

Today's Martyrs
2015-02-15 through 2015-02-21



Belarus

Fr Roman Schulz OP (Polish citizen, denied permission on or before [April 15, 2014](#) to stay in the country after serving a parish for seven years, no reason given; stay extended to December 20, 2014 after protests from parishioners; **UPDATE**: stay extended again to June 20, 2015)

Date reported: [February 20, 2015](#)

Location: Mogilev

Yakov Timofeyev (seminary rector, said that invited foreign professors are often denied visas, though visas for short seminars are often approved)

Date: [January 26, 2015](#)

Location: Minsk

Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti (Papal Nuncio; **UPDATE**: raised concerns with the government over its report that foreign clergy engage in a large range of violations of the law, government complaints that the Catholic Church is not training Belarusian citizens for the priesthood, and the government's repeated refusal to allow the construction of a Catholic seminary)

Date: [January 23 and 30, 2015](#)

Location: Minsk

Event: Two Christians arrested for handing out religious literature on a public street, town court found them guilty of conducting an illegal demonstration and issued an official warning, appeal denied

Olga Shulepova (Ukrainian citizen)

Yulia Prokhopova (Ukrainian citizen)

Dates: [August 7 and 8, and October 9, 2014](#)

Location: Drogichi, Brest region

Andrei Kuzin (home in [Borisov, Minsk region](#) raided by police during a [November 20, 2014](#) worship service, fined US\$250 on [December 23, 2014](#), has appealed; **UPDATE**: appeal denied, said "It seemed that it was all already decided before the hearing. The Judge didn't listen to me and everything was over very quickly", will appeal to the Supreme Court)

Date: [February 13, 2015](#)

Location: Minsk

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2040



Bhutan

Pastor Mon B Thapa aka David Lobzang (aged 56 in 2014, arrested on [March 5, 2014](#) for holding an unauthorized public meeting with 30 Christians but not officially charged, the meeting was for the ground breaking of a new house in [Khapdani village, Samtse district](#); sentenced in [Dorokha, Samtse district](#) on [September 10, 2014](#) to 2 years 4 months imprisonment for transporting Pastor Tandin Wangyal to a village without approval, fined US\$1,678 'in lieu' of his prison sentence; **UPDATE**: paid his fine, released from prison)

Date reported: February 18, 2015

Source: <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/pastor-released-prison/>



China

Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-Kium SBD (**UPDATE**: joined others in demonstrating for the release of Bishop Cosmas Shi Enxiang [who has been reported to have died but no body has been released] and Bishop James Su Zhimin)

Date: February 14, 2015

Location: Hong Kong

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Card-Zen-and-Catholics-protest-against-Beijing-over-the-fate-of-Mgr-Cosma-Shi-Enxiang-33462.html>



Colombia

Russell Martin Stendal (missionary, U.S. citizen, arrested on suspicion of involvement with the FARC 53 Marxist rebel group; **UPDATE**: released from jail due to lack of evidence)

Date: February 18 and 20, 2015

Location: Paloque-mao

Source: <http://blogs.cbn.com/globallane/archive/2015/02/19/american-missionary-arrested-in-colombia.aspx>
and <http://www.charismanews.com/opinion/48416-columbia-finally-releases-us-missionary-from-jail>



Croatia

Fr Slavisa Simakovic (described the desecration of his cathedral)

Date: February 15, 2015

Location: Karlovac

Source: <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/2015/02/croatia-vandals-desecrate-serbian-orthodox-church-temple-in-karlovc/>



Egypt

Fr Basilius Naim (fled his village the day after the murder of Shahid Nesimis Saroufim)

Date: January 14, 2015

Farid (widow of Shahid Nesimis Saroufim, mother of a son aged 6, a daughter aged 4, and an unborn child, said that before her husband's murder "They said many times before to my husband, 'If you don't drop the [murder] charges on our relatives, we will make the Christian women in the village widows'")

