

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2016-03-27 through 2016-04-02



China

Pastor Li Guozhi aka Yang Hua; **UPDATE**: finally allowed to meet with his attorneys in jail, said he had lost weight but has not been tortured, was repeatedly told by government officials “We know we cannot change your beliefs. However, we control everything and can completely succeed in painting you as a greedy pastor, causing you to lose all of your reputation”)

Date: March 23, 2016

Location: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/03/lawyers-for-detained-pastor-allowed-to.html>



Germany

Fr Dale Johnson (aged 65, abducted in 1991 in Iraq, released after 3 days; abducted in Iraq in 1995, released after 4 months; **UPDATE**: now working with refugees, said "I am constantly amazed at how tough they are, and yet as I interview them, they often admit to having nightmares. They are wounded, physically and spiritually, and are carrying with them suffering that isn't visible on the surface...What I can provide is prayer in their own language that they learned as children, and liturgical movements that are familiar to them. All this brings healing")

Date: March 28, 2016

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20160328134424.htm>



India

Pastor Rampal (aged 55, convert, bicycle repair shop owner, forced into a Hindu temple and forced to bow before idols in October 2015; threatened with death by Hindu radicals who had invaded a December 2015 prayer meeting, bicycle shop vandalized; caught with

Bibles while getting off a bus with Pastor Bal Raja in [January 2016](#), beaten, escaped; **UPDATE:** home attacked by Hindu radicals, left hand broken, wife suffered a back injury, daughter suffered several severe cuts on her head, hands and leg, all were threatened with death, police refused to file a complaint and advised him to stop Christian services, said “The best thing that has happened to me is Jesus. I am joyful that I am chased and beaten up for His name’s sake. And we will continue to carry the banner of Christ, and one day the attackers will also see Christ”)

Pastor Bal Raja (caught with Bibles while getting off a bus with Pastor Rampal in January 2016, beaten, escaped)

Pastor Santosh Kumar (aged 80, targeted by name by Hindu radicals in the home of Pastor Rampal, beaten into unconsciousness, hospitalized, vehicle destroyed)

[Date: February 19, 2016](#)

[Location: Rae Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh state](#)

Pastor Sardar Solanki (said “At 9:30 in the morning, three Christian families were summoned to the public meeting, where the Hindu extremists told them not to pray and observe Christianity any more in the village...[later] the police and the villagers did not allow me or any other Christian leaders to enter into the village, and, for now, all kinds of Christian meetings have been closed down”)

Gopal Solanki (aged 18, convert, summoned to a public meeting led by the village chief, beaten unconscious after refusing to leave Christ, revived)

[Date: February 20, 2016](#)

[Location: Dingara, Buldhana, Maharashtra state](#)

[Source: http://morningstarnews.org/2016/03/persecuted-pastor-in-uttar-pradesh-india-keeps-sights-on-christ/](http://morningstarnews.org/2016/03/persecuted-pastor-in-uttar-pradesh-india-keeps-sights-on-christ/)



Iran

Ebrahim Firouzi (aged 31; **UPDATE:** exhorted fellow prisoners “If you are courageous in God’s way, God’s grace will be with you. Do not fear what you are doing, and raise the banner of Jesus in the name of God...If you want to do good to others, who can harm you?...Keep your conscience clean so that people will be ashamed if they cause you harm. If it is God’s will that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing good”)

[Date: last week of March 2016](#)

[Location: Rajai Shahr Prison, Karaj](#)

[Source: http://morningstarnews.org/2016/04/amid-crackdown-prisoner-in-iran-encourages-faithful-to-stand-strong/](http://morningstarnews.org/2016/04/amid-crackdown-prisoner-in-iran-encourages-faithful-to-stand-strong/)



Iraq

Fr Ghazwan Yousif Baho (**UPDATE**: celebrated the Resurrection of Jesus with his parishioners, said "Yes, we are celebrating today in Alqosh and we are only 15 kilometers away from the frontlines of the war. But we tried to show that we are far from the war, because we have hope and we ask God to save us and everyone else from wars, especially in our areas")

