

Today's Martyrs
2015-03-15 through 2015-03-21



Egypt

Marina Louis Shoukrallah (aged 18, daughter of Louis Shokrallah Tawadros, disappeared during a religious service at Monastery of Jabal al-Tair, [Samalout, Minya](#) on [May 31, 2014](#);

UPDATE: still missing, family alleges that the police have information on her whereabouts but refuse to release the information)

Date: [March 14, 2015](#)

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=60119>

Nagy Ghalib (disappeared in mysterious circumstances)

Date: [March 12, 2015](#)

Location: [Qena](#)

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1337&A=18012>



India

Archbishop Thomas D'Souza (denounced the rape of a 72 year old nun and the beating of three elderly nuns during an armed robbery at a parochial school convent, all were hospitalized)

Date: [March 13, 2015](#)

Location: [Ranagath, West Bengal](#)

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/West-Bengal:-after-elderly-nun-raped,-faithful-march-to-demand-justice-33716.html>

Fr Savarimuthu Sankar (**UPDATE:** said of the gang rape of a 72 year old nun “We should know that there is already a vicious atmosphere against Christians in the country, which encourages criminals to attack Christians”)

Date: [March 13, 2015](#)

Location: [Delhi](#)

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-christians-rally-to-show-solidarity-with-raped-elderly-nun/73203>

Sajan K George (**UPDATE:** reacted to a leader of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad who said that the [March 13, 2015](#) gang rape of a 72 year old nun was part of Christian and not Hindu culture "We condemn in the strongest possible terms the comments made by the VHP

joint general secretary Surendra Jain. How low he can get shows how dangerous he is. Rape is wrong, a terrible and despicable act...Vile, vulgar and deliberately malicious comments show how dangerous the mind-set of Hindu radicals is. Our women are a risk with such elements in Indian society")

Date: March 17, 2015

Location: Mumbai

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-leader:-Hindu-radicals-are-a-danger-to-the-women-of-India-33743.html>

Event: A peaceful march by 1,500 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, hundreds were beaten and detained including priests, nuns, elderly, and children

Fr Dennis George (choked by police)

Date: February 5, 2015

Location: Delhi

Source [with photo]: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2015/03/13/police-in-india-accused-of-roughing-up-christian-protesters/>

Event: Two dozen Christian, Muslim, and secular groups hold a protest on the 300th day of Prime Minister Narendra Damodardas Modi's administration and issued a report entitled *300 DAYS – Documenting Hate and Communal Violence under the Modi Regime*, which listed 168 incidents of anti-Christian violence in that time

Dr John Dayal (**UPDATE:** said “What we have compiled is perhaps a tenth of the actual number of incidents...there has been a marked shift in public discourse. Mr. Modi came into office riding a promise of development, his election campaign fuelled by unbridled hate against Muslims and Christians. Development remains a mirage, but the hate has fuelled violence across the country”)

Archbishop Emeritus Vincent Concessao (**UPDATE:** said “I am standing before you not as a Christian but as a citizen of the country. The state of affairs is dangerous. We have to raise our voices against what is happening”)

Date: March 19, 2015

Location: New Delhi

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2015/03/3777970>



Iran

Pastor Saeed Abedini (aged 32 in 2013, convert, US citizen, husband of Naghmeh Shariat Panahi Abedini, father of Rebekka and Jacob, convicted on [January 27, 2013](#) of undermining the government by spreading Christianity and sentenced to eight years in prison; **UPDATE:** wrote a letter to his son Jacob for his seventh birthday " ...I long to be there for your

birthday and to make this reunion happen, but my chains are keeping me from you...God came in human flesh in Jesus Christ all the way from heaven to the earth to give us the gift of salvation by being crucified on the cross for the punishment of our sin. So on this special day, I want you to accept this gift of salvation. Invite Jesus into your heart as you have invited me to your birthday...So happy birthday to my big boy and my hero, Jacob Cyrus Abedini. Thank you for standing strong with me in this battle for the Glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Your proud Dad")

Jacob Cyrus Abedini

Date published: March 13, 2015

Location: Rajai Shahr Prison, Karaj

Source: <http://aclj.org/persecuted-church/pastor-saeed-writes-his-son-for-his-birthday-my-chains-are-keeping-me-from-you>



Italy

Cardinal Carlo Caffarra (condemned the actions of a reporter who went to confession with fictional sins, recorded the conversations, and published them in her newspaper)

Date: March 11, 2015

Location: Bologna

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/journalist-blasted-for-lying-in-confessional-recording-priests-answers-53452/>



