

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2015-12-27 through 2016-01-02



### **Bangladesh**

Bishop Bejoy N D'Cruze OMI (**UPDATE**: received a death threat “Fulfil your last dream because your life is in last stage. Very soon you are going to be killed by us”)

Bishop Paul Panen Kubi (**UPDATE**: received a death threat)

Fr Boniface Subrata Tolentino (received a death threat)

Fr Ujjol Rozario (**UPDATE**: received a death threat)

Br Binoy (received a death threat)

Aldrick Biswas (Catholic newspaper executive director, received a death threat)

Rev Edward Jagadish (received a death threat)

Date reported: December 28, 2015

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Fear-at-Christmas-in-Bangladesh-as-two-bishops-receive-death-threats-36257.html>



### **China**

Huo Jinrong (detained by police, still not released)

Li Yan (detained by police, still not released)

Pan Xianglong (detained by police, still not released)

Date: November 18, 2015

Date reported: December 26, 2015

Location: Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, Xinjiang province

Fang Jianying (detained by police, still not released)

Chen Ai'e (detained by police, still not released)

Date: December 11, 2015

Date reported: December 26, 2015

Location: Poskum county, Xinjiang province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2015/12/multiple-raids-in-xinjiang-5-detained.html>

Tu Yulei (detained by police along with his daughter, whereabouts unknown)

Date: December 22, 2015

Location: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2015/12/more-house-church-members-detained-in.html>

Guo Yongfeng (**UPDATE**: spoke on the government's coercion of a landlord to terminate the lease of a house church "...they must unconditionally move out by January 2016. If they don't move out, [the officials] could carry out enforcement methods...There are many churches that have registered, but there are also other house churches that refuse to register. However, they suffer the government's [persecution]. It is more than they can bear; they don't have any means to go to the [correct government] departments and register. Some are churches that have more than 10 or 20 people. They all must complete the registration and become Three-Self churches. If we, [activists and dissidents], go to a church or a house church, they will be asked to close. Furthermore, I am not permitted to go to the church that takes the initiative to greet me. Shenzhen's Domestic Security Protection Bureau said to me, 'You cannot go to any house churches right now, [but] you can go to a Three-Self church'")

Date: December 30, 2015

Location: Shenzhen, Guangdong province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2015/12/officials-terminate-churchs-lease-order.html>



## Egypt

Bishop Youhannes Zakaria Badir (aged 65; **UPDATE**: died of natural causes)

Date: December 28, 2015

Location: Luxor

Source [with photo]: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1541&A=21676>



## Eritrea

Helen Berhane (Gospel singer, locked with 17 other Christian women in a shipping container filled with fleas and lice for 32 months, given one bathroom break a day in an open field, beaten for singing hymns, freed in 2006 after she became deathly ill; **UPDATE**: called on people to help the persecuted: "You cannot do anything by yourself. We need many kinds of people. It doesn't matter what kind of religion they have or which doctrine; we must be united and pray for the voiceless")

Date reported: December 29, 2015

Location: Rome, Italy

Source [with photo]: <http://www.religionnews.com/2015/12/29/eritrean-gospel-singer-helen-berhane-tortured-beliefs-now-shes-speaking/>



## India

Sr Bertilla Capra (aged 77, Italian citizen, director of the Vimala Dermatological Center, denied a visa to stay in the country, has cared for people with leprosy for 44 years)

Sr Tessie (said "Until 2010 her [Sr Bertilla Capra's] visa was renewed every five years, then annually. This time, last November, her request for renewal was refused. She asked for at least a temporary visa for three months to find a solution, but was denied this")

Date reported: December 30, 2015

Location: Mumbai

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/After-almost-40-years-caring-for-leprosy-sufferers,-India-denies-Sister-Bertilla-Capra-a-visa-36273.html>



## Iran

Misem Hojatti (**UPDATE**: arrested in his parent's home by plain-clothed intelligence officers, hand-cuffed and slapped, religious items, electronics, and a Christmas tree seized, whereabouts unknown)

Date: December 23, 2015

Source [with photo]: <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=2740>

## Event: MOIS agents arrest nine Christians who were celebrating Christmas

Ahmad Golshani-Nia

Alireza Ali-Qanbari

Elaheh Izadi

Mahmoud Salehi

Mohammad-Reza Soltanian

Mohsen Javadi

Moussa Sari-Pour

Reza Mohammadi

Date: December 25, 2015

Location: Shiraz

Source: <http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/human-rights/19715-iran-s-regime-arrests-christians-on-christmas-day>