Date reported: February 19, 2015

Location: Nag Hassan village, Dabiya, Luxor province

Source: https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2015/02/article_3721551.html/

Adel Sobhi Youssef (brother of Eshak Sobhi, killed by a traffic police lieutenant)

Date: April 2014

Eshak Sobhi (brother of Adel Sobhi Youssef, said that the police officer who killed his brother has yet to be arrested)

Date: February 19, 2015

Location: Beni Suef

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59713>



France

Bishop Pascal Roland (has ordered the Blessed Sacrament removed from all tabernacles in the diocese unless public prayer allows for "a sufficient presence of the faithful", order instituted due to a wave of church desecrations)

Date: February 10, 2015

Location: Belley-Ars

Source: <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/bishop-of-ars-removes-blessed-sacrament-from-all-parishes/#ixzz3SFRzaEbE>



India

Fr Cedric Prakash SJ (director of the Prashant Jesuit Center for Human Rights; **UPDATE:** spoke about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent speech in favor of religious freedom "At no point in his speech did he condemn or take a position against attacks on Christians and other minorities in India. If he was serious he would first repeal the draconian and unconstitutional anti-conversion law that he introduced in Gujarat in 2003...[Modi's words] surely look good on paper, but many are wondering if he will actually 'walk his talk' [since he] was groomed and nurtured by the right-wing Hindu groups commonly referred to as Sangh Parivar. He is an integral part of them, shares their ideology and world view. It is they who catapulted him to power")

Date: February 19, 2015

Location: Ahmedabad, Gujarat state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/For-Indian-Jesuit,-Narendra-Modi's-bluff-will-be-called-sooner-or-later-33509.html>

Event: Eleven Hindu radicals drag four women from a prayer meeting while their husbands worked in the fields

Shanti (convert, beaten)

Samudri (convert, beaten)

Sonamati (convert, beaten)

Yasoda (convert, beaten, partially stripped, said "I asked them what crime did I do for them to do this to me and asked them to stop, but they would not stop and said that I should stop following Christ and stop praying to Jesus, and that then all this will cease")

Pastor Rampath Nayak (described the attack on Shanti, Samudri, Sonamati and Yasoda, said "They are all recovering, except that Yasoda is still complaining of pain in the left part of her chest")

Date: February 8, 2015

Location: Navardi, Chatra, Jharkhand state

Bhim Kujur (teacher at a Christian school, accused of child molestation by a Hindu parent who led a mob which shouted pro-Hindu slogans and physically attacked the school, a school representative said "The accusation against Bhim Kujur was totally false...The town people are wondering if the sudden unprovoked attempt was staged to malign the Holy Family School and the Christian religion")

Date: February 2, 2015

Location: Barhawa, Sahibang, Jharkhand state

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2015/02/hindu-extremists-strive-to-mortify-malign-christians-in-jharkhand-state-india/>



Iran

Mehdi Reza Omid Youhan (convert, sentenced to 80 lashes for drinking communion wine on **October 20, 2013** in Rasht, allowed 10 days to appeal; sentence executed on **November 2, 2013**, has been flogged; **UPDATE**: home raided by VEVAK agents, religious items seized, warned the next day to leave the country)

Yasser Mosayebzadeh (home raided by VEVAK agents, religious items seized, warned the next day to leave the country)

Saheb Fadaie (home raided by VEVAK agents, religious items seized, warned the next day to leave the country)

Dates: February 16-17, 2015

Location: Rasht

Pastor Behnam Irani (husband of Kristina Irani; **UPDATE**: refused conditional release from prison)

Date reported: February 18, 2015

Source: <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=press&id=1840&search=>



Iraq

Myriam ('young girl', refugee from Qaraqosh, said "We used to have a house and were entertained, whereas here we are not. But thank God. God provides for us: God loves us and wouldn't let ISIL kill us...I will only ask God to forgive them")

Flourine ('young girl', refugee, said she missed "our school and our church")

Maryouma ('young girl', refugee, said "Jesus will be with us no matter where we go")

