

Today's Martyrs
2015-03-01 through 2015-03-07



Central African Republic

Archbishop Dieudonne Nzapalainga (**UPDATE**: visited two anti-balaka militia leaders in prison, said "I came to witness compassion to my children that are going through a difficult time. I came to tell them that God's love is strong, and they must not stop preaching peace")

Date: March 3, 2015

Location: Bangui

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/37381-AFRICA CENTRAL AFRICA Archbishop of Bangui visits two militia leaders in prison#.VPadVMJTefg](http://www.fides.org/en/news/37381-<u>AFRICA CENTRAL AFRICA Archbishop of Bangui visits two militia leaders in prison#.VPadVMJTefg</u>)



Egypt

Wagih Matta (three brothers and a cousin abducted in Libya, fate unknown)

Date reported: March 1, 2015

Location: Assiut

Source: <http://www.mendirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59895>

Fr Yosots Soleiman (mother disappeared in mysterious circumstances)

Date reported: March 2, 2015

Location: Maghagha

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1324&A=17799>

Fr Boktor Saad (expressed surprise after the attorney for 73 people accused of the August 14, 2013 arson attack on his church claimed that there was no church to be attacked)

Date reported: March 4, 2015

Location: Kafr Hakim, Kerdasa

Source [with photo]: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1326&A=17842>

Milad Fathy (abducted, freed by police)

Date reported: March 5, 2015

Location: Faqai village, Abu Qurqas

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1327&A=17858>

Salwa Fawzy (mother of Kyrillos Halim, son one of 30 soldiers killed fighting Islamists in Sinai, denied government compensation given to families of the Muslim soldiers)

Date: March 5, 2015

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59968>

Event: relatives of a Copt beheaded in Libya on or before February 15, 2015 have been accused of forging a document, detained and tortured

Atef Bashry (brother of Ezzat Bushra Nassif)

Damian Gerges

Date: March 3, 2015

Location: Samalout, Minya province

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59976>

Fr Ayub Yusif (automobile destroyed by arson)

Date: February 17, 2015

Location: Dalga, Minya province

Source: <http://www.raymondibrahim.com/from-the-arab-world/coptic-christian-priests-car-set-aflame/>

Heshmat Wasif Heshmat Makin (abducted, threatened with death, US\$131,000 ransom demanded)

Date: March 6, 2015

Location: Sahel Salim, Assiut province

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59990>



India

Gordon D'Souza (criticized the passage of state legislation that bans the possession, sale, or consumption of beef, said "Religion is something personal, and the government should not mix it with their laws", about 10.5 million people - mostly Muslims - will lose in part or in full their employment)

Date: March 4, 2015

Location: Maharashtra state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Maharashtra-bans-beef:-5-years-in-prison-for-those-who-eat-it-33617.html>

Rev Emmanuel Nobel (worship service halted by members of the Hindu Jagran Manch, accused of making forced conversions)

Date: March 1, 2015

Location: Kasba Jobat village, Alirajpur district, Madhya Pradesh state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Religious-freedom-increasingly-at-risk-in-India-as-new-attacks-are-perpetrated-against-Christians-33621.html>

Pastor Stephen Raj (said "We went to Rajasthan with a plan to go around preaching and sightseeing for four days, but it lasted only a few hours. As soon as we started, a man

came and asked, 'What is this?' He took our leaflet and went. He must have called the police...When we reached the place we were staying, they started abusing us and called the police again. The police came and took us to the police station in two jeeps. They made us stretch out our palms and beat us severely with wooden lathis. Those who pulled their hands back after the first beating came in for more beatings. Many of us have bruises and blood clots on our palms six days later")

Date: February 25, 2015

Location: Jaipur, Rajasthan state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2015/03/3754549>

Vadde Janardhan (aged 50, convert, farmer, assaulted with a large rock by the local RSS paramilitary leader on October 28, 2014; **UPDATE**: birthday party for his 3 year old granddaughter interrupted by 70 Hindu radicals, Christian guests beaten)

Date: November 23, 2014

Location: Appampally village, Mahabubnagar district, Telangana state

Raju (aged 22, beaten by 15 Hindu radicals in an attempt to force his conversion to Hinduism)

Date: December 31, 2014

Location: Appampally village, Mahabubnagar district, Telangana state

Gangamma (aged 60, convert, widow, home invaded by 100 Hindu radicals, family assaulted, possessions including a calendar with Bible verses thrown into the street, told "You either choose the village or you choose Jesus", grandson abducted and held for three days, released)