## Kazakhstan

Yklas Kabduakasov (aged 54, father of eight, arrested by KNB secret police on [August 14, 2015](#) for spreading 'religious discord' by discussing his faith with others and offering Christian books to others, ordered held on [August 15, 2015](#) in a two-month pretrial detention; sentenced on [November 9, 2015](#) to 7 years' restricted freedom, will not be able to travel or move without permission, banned from most public locations; **UPDATE**: sentenced amended after a KNB prosecutorial appeal to 2 years' imprisonment in a labor camp)

Date: December 28, 2015

Location: Astana

Source: [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2136](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2136)



## Norway

Marius Bodnariu (husband of Ruth, father, five children seized on [November 16, 2015](#) and placed in foster care after the oldest sang about Jesus at school, charged with 'Christian indoctrination'; **UPDATE**: children are being put up for adoption despite no court ruling)

Ruth Bodnariu (wife of Marius, mother, five children seized on or before [November 16, 2015](#) and placed in foster care after the oldest sang about Jesus at school, charged with 'Christian indoctrination'; **UPDATE**: children are being put up for adoption despite no court ruling)

Date reported: December 31, 2015

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/norway-five-christian-children-seized-government-foster-care-adoption-process-153771/>



## Pakistan

Prof Anjum James Paul (**UPDATE**: wrote a letter to the provincial Chief Minister [governor] concerning the November 9, 2015 abduction, forcible conversion to Islam, and forcible marriage of 13 year old Sana John Shahid, pointed out that compulsory education is mandated by law until 16 and so her abductors are in violation of that law as well,

attached a copy of her birth certificate to prove the age of 18 on the marriage certificate was fraudulent)

Date: December 22, 2015

Location: Punjab province

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/cm-punjab-urged-to-take-steps-to-recover-a-christian-teenage-girl-forcefully-given-in-marriage-to-a-muslim/>



## Philippines

Fr Sebastiano D'Ambra PIME (**UPDATE**: described attacks by the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters that left 2 dead in a Christian chapel and 9 dead on a rice plantation, 14 total were killed including some Muslims)

Date: December 24, 2015

Location: villages in Sultan Kudarat and North Cotabato

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/PIME-missionary:-lack-of-agreement-between-Muslims-and-government-behind-Mindanao-attacks-36254.html>



## Sudan

Telahoou Nogose Kassa (aged 36, church worker, arrested)

Date: second weekend in December 2015

Location: Bahri

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2015/12/another-christian-leader-arrested-in-sudan/>



## Syria

**Event: ISIL released 25 Christians from captivity, all had been held since February 23, 2015**

Sammy Awisha Malham (aged 41)

Fadi Michael Eesa (aged 41)

Juliet Yourish Talya (aged 40, mother of 2)

Stella Farid Joseph (aged 10)

Tony Farid Joseph (aged 7)  
Ghada Moshe Baram (aged 40, mother of 1)  
Maria Akram Odisho (aged 8)  
Hanan Youkhana Enwiya (aged 46, mother of 4)  
Francis Walid Sawa (aged 11)  
Aurinya Walid Sawa (aged 9)  
Ashurina Walid Sawa (aged 7)  
Nahren Walid Sawa (aged 4)  
Muna Marcus Adam (aged 41, mother of 5)  
Louise Ashur Gabriel (aged 9)  
Lamasu Ashur Gabriel (aged 7)  
Ankidu Ashur Gabriel (aged 6)  
Amilio Ashur Gabriel (aged 4)  
George Ashur Gabriel (aged 2)  
Lena Nawaf Marjan (aged 39, mother of 3)  
Ninos Elias Youkhana (aged 10)  
Ishtar Elias Youkhana (aged 7)  
Junior Elias Youkhana (aged 3)  
Laila Odisho Odisho (aged 47, mother of 1)  
Alexander Samih Simon (aged 11)  
Jamila Kako Kako (aged 41)

