

Today's Martyrs
2015-08-23 through 2015-08-29



Australia

Pastor Bobbie Houston (called on women to pray in opposition to ISIL's 'theology of rape':
"Perhaps if we committed ourselves to pray each day at 12 [noon - the girl was 12yrs old]
for a few moments. If you don't know HOW to pray - pray Psalm 10 over this situation.
Pray in the Spirit. Pray with understanding. Pray with authority. Pray for the victims.
Pray for the perpetrators. Yes. Pray for the enemy. All I know is that PRAYER MAKES
A WAY")

Date: August 21, 2015

Location: Sydney

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/hillsong-church-pastor-bobbie-houston-horrified-by-islamic-states-theology-of-rape-mobilizes-women-everywhere-to-pray-143378/>



Belarus

Dmitry Chorba (aged 23, conscientious objector, criminal case opened on [June 11, 2015](#) against him; **UPDATE**: case closed, fears he may be called up again in the autumn)

Date: July 2015

Location: Rechitsa, Gomel region

Viktor Kalina (aged 21, indicted for refusing military service, had been exempted from military service the previous year due to heart disease, trial begun)

Dates: June 22, August 17, 2015

Location: Brest

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2094



China

Pastor Guo (husband threatened by police that 'something bad' would happen if their congregation did not join the official church, said "The Religious Affairs Bureau wants us to join the Three-Self, but I will not agree. We have endured for many years already. We will never compromise to them")

Date: August 18, 2015

Location: Shantou, Chenghai district, Guangdong province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2015/08/guangdong-house-church-sealed-after.html>

Zhang Kai (civil rights attorney; **UPDATE**: disappeared, apparently detained in response to his defense of churches during the cross removal campaign)

Date: August 25, 2015

Location: Wenzhou, Zhejiang province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2015/08/international-business-times-china.html>

and <http://www.chinaaid.org/2015/08/new-york-times-lawyer-who-represented.html>



Cuba

Berta Soler (**UPDATE**: said “We’re really worried. When Pope Benedict XVI came to Cuba they shut down telephone lines in an area of some 15 to 25 miles. They did the same to the cell phones of human rights activists and their close relatives. Cuban officials began arresting all the human rights activists so we couldn’t participate in the Masses the Pope celebrated in Santiago de Cuba and Havana. We’re waiting, we’re thinking the same thing is going to happen when the Holy Father Pope Francis comes”)

Date reported: August 27, 2015

Location: Havana

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/ahead-of-papal-visit-cubas-women-in-white-fear-government-crackdown-66398/>



Egypt

Fr Angelous Mikhail (complained of the now 30-year closure of a church "for no reason" by security forces, the church is only one of two available in the village for 22,000 Christians)

Date: August 23, 2015

Location: Rahmaniya village, Qena province

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=64099>

Fr Luka Radi (**UPDATE**: described how historical church furniture was to be auctioned to pay a US\$19,157 fine against him and Pope Twardos)

Date: August 22, 2015

Location: Rashid, Beheira province

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=64085>

Mariam Malak Zakry Tadros (aged 16, sister of Dr Bassem, student ranked first in her class, exams altered on or before [July 26, 2015](#) to give her a failing grade; appealed on [August 19, 2015](#) to President al-Sisi for help; **UPDATE**: prosecutors have questioned her three times in apparent retaliation for her original complaint, appear to be building a case that her previous high grades were the result of cheating and fraud)

Date reported: [August 23, 2015](#)

Location: Minya

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=64094>

Eid Rashid Gergis (aged 55, farmer, disappeared, **body found, had been murdered**)

Dates: [August 17-24, 2015](#)

Location: Sylla village, Minya province

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1451&A=20051>

Medhat Isaac (aged 35, arrested on August 7, 2015 for passing out Bibles in a public location in Giza, charged with contempt of religion even though he said nothing against any religion, ordered held for 15 days; **UPDATE**: ordered held another 15 days)

Rafik Rafaat (attorney, said that the judge will likely continue to extend Medhat Isaac's detention until the case is no longer under public scrutiny and then impose a sentence of up to 5 years' imprisonment)