Libya

Archbishop Giovanni Innocenzo Martinelli (**UPDATE**: said “I know that my life is in danger. What can I do? I can trust only God. If it is his will that the church grows in the Islamic world, I will do everything to defend it”)

Date: March 17, 2015

Location: Tripoli

Source [with photo]: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=60182>



Nigeria

Bishop Joseph Bagobiri (**UPDATE**: described details of the army attack on St Peter Church)

Zakaria Yaki (aged 48, power company worker, **shot dead**)

David Jester (aged 24, Kaduna State College of Education student, **shot dead**)

Date: March 8, 2015

Location: Gidan-Waya, Jama'a local government area, Kaduna state

Source: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/03/tension-in-southern-kaduna-over-the-killing-of-3-catholics/#sthash.3y1vu4rq.dpuf>



Pakistan

Event: Two churches were attacked by the Pakistani Taliban, initial toll is 14 dead and 80 wounded, several children unaccounted for, two alleged attackers were reportedly captured by enraged mothers who stoned them then burned them alive

Patras Bhatti (aged 48, taxi driver, assisted with security at St John's church, shirt stained by blood and flesh of victims, said he heard gunfire then "Seconds later the blue door of the steel gate came flying inside with a blast. The echo still resounds in my head. I can hear properly from my right ear...We had a small committee of 12 parishioners who were stationed at the gate and in the street outside. It's a free service to protect the Church attendants and only God will reward us. Perhaps He saved me to die some day on duty")

Moon Ashknaz (pointed to a bloodstain on the ground near the church gate "This is the blood of the leader of our security team. There was panic inside but we led the parishioners outside, towards the school playground, at the back and through an emergency exit")

Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shah (**UPDATE**: visited both churches, said "Time and again we had been demanding tighter security measures, especially during the Sunday service. The government has failed to protect us. All religious groups have to meet the challenge and raise their voice against this kind of attack...We salute the young martyrs who prevented the militants from entering the Church building. The wounds of [the September 22, 2013] Peshawar Church blasts are still fresh; we are already on the road to Calvary")

Rev Irshad Ashknaz (Christ Church, said the terror attack began during Communion with gunfire: "Soon afterwards there was a loud explosion, and clouds of dust rose above the street. By that time we had evacuated members of the congregation from the back door; some 1,000 people were present inside the church at that time")

Asher Wasim (described the attack on Christ Church "[The shooter with the machine gun was] clearing the way for the bomber [as he approached] the entrance from the opposite side")

Yousuf Goga (Christ Church volunteer security guard, hospitalized, **died**)

Shamim Bhatti (Christ Church volunteer security guard, hospitalized in critical condition)

Obaid Sardar Khokhar (aged 32, husband of Ambreen Khokhar, father of Angelina Khokhar, Christ Church volunteer security guard, overpowered the suicide bomber and dragged him away from the church, **shot in the head** by the bomber's accompanying gunman)

Ambreen Khokhar (wife of Obaid Sardar Khokhar, mother of Angelina Khokhar, pregnant, **shot dead** when she tried to prevent Angelina from rushing to her father after he was shot)

Angelina Khokhar (aged 3, daughter of Obaid Sardar Khokhar and Ambreen Khokhar, saved by her mother's intervention during the terror attack, now orphaned)

Mukhtar Joseph (father of Ambreen Khokhar, grandfather of Angelina Khokhar, described how his daughter died while saving his granddaughter in the terror attack)

Alias Masih (Christ Church volunteer security guard, **killed**)

Joseph Francis (**UPDATE**: injured in the church attacks, hospitalized, released)

Fr Francis Gulzar (**UPDATE**: described the actions of Akash Bashir during the terror attack on St John's Church)

Akash Bashir (aged 16, son of Bashir Emmanuel, St John Church volunteer security guard, pulled the attacking suicide bomber down as he attempted to scale the wall surrounding the church even after he was shown the explosive vest, **killed in the explosion**)

Bashir Emmanuel (father of Akash Bashir, described how his son died stopping a suicide bomber from entering his church)

Sr Arsene (said "We're treated as second class citizens. We'd like the government to give Christians our due place and due right. That's why the angry youths reacted [by rioting and killing two suspected terrorists]")

Napoleon Qayyum (rights advocate; **UPDATE**: resides only 100 yards from St John's Church, said "The local police station had been requested to provide a walk-through gate for security, but no such measure was put in place", complained that Muslims killed while stopping suicide bombers are given posthumous government awards but Christians never are)