Date reported: February 19, 2015

Location: Ainkawa, Erbil, Kurdistan

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/displaced-iraqi-christian-girl-who-fled-home-to-escape-death-asks-god-to-forgive-isis-despite-her-terrible-living-conditions-in-half-built-mall-134407/>



Kosovo

Archpriest Milija Arsovic (described the desecration of a cemetery including the destruction of the cemetery chapel “You can see that there is absolutely nothing good here. People came here today in large numbers, to this sacred cemetery, because many holy people are buried here, and they did not deserve this to be done to them. Simply, I have been coming here for 15 years with these people and I can say that every time we come we find the situation to be worse”)

Date: February 15, 2015

Location: Kosovska Mitrovica

Source: <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/2015/02/kosovo-chapel-at-orthodox-cemetery-destroyed-graves-desecrated-busts-stolen/>

Hieromonk Andrej (reported on Kosovo Liberation Army graffiti at the Cyril and Methodius Seminary)

Date: February 17, 2015

Location: Prizen

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/77341.htm>



Laos

Event: Five Christian leaders detained on June 22, 2014 after praying with a dying Christian, accused of murder; murder charges dropped on August 6, 2014; **UPDATE: convicted of 'unlicensed professional medical care' for having prayed for the dying Ms Chan, sentenced to nine months' imprisonment and together fined US\$2,758**

Ms Kaithong

Mr Puphet

Mr Muk

Mr Hasadee

Mr Tiang

Date: February 12, 2015

Location: Savannakhet province

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/37284-ASIA_LAOS_Prayers_for_a_dying_woman_five_Pastors_charged_with_abuse_of_medical_profession#.VOLNaMJTEfQ

and <http://morningstarnews.org/2015/02/court-in-laos-fines-sentences-pastors-to-prison-for-praying-for-sick-woman-who-died/>



Lebanon

Evelyn Polis (Iraqi refugee for four years, has enough money for one more month's rent)

Gladis Khamees (mother, Iraqi refugee for four years, wants to leave Lebanon "We don't know what our fate will be here")

Bishop Michel Kassarji (**UPDATE**: said that his diocese has been supporting 2,000 Chaldean Iraqi families, desperately needs funds, has spent US\$400,000 in the last six months on food alone)

Rita Saky (church aid worker for Iraqi refugees)

Date: February 17, 2015

Location: Beirut

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20150216192557.htm>



Libya

Event UPDATE: Twenty-one abducted Coptic Christians, one unnamed, reported to have been **beheaded** by ISIL, the men could be heard in the video calling on Jesus Christ as they died

Abanoub Ayyad Ateyya

Beshoy Estafanous Kamel

Bishoy Adel Khalaf

Gaber Mounir Adly

Essam Baddar Samir

Ezzat Bushra Nassif

Girguis Milad Sinewt

Hany Abdel-Messeih Saleeb

Kirollos Beshry Fawzy

Luqa Nagati

Maged Solaiman Shehata

Malak Farag Ibrahim

Malak Ibrahim Sinewt

Milad Makeen Zaky

Mina Fayez Aziz

Sameh Salah Farouq

Samuel Estafanous Kamel

Samuel Wilson

Tawadros Yusuf Tawadros

Yusuf Shukry Yunan

Date: February 15, 2015

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2015/02/egypt-in-mourning-as-it-bombs-libyan-terrorist-targets-after-beheading-of-copts/>

Archbishop Giovanni Innocenzo Martinelli (**UPDATE:** said “Only a few of us remain, just a good group of Filipinos and it is for them that I have stayed. They are mainly nursing staff, nearly all women, who have opted to stay to tend to the growing healthcare needs of the people...At the moment the situation is calm, but no one knows what will happen next. However as I have often said, even if there were only one Christian here, I too would remain. It will all go according to the will of God”)

Date: February 17, 2015

Location: Tripoli

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/37294->

[AFRICA LIBYA Filipinos are the only ones who remain to serve the growing medical needs of our people says Bishop Martinelli#.VOVTT8JTEfQ](http://www.fides.org/en/news/37294-)

Fr Piotr Borkowski OFM (Polish citizen, said “...the people and the country is always more divided between different cabilas, tribes and militias. It is even difficult to understand who to turn to for help. Dialogue would solve many problems, but how do you talk to who only wants to use weapons?”)