Date: [August 24, 2015](#)

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2015/08/christian-in-egypt-kept-in-prison-on-false-charge-of-blasphemy-attorney-says/>

Gamal Silvanus (father of military recruit Bahaa Gamal Mikhael Silvanus, said "My son was killed by someone. He didn't kill himself"; **UPDATE**: said "The forensic report on the killing of my son is not true")

Date: [August 25, 2015](#)

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=64116>

Bahaa Saeed Karam (aged 22, soldier, shot with four bullets while with his battalion, **died in hospital**)

Date: [August 23, 2015](#)

Location: Marsa Matruoh

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=64146>

Ashraf Thabet (aged 33, **stabbed to death** during a dispute with Muslim neighbors)

Date reported: [August 28, 2015](#)

Location: Minya

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1454&A=20102>



Ethiopia

Event: Six Christian parish council leaders were charged with inciting public disturbance, destroying public trust in government officials, and spreading hatred after sending a letter to the Prime Minister that documented employment discrimination, church burnings, physical attacks, and death threats, convicted

Yemariam Worke Teshager (sentenced to 8 years 8 months' imprisonment)

Masresha Seife (sentenced to 5 years 6 months' imprisonment)

Nigatua Lema (sentenced to 5 years 6 months' imprisonment)

Mulugeta Aragaw (sentenced to 5 years 6 months' imprisonment)

Habtamu Teka (sentenced to 5 years 6 months' imprisonment)

Maru Lema (sentenced to 5 years 6 months' imprisonment)

Dates: July 6 and August 7, 2015

Location: Kilty, Silte zone, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2015/08/3982042/>



India

Pastor Malkeet Singh (said “Since June 27, we have not been able to have any kind of worship meetings. The extremists threatened to harm us if we utter the name of Christ or conduct any Christian meetings”)

Date reported: August 28, 2015

Location: Nakhnool village, Rajasthan state

Pastor Pratap Singh (forced with his family to worship idols)

Rajamman Johnson (described the Hindu extremist attack on the family of Pastor Pratap Singh “The extremists had been following the movement of Pastor Singh closely for a long time, and then they dragged him back from his hiding place to forcefully convert him along with 10 members of his family to Hinduism in an hour-long Ghar Vapsi ceremony. About 600 people gathered in front of Pastor Singh’s house, put up the idol of the Hindu god Hanuman, forced Pastor Singh and 10 family members to worship the idol and forced him to sign a paper which said, 'I am willing to be a Hindu'. They forced them to drink water procured from the Ganga River and put kumkum [red marks] on their foreheads to show that they were now Hindus...The extremists boldly claimed that they were the ruling [BJP] party in the state, and that they can stop whatever they like. The support they get from the police and the village head emboldened their actions”)

Anil Masih (said "The extremists threatened to socially boycott the Christians if they continue to worship Christ and threatened to kill them if they submit a police complaint against anyone”)

Date: July 19, 2015

Location: Nakhnool village, Rajasthan state

Malkeeth Singh (evangelist, family threatened)

Date: July 18, 2015

Location: Bandholi, Rajasthan state

Pastor Benjamin Gomes (said "On every Sunday for more than a month now, around 100 Hindu extremists gathered near where we are conducting Sunday meetings and threatened to harm some of our church members if they continue to attend the prayer meetings. Even the village head told us to stop the meeting")

Rev Anand Chougule (said that the church of Pastor Benjamin Gomes had been accused of forcible conversions, but every member testified to the contrary)

Date reported: August 28, 2015

Location: Pinguli village, Kudal, Sindhugurh

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2015/08/death-threats-forced-conversions-of-christians-cited-in-india/>



Indonesia

Rev Erde Berutu (**UPDATE**: said that his church was destroyed by arson "We want local police to fairly investigate the case. We lament that the police still believe that a short circuit was the cause of the fire. We don't see it that way...There's an indication that our church was burned down [on purpose]. There was a reuncong [in the rubble]. This reuncong [machete] wouldn't be there by itself...There was a religion-based conflict in 1979 and our church was set on fire. In 1999, another group tried to burn down our church, but a member of the congregation saw the fire on the door and immediately put it out")