Date: December 23, 2014

Location: Akleshpur village, Mahabubnagar district, Telangana state

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2015/03/06/icc-investigated-one-of-indias-toughest-districts-for-christians/>



Iran

Pastor Saeed Abedini (**UPDATE**: reported to have been shaken by the beating and summary execution of six fellow inmates, and by the "crying and wailing" of their families)

Date reported: March 6, 2015

Location: Rajai Shahr Prison, Karaj

Source: <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2015/March/Pastor-Saeed-Shaken-after-Brutal-Executions/>



Lebanon

Michel Naim Aoun (retired general, called on the country to admit Assyrian Christian refugees from the recent ISIL attacks in Syria, said "We do not want that Christians find refuge in Europe and elsewhere. It is a crime to treat communities who have been living in the East for centuries in this way. Today we are facing a systematic uprooting of Christians in the East")

Date: March 3, 2015

Location: Beirut

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/37380-ASIA_LEBANON_Former_General_Aoun_let_us_welcome_Christians_fleeing_Syria#.VPaeB8JTEfg

Bishop Joseph Mouwad (described a church desecration)

Date: late February 2015

Location: Bekaa

Source: <http://www.raymondibrahim.com/from-the-arab-world/maronite-church-invaded-hole-dug-by-altar/>



Libya

Mansour Saad Awad (poultry farm worker, found **beheaded**)

Date: March 3, 2015

Location: Mechili, Cyrenaica

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/37375-AFRICA_EGYPT_Patriarch_Tawadros_meets_the_families_of_21_martyrs_another_Copt_beheaded_in_Libya#.VPagWMJTEfg

Emad Youssef Rizk (cousin of Amgad Atiya, tortured and **killed** while attempting to return to Egypt)

Amgad Atiya (reported on the murder of his cousin Emad Youssef Rizk)

Date reported: March 6, 2015

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59988>



Myanmar

Fr John Sau Luk (church damaged in shelling on **February 24, 2015**, shrapnel just missed the assistant pastor, **UPDATE**: six church employees detained by government military forces, interrogated and beaten)

Date: February 25, 2015

Location: Kutkai township, Shan state

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/shan-state-conflict-reaches-catholic-parish/73126>



Nigeria: Emiwo, Kogi State

Rev Phyllis Sortor (aged 70, widow of Jim Sortor, U.S. citizen, missionary, abducted by 5 armed men on February 23, 2015, US\$300,000 ransom demanded; **UPDATE**: freed)

Date: March 6, 2015

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/phyllis-sortor-american-missionary-kidnapped-in-nigeria-is-free-135288/>



North Korea

Pastor Lim Hyeon-Soo (aged 60, Canadian citizen, disappeared after his entry to the country, whereabouts unknown)

Date: January 31, 2015

Source [with photo]: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/North-Korea,-Protestant-pastor-missing-for-over-a-month-33603.html>



Philippines

Fr Pascual Benitez (apparent target of an explosive device planted at his church, no injuries or damage in the explosion)

Bishop Martin Jumoad (**UPDATE**: said that the bombing "makes me feel sad and caught me by surprise. This is the work of evil people and let us not be carried by our emotions")

Date: February 27, 2015

Location: Lamitan town, Basilan province

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/bomb-blast-hits-parish-church-in-the-philippines/73095>



Poland

Mariusz Dzierzawski (arrested at an [August 2, 2012](#) pro-life demonstration in [Kostrzyn](#) for possession of 'obscene' material, **UPDATE**: arresting officers convicted of illegal arrest)

Date: [February 20, 2015](#)

Location: [Slubice](#)

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/policemen-jailed-after-wrongful-arrest-of-polish-pro-lifers-during-demonstr>



Russia

Pastor Alexei Kolyasnikov (prayer service in a rented coffee shop room raided by FSB agents on September 28, 2014, detained; fined US\$480 on October 10, 2014; fine overturned on appeal on December 2, 2014; **UPDATE**: fine reinstated; reinstatement of the fine upheld on appeal)

Dates: [December 12, 2014](#), [January 28, 2015](#)

Location: [Krasnodar](#)

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2044



Syria

Dr Samir Ibrahim (detained by government forces on the Beirut-Damascus highway, **UPDATE**: released)

Gabriel Moshe (still in detention)

Dates: [July 5, 2014](#) and [March 2, 2015](#)

Location: [Damascus](#)

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20150302211930.htm>

Wanis (uncle of the wife of Fr Sirjun Zumaya, captured by ISIL, whereabouts unknown)

Date: [February 23, 2015](#)

Location: [Tal al-Jazira](#)

