

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2016-02-28 through 2016-03-05



China

Event: Twelve Christians sentenced to prison on embezzlement charges

Pastor Bao Guohua (husband of Xing Wenxiang, detained on [July 26, 2015](#) on embezzlement charges after trying to prevent the demolition of a cross on a church; **UPDATE:** sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment)

Pastor Xing Wenxiang (wife of Bao Guohua, detained on [July 26, 2015](#) on embezzlement charges after trying to prevent the demolition of a cross on a church; **UPDATE:** sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment)

Deacon Bao Chenxing (son of Pastors Bao Guohua and Xing Wenxiang, detained on [July 26, 2015](#), tortured; **UPDATE:** sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment)

Zhang Kai (civil rights attorney; disappeared in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province on [August 25, 2015](#), apparently detained in response to his defense of churches during the cross removal campaign; **UPDATE:** appeared on Chinese television where he confessed "Such religion cases are sensitive, they can lift my fame quickly and bring some economic interest. Foreign countries also focus on the cases, it also improves my fame overseas")

Date: [February 26, 2016](#)

Location: [Jinhua, Zhejiang province](#)

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Zhejiang-Protestant-pastor-sentenced-to-14-years-for-defending-Cross-36796.html>

and <http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/02/pastor-wife-sentenced-to-10-plus-years.html>



Egypt

Fawzi Osama Ibrahim (aged 16, arrested on [July 11, 2015](#) for distributing food and Christian literature to Muslims during Ramadan; **UPDATE:** charges dismissed)

Stephen Boutros Fayed (aged 21, arrested on [July 11, 2015](#) when he went to the police station to see Fawzi Osama Ibrahim; **UPDATE:** charges dismissed)

Shady Saeed (aged 20, arrested on [July 11, 2015](#) when he went to the police station to see Fawzi Osama Ibrahim; **UPDATE**: charges dismissed)

Date: February 24, 2016

Location: Alexandria

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2016/02/case-dropped-against-christians-arrested-for-evangelizing-in-alexandria-egypt/>

Michael Gamal Mansour (brother of Osama Gamal Mansour, military conscript, **died of a gunshot wound while with his unit**, death ruled a suicide)

Osama Gamal Mansour (brother of Michael Gamal Mansour, said “My brother did not commit suicide as they alleged in his military unit, but he was killed intentionally”)

Date: on or before February 17, 2016

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=65986>

Ghabriel Suriel (forced to turn over 183 square meters of land to a Muslim family by a 'customary meeting')

Date: February 27, 2016

Location: Qena

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=66021>

Mervat Sephan (newly appointed school principal, appointment protested by Muslim students and teachers)

Date: February 28, 2016

Location: Minya

Source: <http://www.mcndirect.com/showsubject.aspx?id=66040>

Event: Four teens were convicted of contempt of Islam for making a parody video of the Islamic State's beheading videos, three were sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment and one was remanded to juvenile custody

Alber Ashraf Hanna

Bassem Amgad Hanna

Clinton Magdy Youssef

Molar Atef Edward

Date: February 27, 2016

Location: Minya

Source: <http://www.copticsolidarity.org/media-news-events/news/4592-egypt-jails-coptic-christians-for-insulting-islam>

and <http://www.copticsolidarity.org/media-news-events/news/4554-egyptian-commission-calls-for-dropping-blasphemy-charges-against-4-christian-children>



India

Event: A Christian husband and wife were murdered for suspicion of performing black magic after a young boy in the village died of a leg infection

Pandayya (husband of Seethamma, father of three, beaten and **burnt to death**)

Seethamma (wife of Pandayya, mother of three, beaten and **burnt to death**)

Date: January 13, 2016

Location: K. Kamuduvalasa village, Makkuva Mandal, Vizianagaram district, Andhra Pradesh state

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/news/Christian-couple-falsely-accused-of-black-magic-and-burnt-to-death-in-India>



Indonesia

Fr John Djonga (summoned on **February 19, 2016** for police interrogation for having said a Mass attended by Papuan separatists, said he would not appear until he had secured legal counsel and received permission from his bishop; **UPDATE**: met with two police officers for four hours of questioning with his attorney)

Bishop Leo Laba Ladjar (**UPDATE**: defended Fr John Djonga)