Rev Domeniktus Padang (said that the church destruction might be related to the restrictive local building codes, which make it almost impossible to build a church)

Date: August 18, 2015

Location: Mandumpang village, Aceh province

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/dispute-over-cause-of-fire-after-indonesian-church-burns-down/74137>



Iraq

Salma Lewis (**murdered**, body found)

Date: August 26, 2015

Location: Bagdad

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=64126>



Israel

Fr Abdel Masih Fahim OFM (complained of recent government actions that may force the closure of up to 48 Christians schools “The Education Ministry is financially strangling the Christian schools that have existed for hundreds of years” while independent Orthodox Jewish schools remain 100% funded despite legal requirements to not discriminate)

Boutros Mansour (said that some Christians see the government's actions as an attempt to pressure the Christian schools to become public schools “If this is the case, the whole Christian faith emphasis would be lost...[the schools provide an] important base of establishing Christian identity in Israel. Without them there is almost no social identity [outside church]”)

Date: August 19, 2015

Location: Nazareth

Source: <http://www.catholicsun.org/2015/08/19/christian-educators-say-israeli-policies-could-force-school-closures/>



Nigeria

Rev Samuel Dante Dali (husband of Dr Rebecca Dali; **UPDATE**: said “Nigeria will overcome the Boko Haram challenge soon. 70% of our [Church of the Brethren] churches have been destroyed in Adamawa, Yobe and Borno states by Boko Haram; over 8,000 of our members were killed. 176 of the girls kidnapped in Chibok are our members”)

Date: August 23, 2015

Location: Jos, Plateau state

Source: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/08/boko-haram-killed-over-8000-members-of-my-church-eyn-president/>

Ushahemba Kumashenge (brother of Sughter Kumashenge, farmer, **killed** by Muslim Fulani gunmen)

Sughter Kumashenge (brother of Ushahemba Kumashenge, farmer, **killed** by Muslim Fulani gunmen)

Rev Caleb Ahema (**UPDATE**: reported on the murders of Ushahemba and Sughter Kumashenge)

Date: August 22, 2015

Location: Kortse village, Gassol local government area, Taraba state

Tanko Nyam (aged 45, married, father of five, **killed** by Muslim Fulani gunmen)

Date: June 11, 2015

Location: Kyari Daddu village, Jaba local government area, Kaduna state

John Danfulani (said "[Christians in Kaduna] are being wiped out with impunity, and the casualty figures increase with every attack. Everything points to the fact that our people are being used as sacrificial lambs")

Date reported: August 24, 2015

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2015/08/muslim-herdsmen-attacks-in-nigerias-middle-belt-show-jihadist-aims-sources-say/>

Cardinal John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan (aged 71, **UPDATE**: marched with the Bring Back Our Girls organization to protest 500 days of captivity for the remaining 219 Chibok schoolgirls, said "My heart bleeds for the children. I feel terribly ashamed. I feel ashamed that about 300 girls should disappear just like that")

Date: August 27, 2015

Location: Abuja

Source: <http://news.yahoo.com/nigeria-marks-500-days-since-boko-haram-schoolgirl-052602199.html>



Pakistan

Khurram Naveed (aged 33, husband of Sobia Mariam Naveed, father of Ramia and Eman, former teacher, in hiding due to his wife's conversion, said "My wife, I and our children have had to flee from place to place. We feel threatened as soon as people find out about by wife's Muslim past. However, running from one place to another is not easy. There are so many problems. Until now I have to change job six times and finding new employment is not easy. But we need security for our life and we ask for help from the people of God")

Sobia Mariam Naveed (aged 25, convert, wife of Khurram Naveed, mother of of Ramia and Eman, former teacher, in hiding due to her conversion, said "Since I am still registered as a Muslim, we are open to threats. I really hope someone will help us because it is now impossible to lead a free life. In any event, despite all these problems, we remain firm in our faith following the teaching of the Lord Jesus until the last breath. I accepted Him in my heart and shall not go back")