Date: December 25, 2015

Location: Tel Tamer

Source: <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/?p=45537>

Fr Dhiya Azziz OFM (aged 41, Iraqi citizen, slightly injured when a missile hit his monastery on July 20, 2014 in Yacubiyah, room destroyed in the explosion; abducted in Yacubiyah village, Jisr ash-Shugur district, Idlib province on July 4, 2015 possibly by Al-Nusra; released on July 10, 2015; **UPDATE**: abducted by persons unknown while returning from visiting his parents who are refugees in Turkey, all other persons in his taxi also missing)

Date: December 23, 2015

Location: on the road between Lattakia and Yacubiyah

Source [with photo]: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Syria:-no-news-on-fate-of-Fr.-Aziz,-a-Franciscan-kidnapped-at-Christmas-36252.html>

Riad Sargi (husband of Rouba Farah, father of Leila, Elias, and Michael, mechanical engineer in the pharmaceutical industry, said “we have tried to experience the atmosphere of

Christmas and respect its values despite the conflict that goes on unabated around us. We went to church, attended Mass, saw plays, watched young people sing and play hymns, whilst only two kilometers away from our church, war rages on in an area controlled by terrorists...it will not be possible to put an end to the Syrian crisis without mercy, love and reconciliation, completely lacking in the hearts of those who fight in the name of God, as they see Him and shape Him to their own ends...I am excited by the chance to show the ideal of love that is inherent in Christianity, which has no place for hatred to fuel of war and fighting in our country")

Rouba Farah (wife of Riad Sargi, mother of Leila, Elias, and Michael, medical researcher)

Leila (aged 14, daughter of Riad Sargi and Rouba Farah, sister of Elias and Michael)

Elias (aged 5, son of Riad Sargi and Rouba Farah, brother of Leila and Michael)

Michael (aged 5, son of Riad Sargi and Rouba Farah, brother of Leila and Elias)

Date: December 29, 2015

Location: Damascus

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Damascus:-Christmas-of-Mercy-not-far-from-terrorists-and-bombs-36269.html>

**Event: Thirteen Christians were among the 16 killed in ISIL suicide bombings on three restaurants**

Aboud Hagiki

Anton Joseph

Danny Hanna

Eli Kaspo

Eliamo Malke

Issa Hanna

Jack Tuma

Marwan Shamoun

Nedal Abdo

Ramy Tarzi Bashi

Robert Hegame

Robert Krio

Shabo Malke

Date: December 30, 2015

Location: Qamishli

Source [with photos]: <http://www.aina.org/news/20151231183957.htm>

Fr Touni Hannah (condemned the ISIL suicide attacks on three Christian-owned restaurants that killed 16 and wounded more than 45)

Date: December 30, 2015

Location: Qamishli

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20151231185522.htm>



## Thailand

Sanina Faisal (aged 30, wife, mother, Pakistani refugee, arrested on a visa violation, denied medication, **died in custody**, family denied access to her body due to their visa status)

Dates: December 20 and 30, 2015

Source [with photo]: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christmas-and-new-year-tragedy-detained-pakistani-christian-mother-dies-in-custody>

and <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=5742>

and <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=5741>



## Turkey

"Myriam" (cousin of "Kinda", Syrian refugee, said of another cousin's abduction in Syria "My cousin, in his 50s, was beaten badly and given only dry bread to eat for two months", cousin was freed after a ransom of US\$63,554 was paid)

"Kinda" (cousin of "Myriam", Syrian refugee)

Date reported: December 29, 2015

Location: Mardin

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20151228191855.htm>



## Ukraine

Metropolitan Agafangel (wrote "There have been around 20 robberies or attempted robberies of churches in our city and across the Odessa region over the past month. The donations, brought in by the parishioners, little by little, for the beautification of the houses of God, for helping the refugees from the conflict in Donbass and the wounded, for supporting those of our neighbors whom no one helps—all these were stolen...")

Date: December 28, 2015

Location: Odessa

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/89300.htm>





## **Vietnam**

Fr Dominic Tran Van Vu (**UPDATE**: confirmed that authorities prevented Christmas Mass from being celebrated in two parishes for 8,000 parishioners)

Theresa Hoa (said "the authorities prevented the priests from saying Mass, have thus violated the Constitution and the laws of Vietnam")

Date: December 25, 2015

Locations: Dak Lak, Dak Mon municipality, Dak Glei district, and Xe-Dang, Kon Pia village, Tumoron district

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Vietnamese-authorities-prohibit-thousands-of-Kontum-Christians-from-celebrating-Christmas-36255.html>

## **Today's Martyrs**

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