

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2016-02-14 through 2016-02-20



### China

Pastor Zhang Chongzhu (possibly abducted by police on [September 8, 2015](#) in [Tongxiang, Jiaxing, Zhejiang province](#); **UPDATE**: officially charged with 'stealing, spying, buying, or illegally providing state secrets or intelligence to entities outside China')

Date: [February 5, 2016](#)

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/02/zhejiang-pastor-detained-charged-with.html>

Cheng Jie (wife of Pastor Du Hongbo, mother of two young children, detained on [February 18, 2014](#); convicted on [May 1, 2015](#) of "illegal business operations" for having printed course materials without a permit, sentenced to two years' imprisonment and fined US\$806; **UPDATE**: released)

Date: [February 17, 2016](#)

Location: [Liuzhou, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region](#)

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/02/church-run-kindergarten-director.html>

Jiang Junying (detained for several hours by police for publicly distributing religious literature, refused to answer questions, released)

Date: [February 8, 2016](#)

Location: [Shantou, Guangdong province](#)

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/02/officials-detain-christian-repeatedly.html>



### Cuba

Rev Alain Toledano (husband of Marilyn Alayo Correa; **UPDATE**: church and home demolished by state security while he was attending a religious meeting in the United States)

Marilyn Alayo Correa (wife of Rev Alain Toledano, detained by state security while her home and church were demolished, their 11 and 12 year old daughters screamed as she was detained)

Date: [February 5, 2016](#)

Location: [Santiago de Cuba](#)

Source: <http://www.csw.org.uk/2016/02/09/news/2977/article.htm>



## Egypt

Mariam Wagih Fayeze Gadaalah (aged 18, disappeared in mysterious circumstances)

Date: February 15, 2015

Location: Village 2, Samalout, Minya province

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=65904>



## France

Pastor Philippe Dugard (described conditions in the Grande-Synthe refugee camp: “Between November and December, there was a group of Iranians who confessed their belonging to Christ, who started to attend our church. Some were Orthodox, while others said they were Christians but were not truly converted. But we got to know them, and we felt they had a real spiritual thirst. And then one evening [December 14, 2015], we were informed that two of them were stabbed and the whereabouts of a third one was unknown. We then said that as Christians we cannot leave them alone in that situation, and the victims themselves told us that they no longer wanted to stay in the camp, as they felt threatened”)

Michel Varton (director of Open Doors France, said "Many Christians amongst the refugees are fleeing persecution and discrimination. They are already traumatized by their terrible experience in the Middle East. Imagine their despair to realize that, once here in France, they are suffering the same discrimination and hate from fellow immigrants...It's totally unacceptable that someone could lose their life for their faith once in France”)

Date reported: February 17, 2016

Location: Saint-Pol-sur-Mer

Mohammad (aged 19, convert, Iranian citizen, **stabbed to death**)

Date: December 14, 2015

Location: Grande-Synthe refugee camp

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/02/4305685/>



## India

Fr Savarimuthu Shankar (spokesperson of the Archdiocese of Delhi; **UPDATE**: rejected a proposal by the RSS paramilitary organization to create a separate Christian organization with its structure)

Dr John Dayal (**UPDATE**: said that Christian leaders had a consensus that dialog with the RSS paramilitary organization was not currently possible "Not only the incidents of Christian persecution but the overall reaction of the Hindutva groups against civil society exposes their thinking, roots and ideology...We would demand a larger discourse on the strengthening of secular, constitutional democracy in India")

Date: February 13, 2016

Location: New Delhi

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/christian-leaders-in-india-reject-hindu-groups-overtures/75227>

**Event: A Christian prayer service was attacked by Hindu radicals, six Christians hospitalized with severe internal injuries, a four year old girl suffered a fractured leg**

Pastor Nitin Kumar (said "It was very scary scene. They tore my cassock and I received blows, punches, kicks from all directions as I was their prime target. Bibles were snatched from us and were tore and trampled. Believers ran to all directions as they were chased by the mob", later developed an infection in a back wound)