Date: March 15, 2015

Location: Youhanabad area, Lahore, Punjab province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Church-attacks:-we-are-already-on-the-road-to-Calvary,-says-Lahore-bishop-33721.html>

and <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2015/03/3772063>

and <http://morningstarnews.org/2015/03/religious-tensions-simmer-across-pakistan-following-church-bombings/>

and <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/headlinenewsd.php?hnewsid=5245>

Riaz Masih (critically beaten by Muslims for protesting the March 15, 2015 suicide bombings of the two churches in Lahore)

Date: March 16, 2015

Location: Kasur

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2015/03/3772063>

Event: The Justice and Peace Commission issued a report on the March 15, 2015 terror attack on the two churches in Lahore which stated that police "agents present at the time of the attack were busy watching the cricket match on TV, instead of carrying out their duty to protect churches"

Fr Emmanuel Yousuf Mani (**UPDATE**)

Cecil Shane Chaudhry (**UPDATE**)

Date: March 16, 2015

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/37454->

[ASIA_PAKISTAN_The_Justice_and_Peace_Commission_on_the_massacre_of_Christians_Police_negligent#.VQkLo8JTEfg](http://www.fides.org/en/news/37454-ASIA_PAKISTAN_The_Justice_and_Peace_Commission_on_the_massacre_of_Christians_Police_negligent#.VQkLo8JTEfg)

Fr John Nisar (said after the March 15, 2015 Pakistani Taliban attack on the two churches "We must be humble...We are in Lent, a time for practicing forgiveness and sacrifice. We strongly condemn the Sunday attacks, we stand alongside the suffering families and also condemn the destruction of public property. We must remain peaceful and witness Christ with our own lives")

Date: March 17, 2015

Location: Lahore, Punjab province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Attacks-in-Lahore,-Catholics-and-Protestants-together-for-a-day-of-fasting-and-prayer-33737.html>

Wilson Chowdhry (chairman of the British Pakistani Christian Association, **UPDATE**: said after the burning of a church in retaliation for protests following the March 15, 2015 church terror attacks in Lahore "Pakistan is reaching a point of no return, the change that the first consecutive democratically elected government suggested, has not come to fruition. We are now seeing more internal turmoil and polarization than ever before. Christians in Pakistan have always had a tough life, but these latest acts of violence illustrate a pending humanitarian crisis of previously unheard of levels. This might well be the beginning of the end for Christianity in Pakistan")

Date: March 17, 2015

Location: Lalyani village, Kasur district

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/headlinenews.php?hnewsid=5246>



Spain

Fr Adolfo Enriquez (aged 77, **murdered** while feeding his cats, body hidden in a haystack)

Date: March 10, 2015

Location: Vilanova dos Infantes, Galicia

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/37460->

[EUROPE_SPAIN_Pastor_of_the_Shrine_of_Virxe_do_Cristal_killed#.VQkKWsjTEfg](http://www.fides.org/en/news/37460-EUROPE_SPAIN_Pastor_of_the_Shrine_of_Virxe_do_Cristal_killed#.VQkKWsjTEfg)



Sudan

Rev David Yein Reith (arrested by NISS secret police on January 9, 2015 while returning home from a prayer meeting; **UPDATE**: to be tried for evangelizing Muslims)

Rev Yat Michael (arrested by NISS secret police on December 21, 2014 without charge after delivering a homily; **UPDATE**: to be tried for evangelizing Muslims)

Date reported: March 13, 2015

Location: Khartoum

Source: <http://barnabasfund.org/news/Two-pastors-in-Sudan-to-be-tried-for-evangelising-Muslims>



United Kingdom

Aisleen Hubert (aged 21, as of [October 27, 2014](#) has brought a private prosecution against 3 doctors implicated in illegal gender-selection abortions after Crown prosecutors refused to prosecute; **UPDATE**: Crown prosecutors announced that they would take over and then drop the prosecutions as 'not in the public interest', have refused to release her video recordings of the doctors agreeing to abort females, which is a crime under UK law)

Date: March 13, 2015

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/abortion/cps-to-take-over-and-drop-gender-abortion-cases>



Vietnam

Fr Dominic Tran Van Vu (ordered by the government to leave his parish, temporary church building to be torn down, demolition delayed after more than 6,000 parishioners mounted anti-government demonstrations)

Bishop Michael Hoang Duc Oanh (**UPDATE**: spoke on the government's refusal to allow a permanent church building to be built)

Date: January 7, 2015

Location: Dak Jak, Kontum

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Vietnamese-authorities-threaten-to-tear-down-a-church-and-expel-its-priest-33729.html>

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