Date: February 26, 2016

Location: Wamena

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/indonesian-bishop-backs-priest-questioned-for-treason/75344>



Iran

Event: Four Christians beaten and arrested at a March 5, 2014 picnic have had their convictions upheld, must report within 15 days to finish their 12 month sentences)

Pastor Amin Khaki (**UPDATE**: must serve 13 months in prison, including unserved time from a previous conviction)

Hossain Danial Barro Zadeh (convert; **UPDATE**: must serve 3 months in prison)

Rahman Ziya Bahmani (convert; **UPDATE**: must serve 3 months in prison)

Mohammad Bahrami (convert; **UPDATE**: must serve 4 months in prison)

Date reported: March 1, 2016

Location: Ahwaz

Source: <http://presenttruthmn.com/newsroom/iran/four-iranian-christians-receive-prison-sentences/>



Iraq

Fr Jalal Yako RCJ (**UPDATE:** spoke on the conditions in his refugee camp "If you are not local, if you speak Arabic and not Kurdish, being accepted is hard. Language has become a factor of discrimination, higher prices, and refusal of medical care. This has also affected Christians. Even in my camp, Asthi One, home to families from Qaraqosh, Mosul, Bartella, the prevailing sentiment is one of fatigue...Those who did find accommodation in a house, now cannot pay the rent because there is no more money. Many have lost their job. Those who have work are not getting paid. Lately, I heard that 250 companies have gone bankrupt. Some construction sites have stopped, the work left unfinished...We celebrate Masses every day. People flock to church, devoutly observe Friday fasting, and participate in the Way of the Cross outdoors. We also recite the Angelus every day. Recently, with the help of an Italian parish, we built a bell tower to call the faithful to the services and give a visible sign of our presence, bearing witness to our faith")

Date: March 3, 2016

Location: Erbil, Kurdistan

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Without-a-home-or-job,-conditions-for-Mosul-refugees-is-getting-worse,-Erbil-priest-says-36846.html>



Kyrgyzstan

Event: A mother and daughter have been under house arrest since [March 20, 2013](#) on fraud charges after their church filed registration applications; acquitted on all charges on [October 7, 2014](#), judge called the case 'fabricated'; on [October 29, 2015](#) won their appeal that confirmed the dismissal of fraud charges, NSC secret police attempted twice to detain their attorneys prior to the hearing, then invaded the judges' chambers in an attempt to influence or delay the ruling; **UPDATE: the Supreme Court agreed with a request by prosecutors to open a new trial**

Oksana Koryakina (aged 36)

Nadezhda Sergienko (aged 57)

Date: February 24, 2016

Nurlan Usupbayev (detained after police in [Osh City, Osh region](#) raided an [August 9, 2015](#) worship service in a rented cafe, beaten, strangled, police opened an administrative case

against him and listed his fine as four times that allowed by statute; **UPDATE:** prosecutorial appeal of his acquittal denied by the Supreme Court due to late filing)

Date: March 2, 2016

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2155



Nigeria

Ada Ojechi (survived a Muslim Fulani attack on his village, said “Our people were caught napping because we relaxed when we heard what we considered the cheering news that the federal government has intervened. Unfortunately, the Fulanis knew we had relaxed and took advantage of us to unleash a terrible massacre on us. As we speak, corpses litter everywhere in the village. I have been trying to reach many of my family members without success. We feel terribly let down by the government that announced a joint security team. We have not seen the security men - be they policemen or military, as I speak”)

Date: February 29, 2016

Location: Agatu, Benue state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/03/4332785>



Pakistan

Eric John (attorney; **UPDATE:** gunshots fired into his home)

Date: February 25, 2016

Location: Kasur district, Lahore, Punjab province

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/christian-lawyers-house-attacked-in-lahore/>

Saima Rasheed (daughter of Rasheed Pervez, abducted and forced into an Islamic marriage)

Rasheed Pervez (aged 58, father of Saima Rasheed, has attempted to recover his daughter from her abductors but police have refused to cooperate)

Date: January 28, 2016

Location: Shadab Colony [ghetto], Maqbool Chauk Chung – Multan Road, Lahore, Punjab province

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/victim-of-dispute-christian-girl-abducted-raped-forced-to-convert/>

Event: Rioting broke out following the execution of the Islamist murderer of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer

Kaneez Bibi (said "I work as a beautician but I did not go into work today. Our bosses told us to stay at home as they are not opening their businesses due to threats of violence. My family and I are bunkering down at our home and it is very frightening")

Tariq Parvez (said "I work in a permafex and printing company. I could not get through to work this morning. A large group of protestors threatened to beat me if I tried to reach my work premises. The group looked scary and was shouting out about how Kaffir [infidels] were ruining the country. I am fearful for my life and my family")

Shakil Masih (music and fine art teacher, said "I was travelling to school and was stopped by protesters. They threatened to kill me and beat me on my back to send me home. I later called the school and found out it was closed, but no-one from management had contacted me")

Rafique Gill (scrap merchant, said "It is worrying that the protesters are in the streets with such animosity. So far Christian areas have not been attacked but there is, as yet, no extra policing for our communities. I have taken the risk of opening my business as it is far from the city centre and most of my clients are Christian. But if I am threatened I will close the shop. It is not worth the loss of life, even though I desperately need the money")

Shamim Masih (**UPDATE:** said "The Christians of Pakistan are in great fear and want the Government to ensure their safety. Threats have already been made to Christian communities and those who have fled their homes to escape to more rural areas will no doubt return to find their homes have been looted. Christians remember the attacks on the communities of Shati Nagar, Gojra and St Joseph's colony where mob violence resulted in loss of lives, homes and churches. They also remember the recent bomb attacks in Peshawar and Lahore, they do not believe extremist and conservative Muslims need much of a reason to attack them and feel the current climate is creating great animosity towards them")

Wilson Chowdhry (**UPDATE:** said "What chance do Christians have for survival in a nation that openly places hero status on murderers? Mumtaz Qadri was involved in the heinous murder of Governor Taseer, an act that traumatized Pakistan and brought to light the extent of extremism and hatred towards minorities in Pakistan. This man enjoyed privileges whilst in Pakistani prisons that few obtain and was able to spread his evil ideology within prison often coercing wardens to punish those involved in blasphemy cases - which contributed to the death of a British Prisoner. Most alarmingly the legal fraternity of Pakistan have come out in support for Mr. Qadri and declared a one day strike, an act that is a clear indictment of the extremism that is ubiquitous throughout all tiers of Pakistani Muslim society. The few voices of liberality in Pakistan will have an uphill struggle making the nation one that is egalitarian, yet in the meanwhile western nations including Britain have deduced that Christians in Pakistan rarely face persecution, a judgment that has led to the re-persecution of thousands of Pak-Christians stranded in Thailand")

Date: February 29, 2016

Source: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/protest-erupt-in-pakistan-after-hanging-of-islamic-hero-mumtaz-qadri-a-terrorist-who-assassinated-fo>



Sudan

Petr Jasek (aged 52, Czech citizen, arrested for making a video for Voice of the Martyrs on Christian persecution)

Date: December 2015

Location: Khartoum

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/91079.htm>



Thailand

Sabir (husband of Laila, Pakistani refugee)

Laila (wife of Sabir, Pakistani refugee, detained)

Date: December 2015

Pastor Joshua (convert, Pakistani refugee, described why he fled Pakistan "My bone was broken - the one right above the heart. And they tried to cut my arm off. My sister was murdered, she was burned alive, just because she spoke the word 'God'. They hate the word 'God' so much. She was burned for this reason alone")

Nazeem (aged 19, Pakistani refugee, detained along with her infant cousin)

Daniel (Pakistani refugee, detained, said "Jesus said to us, 'If someone troubles you, don't ask for curses for him, instead, you should ask for blessings for him.' So, we ask for blessings for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees")

Date reported: February 26, 2016

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35654804>

Asia Johnson (aged 38, wife of Johnson Masih, mother of Eashal, Reemal, and Rumaisa, Pakistani refugee, detained, released)

Reemal Johnson (aged 7, daughter of Johnson Masih and Asia Johnson, Pakistani refugee, detained, released)

Eashal Johnson (aged 3, daughter of Johnson Masih and Asia Johnson, Pakistani refugee, detained, released)

Johnson Masih (aged 40, husband of Asia Johnson, father of Eashal, Reemal, and Rumaisa, Pakistani refugee)

Rumaisa Johnson (aged 6, daughter of Johnson Masih and Asia Johnson, Pakistani refugee)