Date: March 27, 2016

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20160327140111.htm>

Fr Muyessir al-Mukhalisi (said his people were "threatened with extinction...This is a harsh word but every day we are being depleted. Our people are travelling, migrating")

Date: March 29, 2016

Location: west Bagdad

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20160329154854.htm>



Kazakhstan

Pastor Maxim Maximov (**UPDATE**: U.S. resident, wrote of KNB secret police raids on five church owned buildings and the homes of 6 pastors and church workers including his own, and the seizure of 54 computers and US\$276)

Pastor Sergei Zaikin (home raided, allowed to leave the country on a pre- scheduled trip two days later)

Pastor Ivan Kryukov (accompanied by Pastor Vadim Martynov when he attempted to drive to a church meeting in Kyrgyzstan, elected to not leave the country and remained with Pastor Vadim until he was released)

Pastor Vadim Martynov (home raided, prevented from leaving the country on a pre-scheduled trip two days later)

Pastor Erkin Nurmanov (home raided)

Pastor Natalya Nefedova (home raided)

Pastor Larissa Maximova (home raided, allowed leave to the country on a pre- scheduled trip two days later)

Date: March 25-27, 2016

Location: Alamyty

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2163



Malaysia

Victoria Jayaseele Martin (attorney, appeal to be allowed to practice Islamic law before the country's sharia courts denied by the Supreme Court in violation of Parliament's intention that non-Muslims be allowed)

Date: March 24, 2016

Location: Putrajaya

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2016/03/christian-lawyer-in-malaysia-loses-appeal-to-practice-in-sharia-courts/>



Mexico

Lauro Nunez Perez (reported on [September 14, 2015](#) to have been detained three times since [July 2015](#) for refusing to convert to traditionalist [syncretic] Catholicism, fears that leaving his home will result in another arrest, officials refuse to register his children for school; **UPDATE:** beaten and imprisoned by a mob after entering the village to visit his mother, two others who protested the attack were also imprisoned, his mother's home was then attacked and all her possessions destroyed)

Date: March 28, 2016

Location: La Chachalaca village, Santiago Camotlan municipality, Villa Alta region, Oaxaca state

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2016/03/29/expelled-christian-minority-brutally-beaten-by-mob-and-incarcerated-while-returning-to-visit-family-in-oaxaca-mexico/>



Nigeria

Event: Church prayer camp attacked by gunmen, church leaders abducted, ransoms demanded)

Rev Dr Emmanuel Dzigau (president of the church, abducted)

Rev Iliya Anto (deputy president of the church, abducted, released due to illness)

Rev Yakubu Dzarma (retired church leader, abducted)

Rev Jibrailu Wobiya (church general secretary, escaped during the attack with other church members, said “We were all holding a prayer meeting at the prayer camp located along the Kaduna-Abuja Highway in the city of Kaduna. We were working on the camp site in

preparation for our forthcoming church conference when the kidnappers invaded the place and began shooting into the air”)

Rev Moses Ebuga (said “The kidnappers have contacted me, being the general secretary of TEKAN, about the two pastors they are holding captive, and they are demanding that we pay them a ransom of 100 million naira [US\$502,476]. Where are we going to get that kind of money?”)

Date: March 21, 2016

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2016/03/pastors-kidnapped-in-kaduna-state-nigeria/>



Pakistan

Abrar Younas (union leader, said “Despite the government’s decision authorizing Christians to have time off at Easter, the Faisalabad Waste Management Company has required that Christian sanitary workers work on Good Friday and Easter Monday. This is discrimination against poor sanitary workers”)

Date: March 26, 2016

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Some-but-not-all-Pakistani-Christians-can-celebrate-Easter-37054.html>

Event: A suicide bomber attacked children’s carnival rides in a public park killing 78 and injuring 350, the terrorist group claimed it was targeting Christians

Arif Masih (a young Christian who was at the park with his family, said "There was blood and bodies everywhere, it was devastating, I almost fainted")

Asma Masih (cried "...my whole world has ended, the children insisted to come to the park to enjoy themselves, now I cannot find them, I have lost everything")

