracy, we would expect our country to be showing signs of growth and consolidation. Rather, we find ourselves tightly in the clutches of fear, anxiety and near despondency")

Date: January 31, 2015

Location: Kaduna, Kaduna state

Source: <http://thenationonlineng.net/new/boko-haram-crushed-2003-says-catholic-bishops/>

Henry (alias, 'boy', escaped from Boko Haram, reported on the terrorists' response to the worldwide reaction to their abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls "we disturbed the world by abducting these girls. If we'd known, we would have been doing this before. One time we killed a bunch of schoolboys at Buni Yadi and let the girls go after warning them to leave school. We should have taken them then and we will from now on")

Date reported: January 30, 2015

Source: <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2015/01/30/face-to-face-with-a-boko-haram-escapee-a-christian-boy-tells-his-story/>

Fr Gideon Obasogie (**UPDATE**: said "If Maiduguri falls into the hands of Boko Haram, it would be a disaster for all of Africa. Maiduguri is the state capital and the seat of Government, with all its structures, with a high concentration of state population and the commercial nerve of the northeast. If the city falls, citizens will be more facile to radicalization and the terrorists will have more conscripts. Maiduguri for Boko Haram would become a strong base and then rumble into Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe and Adamawa. Finally, if Maiduguri falls, the militants would control an airport and a military base with the 7 Div. This is really and truly dangerous for Nigeria, as it is a potential disaster for Africa as a continent. So far the militants have conquered and occupied towns and villages near Maiduguri...With the recent waves of attacks, there is so much fear and tension in the air. With the February Polls drawing ever close we see all sorts of personalities with well fashioned and designed promises too good to be taken as true; trooping into Maiduguri and the northeast, not to identify with us in our plight but to beg for our votes")

Date: February 5, 2015

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/37224->

[AFRICA NIGERIA If Maiduguri falls into the hands of Boko Haram it would be a disaster for Africa as a continent#.VNRR2sJTE5s](http://www.fides.org/en/news/37224-)



Pakistan

Event: The homes of seven Christian families were seized by Muslims with false documents and bulldozed, the families were told that they could avoid the demolition by converting to Islam, they refused and have been sleeping outdoors in the cold since, other neighbors have been similarly threatened

Rafique Masih

Shangara Masih

Farzana Bibi

Iruma Bibi (widow)

Bagh Masih

William Masih

Samar Masih

Gama Bibi (widow)

Date reported: February 1, 2015

Location: Rao Khan Wala village, Kasur district, Punjab province

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/headlinenewsd.php?hnewsid=5166>



Syria

Kenji Goto Jogo (convert, Japanese citizen, journalist, held captive by ISIL; **UPDATE: beheaded**)

Date: January 31, 2015

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/isis-beheads-second-japanese-hostage-kenji-goto-obama-condemns-heinous-murder-133393/>



Tanzania

Rimista (wife of Eliyas, mother of two, dentist, Syrian refugee, beaten and scarred by Turkish airport police, bankrupt, residing in a UN refugee camp with her three year old son, both malnourished, ill with a chest infection, said "If I must die, I rather die in my country")

Date reported: February 4, 2015

Location: Dar es Salaam

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20150204140622.htm>



Uganda

Nabagabana Fatuma (aged 14, convert, sister of Namwase Aisha, beaten and locked in a room for three days without food by her uncle after converting, escaped)

Namwase Aisha (aged 16, convert, sister of Nabagabana Fatuma, beaten and locked in a room for three days without food by her uncle after converting, escaped)

Date: February 1, 2015

Location: Nasenye village, Pallisa district

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2015/02/muslim-uncle-of-two-girls-in-uganda-beats-locks-them-up-without-food/>



United Kingdom

Event: Two bishops criticized the BBC for the televised drama *Wolf Hall*, which presents St Thomas More as an evil character

Bishop Mark Davies (said: “We should remember *Wolf Hall* is a work of fiction. It is an extraordinary and perverse achievement...to make of Thomas Cromwell a flawed hero and of St Thomas More, one of the greatest Englishmen, a scheming villain. It is not necessary to share Thomas More’s faith to recognize his heroism – a man of his own time who remains an example of integrity for all times. It would be sad if Thomas Cromwell, who is surely one of the most unscrupulous figures in England’s history, was to be held-up as a role model for future generations”)

Bishop Mark O’Toole (said there was a “strong anti-Catholic thread” in *Wolf Hall*, and that it appeared to connect St Thomas More and his Catholic faith to 21st century religious fundamentalism)

Date: February 2, 2015

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2015/02/02/bishops-criticise-perverse-depiction-of-st-thomas-more-in-wolf-hall/>

United Kingdom

Cristina Odone (former editor, criticized the shadow education secretary's comment that nuns are not qualified teachers “Tristram Hunt’s comments on nuns last night were arrogant and ignorant. Why is it acceptable to denigrate anything Catholic but bleat tolerance about every other religion? To know he and Labour stand a chance at the next election makes me fear for the 7000 brilliant faith schools in this country”)

Date: February 6, 2015

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2015/02/06/shadow-education-secretary-under-fire-over-nuns-remark-on-question-time/>



United States: Oregon

Event: Christian couple found guilty of discrimination for refusing to bake a cake for a same sex wedding despite serving same sex couples in other ways, may be fined up to \$150,000, had already closed their business due to harassment

Aaron Klein

Melissa Klein

Date: February 4, 2015

Location: Gresham

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-bakers-who-refused-to-make-cake-for-lesbian-wedding-found-guilty-of-discrimination-will-have-to-pay-up-to-150k-133581/>



Venezuela

Fr Luis Sanchez (reported on an attack against four churches with gasoline bombs)

Villca Fernandez (University Movement member, issued a statement condemning the "vile and cowardly attack" against the churches "The attack tries to sow terror and fear among the population in Merida. An attack against a place of worship is an attack on religious freedom and against the historical heritage of Merida")

Date: January 30, 2015

Location: Merida, Merida state

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/37202-AMERICA_VENEZUELA_Four_churches_attacked_in_Merida#.VM2jDMJTE5s

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