Ramia Naveed (aged 4, daughter of Khurram and Sobia Mariam Naveed, in hiding due to her mother's conversion from Islam)

Eman Naveed (aged 2, daughter of Khurram and Sobia Mariam Naveed, in hiding due to her mother's conversion from Islam)

Date reported: August 25, 2015

Location: undisclosed

Rev Mukhtar Fazal (former owner of The Light Christian Primary School, said "Although the school was doing well and was highly respected, it was impossible to keep it open in the city after Sobia's [2010] conversion. I had to sell the building at half of its market value. My business was ruined even though I was not directly involved in the affair")

Date reported: August 25, 2015

Location: Faisalabad

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Faisalabad:-Christian-family-forced-to-flee-from-place-to-place-after-wife-converts-from-Islam-35131.html>

Soran Masih (father of Aasiya Noreen aka Asia Bibi, has petitioned the High Court to overturn a lower court decision which denied him permission to visit his daughter on death row; the High Court granted the petition, ordered prison authorities to allow family visitations)

Rehana Bibi (sister of Aasiya Noreen aka Asia Bibi, allowed visitation rights)

Date: August 21-23, 2015

Location: Lahore, Punjab province

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=5562>

and <http://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistan-court-clears-way-for-father-to-visit-asia-bibi/74142>

and <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=5565>

Naveed Aziz (British-Pakistani Christian Association officer, travelled to the recently flooded areas, said "I was shocked at the immense devastation before me it was a lot to take in. People are in real desperation and children are starving. I am surprised and shocked at the lack of help from Pakistani authorities...When it comes to flooding of Christian communities, the government seems to back away. Whereas with Muslim communities, they go straight in there, so do the Muslim charities", many charities demanded that the Christian flood victims convert to Islam to receive aid)

Date reported: August 20, 2015

Location: Kasur

Source: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/floods-worsen-already-deplorable-lives-of-pak-christians>

Nasim (aged 26, wife of Dilawar Masih, harassed and insulted by a Muslim for being pregnant)

Khaliq Masih (brick kiln worker, husband of Kalsoom, verbally defended Nasim, home attacked, severely beaten, arm fractured with an axe, hospitalized)

Kalsoom (wife of Khaliq Masih, attacked, injured, hospitalized)

Fr Abid Tanveer (**UPDATE**: called the attack 'shameful')

Prof Anjum James Paul (**UPDATE**: said "Pakistani non-Muslims are being threatened. They are not considered equal. Attacking non-Muslims in Pakistan has become a routine. They are either being forcibly converted from their original religions or leaving their homeland as they do not feel secure in their motherland.")

Date: August 27, 2015

Location: Chak No 221 GB village, Samundri

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=5573>



Russia

Dmitry Metelin (detained, questioned, and beaten)

Dates: [May 21 and June 26, 2015](#)

Location: Cherkessk

Andrei Volovikov (planted 'extremist' literature found in a home search conducted while he and his son were ill)

Date: [February 15, 2015](#)

Location: Cherkessk

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2095



Syria

Archbishop Samir Nassar (**UPDATE**: spoke on the shelling of two churches and multiple residences that killed 9 and wounded more than 50: "Part of the war in Syria is to live under indiscriminate bombing, a kind of Russian roulette which is always unpredictable...Of those who died, at least you will not have to see and live this cruel tragedy without end. You will not see your children, your friends and your neighbors suffer and die in the blind violence and fanatical killing unable to save them or help them without understanding why...The survivors bury the dead without having been able to treat the wounded since they lack means and competence. They sink into silent prayer before the relics of martyrs, the seeds of Faith")

Date: [August 23, 2015](#)

Location: Damascus

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/38348->

[ASIA SYRIA Mortar attacks on two churches in Damascus The Maronite Archbishop our life is like a game of Russian roulette#.Vd5seMLlsg](#)