Date: February 20, 2014

Location: Beida, Cyrenaica

Source: <http://www.misna.org/en/other/european-help-needed-says-missionary-in-cyrenaica-20-02-2015-813.html>



Nigeria

Bishop Emmanuel Badejo (blamed U.S. policy for aiding the rise of the Boko Haram Islamist group “The United States actually said it would help Nigeria with Boko Haram only if we modify our laws concerning homosexuality, family planning, and birth control...a child is a treasure, even if that child is going to have to go through some difficulty in growing up. In the West, if a child cannot have the best of life, then it should not live. That’s not the African world view...There is a diminishing sense of the respect for the sanctity of life.

And all of this is to be imposed on Africa, at whatever cost: we think that it is immoral and that it is unjust")

Date reported: February 17, 2015

Location: Rome, Italy

Source: <http://www.aleteia.org/en/religion/article/us-wont-help-fight-boko-haram-until-nigeria-accepts-homosexuality-birth-control-bishop-says-5344466437144576>

Mr James (said "Boko Haram fighters attacked our town Gaya. They killed over 30 people and burnt down several buildings in the community")

Date: February 19, 2015

Source: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/02/boko-haram-attacks-adamawa-villages-kills-40/>



Pakistan

Napolean Qayyum (rights advocate with World Vision in Progress Foundation; **UPDATE:** criticized the provincial government for creating a fast-track for the acquittal of citizens falsely accused of blasphemy but excluding non-Muslims from the new process)

Date: February 13, 2015

Location: Lahore, Punjab province

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2015/02/christians-excluded-from-pakistans-blasphemy-cases-fast-tracked-for-acquittal/>

James (one of four Christian photojournalists threatened by the Fidayan-e-Islam terrorists for converting Muslim youth, the militant group threatened to 'initiate action' against the Press Club if it did not expel the Christians from its membership, said "There is no truth in what has been claimed in the letter")

Date: February 18, 2015

Location: Quetta, Baluchistan

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistani-press-club-faces-threats-over-christian-journalists/73023>

Imtiaz Masih (falsely accused on [December 27, 2010](#) of the murder of his Muslim employer's brother, abducted by his employer, tortured into confessing his guilt to police, father forced to sign family property over to his employer; released on bail in [March 2011](#); **UPDATE:** acquitted at trial due to conflicting testimonies)

Date: February 7, 2015

Location: Sheikhpura

Source: <http://www.charismanews.com/world/48424-vindicated-christian-acquitted-of-false-murder-charges>



Philippines

Fr Sebastiano D'Ambra PIME (**UPDATE**: said “someone wants to destabilize Mindanao” after the January 25, 2015 battle in Mamasapano killed 65)

Date reported: February 19, 2015

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/37310-ASIA_PHILIPPINES_Missionary_says_someone_wants_to_destabilise_Mindanao#.VOa-2sJTEfQ



Sudan

Rev David Yein Reith (arrested by NISS secret police on [January 9, 2015](#) while returning home from a prayer meeting; **UPDATE**: still not charged, still in custody)

Rev Yat Michael (arrested by NISS secret police on [December 21, 2014](#) without charge after delivering a homily; **UPDATE**: still not charged, still in custody)

Date: February 18, 2015

Location: Khartoum

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2015/02/sudan-helps-muslim-investors-take-over-last-piece-of-church-land/>



Syria

Fr Hilal Ziad SJ (**UPDATE**: described a car bombing that killed 15 and wounded 50 "Most of them were students at the university, young people who had not left the city. So what sort of message does this attack send out now? I believe they were deliberately targeted...the attack was staged very close to our church and our aid center")