Dates: December 24, 2015 and February 25, 2016

Source: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/idc-victim-released-after-staying-2-months-in-idc>



Turkey

Event: Syrian Christian refugees await permission to travel to Germany

Naaïam Mazie (husband, father of three, waiting to join his family in Germany)

Alexy Kazangy

Date reported: March 4, 2016

Location: Istanbul

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20160303193241.htm>

Pastor Orhan Picaklar (**UPDATE:** described an attack by four Muslims on his church in which they tried to kick in a door “They attacked us knowing that they would get caught – they even looked at the security camera and smiled. Later they went to the police and turned themselves in, and today they were set free. So what should I do to these guys who drink until they get drunk, and when they get caught instead of fear and sadness yell, ‘Allahu Akbar!’ [God is greater]?...Those who have attacked us [in the past] and been caught have always apologized, and we have always forgiven them, because this is what God wants us to do. If we only say, ‘Forgive your enemies’ when we’re giving a sermon, we’re hypocrites. Those who attacked us this time are really different, however”)

Date: February 25, 2016

Location: Samsun

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2016/03/anti-christian-hatred-seen-in-attack-on-church-building-in-samsun-turkey/>



United Kingdom

Felix Ngole (aged 38, expelled from graduate school after he posted a defense of traditional Christian morality on Facebook)

Date reported: February 29, 2016

Location: Sheffield University

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/freedom-of-speech/christian-student-expelled-from-social-work-course-over-views-on-marr>



United States - Louisiana

Fr Jeff Bayhi (ordered by the state supreme court to divulge the contents of a confession, his diocese has condemned the ruling as of [July 7, 2014](#) and stated that it will not comply; appeal declined by the U.S. Supreme Court on [January 21, 2015](#), a hearing will now be held to determine if he must be compelled to testify; **UPDATE**: a state court ruled that the state cannot compel the disclosure of a confession)

Date: [February 26, 2016](#)

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/priests-cant-be-forced-to-break-seal-of-confession-la-judge-rules-70940/>

United States - Ohio

Rev William B Schooler (aged 70, former teacher, principal, and school board member, **shot dead** by his mentally ill brother during choir practice)

Alberta Blayth (heard the shooting of Rev William B Schooler)

Date: [February 28, 2016](#)

Location: [Dayton](#)

Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/28/us/ohio-dayton-church-pastor-killed/>



Vietnam

Event: Three religious brothers refused to answer a police summons on illegal deforestation charges, charges stemmed from their removal of 15 pine trees in their orange grove

Br Truong Thang OSB (summoned)

Br Pham Ngoc Hoang OSB (summoned)

Br Phan Van Giao OSB (summoned)

Br Stanislas Tran Minh Vong OSB (aged 80, said "some 200 officials, security officers, militia, forest wardens and others suddenly flocked to the monastery, videotaping, threatening and shouting at us with foul language" while they were clearing the trees, added "Benedictines never do as gangsters" after state media accused the brothers of pulling knives on the officials)

Fr Anthony Nguyen Van Duc OSB (said their monastery had papers to prove ownership of 107 hectares including 101 previously seized by the government, stated that the police action appears to be a prelude to the seizure of the remaining land)

Dates: [January 2](#) and [February 22, 2016](#)

Location: [Thien An](#)

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnamese-benedictines-summoned-on-deforestation-charges/75347>

Paul Tran Minh Nhat (Redemptorist News employee; released from prison on or about August 27, 2015; stopped by police on November 8, 2015 near Da Don village, Lam Ha district,

Lam Dong province, beaten, and interrogated; **UPDATE**: stoned by police agents while saying evening prayers with his family, suffered a serious head wound, the attackers prevented his hospitalization)

Fr Anton Le Ngoc Thanh CSSR (**UPDATE**: said "The serious attack shows that local authorities flagrantly violate the laws, disregard human life and invade basic human rights")

Fr Joseph Truong Hoang Vu CSSR (said that police agents in the weeks prior to the stoning of Paul Tran Minh Nhat had destroyed his crops and livestock by spreading pesticide and attempted to set his house on fire)

Date: February 22, 2016

Location: Lam Na district, Lam Dong province

Source [warning - graphic]: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/attack-on-vietnamese-dissident-condemned/75321>

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