Ukraine

Fr Rostislav Sapozhnik (husband, father of 11 and 17 year old sons, church illegally seized by the Kiev Patriarchate on [September 10, 2014](#); **UPDATE**: ordered evicted along with his family from their adjoining home which they have occupied for 17 years, ordered to pay US\$2,690 in 'back rent')

Date: August 18, 2015

Location: Ugrinov village, Horikhiv district, Volhynia region

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/81544.htm>



United Kingdom

Nissar Hussain (convert from Islam, husband of Kubra, resident of Manningham, shunned by his extended family, has been labelled a "Christian Jew dog", wife has been sworn and spat at, children have been ostracized at school, automobile firebombed; sent a letter with his wife on [May 15, 2015](#) to their Member of Parliament listing the acts of terrorism against them by their Muslim neighbors and police since their 1996 conversion from Islam, these acts included being forced to move in June 2006 after three automobiles were destroyed and a police sergeant said in response to an attempted arson attack on their home "Stop trying to be a crusader and move out!", persecution began again after they appeared in a September 2008 documentary on persecution, car damaged again on [April 24, 2015](#) and again on [May 15, 2015](#), the MP has yet to reply as of [June 10, 2015](#); **UPDATE:** automobile pelted with eggs, 40 young Muslim men gathered outside his home in an act of intimidation, son's automobile windows broken)

Dates: August 18-20, 2015

Location: Bradford

Source: <https://barnabafund.org/news/Local-Muslim-community-persecutes-British-convert-from-Islam>



United States - Illinois

Robert DeKelaita (aged 52, husband of Ester, father of two sons, immigration attorney, indicted in September 2014 on charges of making false allegations of religious persecution on asylum requests of Christians from Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, said "The way that some of our federal judges view the plight of Christians in Iraq and the way some of the adjudicators view them, you would honestly think 'what is wrong with these people?' Why can't they see what the rest of the world sees?")

Ramon Michael (Assyrian immigrant, said "Dangerous people are allowed to come in across our borders and these people [Assyrian asylum seekers], I'd let these people babysit my kids, that's how much I fear these people. Something is up. I don't know what, but it seems to be very anti-Christian to me...[There was an inaccurate and outdated European report that] was saying there is no persecution of Christians in Iraq and for many years [the immigration courts] were using that to deny asylum and Robert was able to get that

stopped, and that was when things started going bad for him. He was able to make a pretty substantial impact if judges were no longer able to cite that report")

Mimi Odicho (Assyrian immigrant, said "My sister and her three young children are among the Assyrian hostages in Syria. We don't even know if they're still alive. Instead of trying to help save them - save these innocent people - the U.S. government is trying to take down a man who has been our people's only hope for years. Robert [DeKelaita] is our hero. I don't think anyone could possibly understand what he means to us")

Narsai Oshana (Assyrian immigrant, said "I think our community finds hope in Robert [DeKelaita] because he is an attorney that is not foreign to our part of the world, to our plight and our history. He knows exactly what we have endured, because he's lived it himself. He represented me in my asylum claim when I didn't have any way to pay him except with thanks. That was enough for him. I will never forget that. To me, like many, Robert was light at the end of a very long, horrid tunnel. His name is known everywhere. I am forever indebted to him")

Bishop Gewargis Younan (said "He [Robert DeKelaita] escaped persecution as a child, and resettled in the United States. He had every reason to fail, but instead he went on to graduate from the prestigious University of Chicago and ultimately was considered the best attorney for Middle Eastern Christians. His entire career has been aimed at giving back - to his church, to his heritage, to his people. He is a role model for members of our community, both American-born and immigrants. I can say with confidence that every parishioner in our church has either themselves been represented by Mr DeKelaita, or has a relative that was represented by him. When the charges were filed, the community was in outrage and disbelief, and rightfully so. There is not a single Assyrian family anywhere in Iraq or Syria that has not been directly impacted by religious persecution. The manner in which Mr DeKelaita's case has been approached seemingly moves to challenge this truth. We are proud of Mr DeKelaita's achievements, and will continue to support him during this time")

Date reported: August 24, 2015

Location: Chicago

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20150824143535.htm>

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