Mr Poshetti (home attacked)

Date: January 17, 2016

Location: Nagepur village, Telangana state

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2016/02/16/six-christians-hospitalized-including-4-year-old-girl-following-brutal-attack-by-hindu-radicals/>

**Event: Christian leaders reacted to the announcement by the federal minister for social justice and empowerment that the government would continue its discriminatory policy against Christian and Muslim Dalits [untouchables]**

Samuel Jaykumar (National Council of Churches in India; **UPDATE**: said "Though we knew about the stand of the government, it has now come out clearly on the issue. This is very humiliating for Dalit Christians and Muslims")

Fr Z Devasagayaraj (**UPDATE**: said that the government's decision "is against the multicultural, multireligious nature of our country")

Date: February 16, 2016

Source: <http://www.ucanindia.in/news/decision-denying-quotas-criticized-by-christians/31480/daily>

Pastor Simon Tandy (threatened by Hindu radicals during an invasion of a worship service; injured after Hindu extremists deliberately crashed their automobile into him as he and his wife rode their motor scooter)

Dates: January 31 and February 5, 2016

Location: Kanker district, Chhattisgarh state

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/news/Christian-leaders-left-in-critical-condition-after-violent-attacks-in-India>



## Israel

Rev Nikodemus Schnabel (described the weekly attacks suffered by the monks of the Dormition Abbey: “The people that attack me are never 50-year-old men. They’re always in the beginning of their 20s. I feel sorry for them, I know that at that age it is often difficult to become an adult. I am not angry about these people, I am angry about the people behind them...We pray for the teens – that’s our vocation...These idiots that are attacking us think with their hate, all of this hate against us as Christians, and they try to spoil our lives to make it difficult. But in fact, with every attack, we have more Jewish friends”)

Date: February 15, 2016

Location: Jerusalem

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2016/02/catholic-monks-in-israel-seek-action-against-root-causes-of-anti-christian-hatred/>



## Mexico

Pastor Ciro Diaz Mendez (church heavily damaged in an arson attack)

Date: February 15, 2016

Location: Navenchauc community, Zinacantan city, Chiapas state

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/protestant-church-raided-burnt-in-chiapas-mexico/>



## Pakistan

Shafaqat Emmanuel (aged 35, husband of Shagufta Bibi, father of two, handicapped, arrested in [Gojra, Punjab state](#) on or before [July 21, 2013](#) for allegedly sending a blasphemous text message; confessed on or before [August 5, 2013](#) to sending the blasphemous text message after being tortured and told by the police that his wife would be tortured; on [February 14, 2014](#) has been moved to the jail hospital with multiple bed sores which are reportedly more than 3 inches deep, will require surgery if he survives; found guilty at trial in [Lahore](#) on [April 4, 2014](#), sentenced to death; **UPDATE**: has filed a request to be released on bail "I have developed bedsores and I may die in jail as there is no possibility of a better treatment there")

Date: February 11, 2016

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/pakistan-christian-man-accused-sending-blasphemous-text-messages-islamic-cleric-appeals-death-sentence-157417/>

Sardar Mushtaq Gill (human rights attorney, brother of Pervaiz Gill; **UPDATE**: home looted while his wife was in a maternity clinic delivering their latest child)

Date: February 11, 2016

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=5798>

**Event: Two Christian women abducted after a Muslim girl eloped with a Christian boy**

Tahira Bibi (aged 20, daughter of Bashir Masih, sister of Reema Bibi, abducted, forced into an Islamic marriage, tortured, escaped)

Reema Bibi (aged 21, daughter of Bashir Masih, sister of Tahira Bibi, abducted, forced into an Islamic marriage)

Bashir Masih (father of Tahira Bibi and Reema Bibi)

Amjad Pervaiz (cousin of Tahira Bibi and Reema Bibi, arrest warrant issued in retribution after the escape of Tahira from her abductor)

Amir Shakeel (brother of Tahira Bibi and Reema Bibi, arrest warrant issued in retribution after the escape of Tahira from her abductor)