Fr Sirjun Zumaya (wife's uncle Wanis captured by ISIL, said "The village in which my wife's family lived in had no strategic value...They lived as one. It did not occur to them at all that they could be the victims of ferocious barbarism whose hearts lack honor, because of the failure and conspiracy of the disgraceful international community. After the Chaldeans and Yazidis came the Assyrians' turn. The ethnic cleansing in the region continues, from Iraq to the Levant, amidst dubious international silence...Whose turn is it? Who can we appeal to? I don't have anyone but Jesus Christ to appeal to")

Date: March 3, 2015

Location: Lebanon

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20150302211628.htm>

Abdo Mirza (father of Mariana Mirza, brother of Bobo Mirza, released from ISIL captivity, daughter not released, sister stayed with his daughter, told to return with money for his daughter's release)

Date: March 1, 2015

Location: Hasaka

Source [with photo]: <http://www.aina.org/news/20150301153544.htm>

Bobo Mirza (sister of Abdo Mirza, aunt of Mariana Mirza, released from ISIL captivity)

Mariana Mirza (aged 6, daughter of Abdo Mirza, niece of Bobo Mirza, released from ISIL captivity)

Yatroun Marko (husband of Wardiyya Yonan, released from ISIL captivity)

Wardiyya Yonan (wife of Yatroun Marko, released from ISIL captivity)

Date: March 3, 2015

Location: Hasaka

Source [with photo]: <http://www.aina.org/news/20150303164311.htm>

Bishop George Abu Khazen OFM (**UPDATE**: commented on the rebels refusal to a UN negotiated humanitarian truce "The rejection confirms that the war will continue until foreign powers fuel it. The US and Turks have just declared to have a plan of support and training of rebel groups for the next three years. So for them the war will last another three years, and the people here will continue to suffer and die for another three years...Before the riots, the nine hundred miles on the Turkish border were protected, and if by chance a shepherd crossed the border to catch a sheep that escaped, they would shoot and kill him. Now thousands of militiamen from there enter Syria with heavy weapons, while refugees are rejected, who from Syria try to go elsewhere to escape the violence of the jihadists")

Date: March 3, 2015

Location: Aleppo

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/37389-ASIA_SYRIA_The_rebels_say_no_to_truce_in_Aleppo_Bishop_Abou_Khazen_powers_from_outside_plan_our_torture#.VPfFq8JTEfg

Edward Adam (survived an ISIL attack in which homes were burned and crosses broken)

Date reported: March 5, 2015

Location: Al-Hasakah province

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=59979>



Ukraine

Archbishop Yevglogy (threatened by 20 masked men belonging to the pro-government group Right Sector)

Date: March 1, 2015

Location: Sumy

Source: <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/2015/03/ukrainian-nationalists-attack-moscow-patriarchates-church-in-sumy/>



United Kingdom

Geraldine Stockford (wife of the pastor of Christ Church Teddington, found that Marks & Spencer's online florist order form would not accept the word 'Christ' as it was on the offensive word list)

Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chief Executive of Christian Concerns, **UPDATE**: criticized Marks & Spencer online florist for adding the words 'Jesus' and 'Christ' to the list of banned offensive words on its portal while 'Buddha', 'Muhammad', and 'jihad' were allowed)

Date: March 1, 2015

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/religious-freedom/ms-backtracks-on-banning-christ>

Sarah Mbuyi (nursery nurse in Highbury, London, dismissed from her position in January 2014 for defending traditional Christian marriage; **UPDATE**: her former employer's attorney stated to the Employment Tribunal that Christian views are unacceptable in the workplace and equated Christianity with racism, said after her hearing "You know persecution is coming, but it feels really surreal when you realize it's happening to you")

Date: March 5, 2015

Location: London

Source [with photo]: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/freedom-of-speech/christian-views-unacceptable-in-the-workplace-tribunal-hears>



Venezuela

Fr Javier Yonekura (rector of the Catholic University of Tachira [UCAT], issued a statement on police repression that "strongly condemns the murder of the student Kliverth Roa and expresses solidarity with the pain suffered by his family" and condemned the police because "the statements against UCAT are unfounded and are not coherent with the mission and the work of an institution that houses more than ten thousand people...whose

sole purpose is to train new professionals for the common good of Tachira and Venezuela")

Date: March 3, 2015

Location: Tachira

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/37377->

[AMERICA VENEZUELA Classes suspended in the University of Tachira false accusations made against the Catholic University#.VPasecJTEfg](http://www.fides.org/en/news/37377-AMERICA_VENEZUELA_Classes_suspended_in_the_University_of_Tachira_false_accusations_made_against_the_Catholic_University#.VPasecJTEfg)

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Martyrs