Date: January 21, 2015

Location: Homs

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/jesuit-laments-car-bomb-attack-in-syria-scorns-media-silence-90181/>

Sr Houda Fadoul (spoke on the 120 Christian families served by her community “The jihadists are not far away. We Christians are scared of them. But so are the Muslims of Al Nabek. After all, the jihadists also kill Muslims. No one wants them here...Many families either don’t have a flat at all anymore, or the ones they have are uninhabitable”)

Date reported: February 17, 2015

Location: Al Nabek

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/meet-the-christians-in-syria-who-want-to-stay-despite-the-war-72991/>

Fr Gabriel Daoud (detained by Kurdish PKK soldiers along with at least 12 other Christians for travelling without permits)

Date: February 16, 2015

Location: Hassake

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/37309-ASIA SYRIA Syrian Orthodox priest and laity arrested by Kurd military#.VObB-8JTEfQ](http://www.fides.org/en/news/37309-ASIA_SYRIA_Syrian_Orthodox_priest_and_laity_arrested_by_Kurd_military#.VObB-8JTEfQ)



Turkmenistan

Umud Gojayev (husband of Malahat Gojayev, father of three, arrested after a scuffle with neighbors in [Dashoguz](#), neighbor asked for charges to be dropped but police refused when they learned he was a Christian, sentenced to four years imprisonment; **UPDATE:** aged 32, freed from prison in an amnesty)

Ruslan Narkuliyev (aged 21, conscientious objector, sentenced to two years' imprisonment in September 2014, freed from prison in an amnesty)

Date: February 17, 2015

Soyunmurat Korov (conscientious objector, arrested, has been transferred to a military hospital due to a medical ailment)

Date: November 18, 2014

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2039



Uganda

Saidha Naigaga (beaten by her father for converting to Christianity, hospitalized for a week, later taken by her father to a local church and left there with a document renouncing his parental rights)

Muwanguzi Hassan (convert, has taken Saidha Naigaga into his home, he and his wife have cared for 17 other youths who have been disowned for converting to Christianity)

Date: December 13, 2014

Location: Bwite

Source [with photo]:

http://www.persecution.com/public/newsroom.aspx?story_ID=%3d373430&featuredstory_ID=%3d343830



Ukraine

Sergei Vladimirovich Luchenko (aged 44, cathedral employee, husband, father of two, **killed** in an artillery duel)

Date: February 13, 2015

Location: Horlivka

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/77274.htm>



United States - California

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone (asked by state lawmakers to remove 'morality clauses' from an upcoming contract for school teachers at Church owned schools)

Date: February 19, 2015

Location: San Francisco

Source [with photo]: <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/joan-desmond/lawmakers-to-san-fran-archbishop-drop-morality-clauses/>

United States - Illinois

Patriarch Dinkha IV (aged 79; **UPDATE**: hospitalized with influenza, developed respiratory distress, discharged into a rehab facility)

Dates: January 12, February 5, 2015

Source: <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/2015/02/holy-synod-statement-regarding-the-health-of-catholicos-patriarch-mar-dinkha-iv/>



Venezuela

Archbishop Roberto Luckert Leon (denounced the arrest of the mayor of Caracas allegedly for involvement in a U.S. led coup attempt as "proof of dictatorship", added "Our late President was not mistaken when he promised to take us into Cuba's ocean of happiness, and this is the proof. They are trampling every rule of law")

Date: February 19, 2015

Location: Santa Ana de Coro, Falcon state

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/37312->

[AMERICA_VENEZUELA_Police_arrest_Mayor_of_Caracas_for_Archbishop_Lueckert_proof_of_dictatorship#.VOgUlsJTEfQ](http://www.fides.org/en/news/37312-AMERICA_VENEZUELA_Police_arrest_Mayor_of_Caracas_for_Archbishop_Lueckert_proof_of_dictatorship#.VOgUlsJTEfQ)

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