Arif Masih (uncle of Tahira Bibi and Reema Bibi, arrested in retribution after the escape of Tahira from her abductor)

Nazir Masih (uncle of Tahira Bibi and Reema Bibi, arrested in retribution after the escape of Tahira from her abductor)

Anwar Masih (uncle of Tahira Bibi and Reema Bibi, arrest warrant issued in retribution after the escape of Tahira from her abductor)

Irfan Masih (cousin of Tahira Bibi and Reema Bibi, arrest warrant issued in retribution after the escape of Tahira from her abductor)

Dates: December 2 and 11, 2015

Location: Chak number 38 Janubi, Sargodha district, Punjab province

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=5803>



**Spain**

Bishop Juan Antonio Reig Pla (criminal hate speech charges dismissed, court ruled that his comparison of abortion supporters to the Holocaust was protected as an exercise of religion)

Date: February 17, 2016

Location: Alcala de Henares

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/90825.htm>



## Syria

Elias Abiad (aged 22, church humanitarian volunteer, **killed by mortar shells**)

Date: February 13, 2016

Location: Aleppo

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/59414->

[ASIA\\_SYRIA\\_Caritas\\_volunteer\\_killed\\_in\\_Aleppo\\_by\\_a\\_mortar\\_shell#.VsQUWcIUUfg](#)

Bishop George Abu Khazen OFM (**UPDATE**: said "The whole population of Aleppo is affected by the lack of water and electricity...For the last 20 days we have been under bombardment, almost daily bombing, that is destroying many houses, many apartments, and causing many, many deaths...A few days ago the Armenian Protestant church was badly damaged, and five days ago our Roman Catholic church was even damaged, along with the pastoral center...Just the other day, a student, a little boy of about 13 years old asked me 'Why do I have to study? I am going to die' - so you understand how terrible things are here")

Date: February 20, 2016

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20160219195019.htm>



## Turkey

Pastor Ihsan Ozbek (Association of Protestant Churches, described several recent attacks on Protestant churches and pastors that were ignored by the police, said "We are anxious and distressed. We are being threatened. There are serious obstacles that keep us from expressing ourselves. We live in difficult conditions. We are unable to open places of worship and perform our religious rituals. 'You cannot live here,' is the message we are being sent. The problems we face both in daily life and in terms of representation leave us with a sense of entrapment. The country is already going through a difficult period amid armed conflict, political tensions and uncertainty. Under these conditions, things become even more difficult for us. We expect the government to be more moderate toward us and open channels for dialogue")

Soner Tufan (Association of Protestant Churches, explained that Protestant churches have no official legal standing in Turkey)

Selin Sayek Boke (opposition member of parliament, under attack by pro-government media for being a Christian)

Date reported: February 9, 2016

Source: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/02/turkey-protestants-threats-right-violations.html>

and <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/02/turkey-opposition-lawmaker-becomes-victim-hate-speech.html#ixzz40fCNRHh6>

and <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/02/4302178/>



### **United States - California**

Bishop Teman L Bostic Sr (stabbed to death, an adult son has been arrested)

Date: February 12, 2016

Location: San Leandro

Source: <http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2016/February/California-Pastor-Murdered-in-Apartment-Son-is-Primary-Suspect>



### **Uzbekistan**

Tohar Haydarov (sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in **Gulistan** in **March 2010** on fabricated drug charges, as of **April 17, 2013** has not been allowed to have a Bible; **UPDATE**: told he will not be paroled in 2016, visitor hours have been curtailed since the death of his mother, has complained about salt in his drinking water but has been restricted to 12 kilograms of outside supplies per year)

Gleb Serin (reported on the imprisonment of Tohar Haydarov, said "Tohar's personal Bible was taken away from him about a year ago and he is trying to recite Bible verses from memory. He also cannot find the Bible our Church gave to the prison library. Although he doesn't have the Bible, he feels like God is next to him in prison")

Date: January 5, 2016

Source: [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2149](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2149)

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