Husnain (had been leaving the children's park with his family, had been thrown to ground by the explosion, said "Fortunately none of us were injured badly but I remember feeling this sudden eruption of searing heat that quickly dissipated. In the ensuing panic children were separated from their families as they ran in a panic not knowing what to do. All I could hear was screaming and shouting people came to help the injured. Everyone was crying it was a very emotionally draining experience and all I can remember is all the dead people around me")

Akash Masih (hospitalized with leg injuries)

Shehzad Mehboob (hospitalized, sole survivor of his family)

Falak Sher (husband of Annie, hospitalized, widowed)

Annie (wife of Falak Sher, **killed**)

Ghulam Asghar (said "I was almost deafened, there were bodies everywhere. The deaths are more than the official toll. I was entering the park with my six kids when the explosion occurred")

Amanat Masih (had brought his 3 children and 2 nephews to the park, lost 2 sons and a nephew, wailed “We were just here to enjoy the weather and have a good evening. What kind of people target innocent people and little children in a park?”)

Esther Murad (teacher, neighbors lost 4 family members and 3 young children, said “What a brutal end to Easter celebrations. Words cannot do justice to their pain”)

Wasif Masih (young man, **killed**)

Naveed Ashraf (aged 21, married four months, killed)

Kajal Shaukat (aged 17, lost her right eye, both legs fractured, said "A sudden flash of light, and everyone was on the ground. Soon after, I could not see anything anymore")

Zaeshan Taj (aged 24, left arm burnt, both legs broken, one friend died, said "Every two weeks we played cricket in the park. That evening we were about to leave when the bomb exploded. For five seconds, all I saw was on fire...I tried to stand up after the explosion, but my legs were not working. I gave my phone to a passerby, who called my father. But then he left without giving me back my phone. I was helpless and hopeless")

Waqar Masih (aged 16, son of Parvaiz Masih, **killed**)

Parvaiz Masih (father of Waqar Masih, said “I don’t know when Waqar left and went to the park with friends. After he got injured he was taken up to Sheikh Zahid Hospital, from where he was shifted to the Mayo Hospital, but he succumbed to his injuries. Waqar was a Class-9 student at St. John’s School, Youhanabad. He dreamt of growing up and serving his country and the community")

Sahil Rehmat (aged 10, son of Rehmat Masih, **killed**)

Somal Tariq (aged 12, daughter of Tariq Masih, **killed**)

Sahil Masih (aged 17, **killed**)

Kashif Suba (social activist, described the murder of his cousins Sahil Rehmat, Somal Tariq, and Sahil Masih “They [the parents] were looking at their children when the suicide bomber ripped through the crowd and blew himself up”)

Sonum (9th grade student, **killed**)

Arroj (10th grade student, **killed**)

Fr Jamil Albert OFM (said "They did not target just one sect. Followers of all religions are crying with tears of blood")

Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shah OFM (**UPDATE**: said “I visited every bedside and every victim, of whatever faith. It was truly difficult because I saw so many children, only four or five, both Christians and Muslims, who had been wounded or killed by this terrible attack...There are no words to console a mother whose 4 and 6 year old children are seriously injured, while her husband and another son were killed. An authentic tragedy. Hope can only come from God...Another mother lost her two sons and her husband. She had come to Lahore from Sindh province, for Easter. She lost her entire family: she will go back home alone. Her life is no longer the same. How can you comfort her?...To my own faithful I said that they must not give up hope because, even though we were going

through a period of grave difficulties, we have to learn to rise up again, just as Christ was able to raise himself again, despite carrying the Cross”)

Peter Jacob (**UPDATE:** said that the park may also have been attacked because it was near the Prime Minister's family home "his brother Shahbaz Sharif lives here, hence we can't exclude the possibility that the attackers wanted in some way to send a warning to the authorities”)

Fr Morris Jalal (**UPDATE:** said "many Christians were killed...Instead of difficult and hard targets [military barracks, etc.], the terrorists now aim at soft targets. They use suicide bombs to cause as many victims as possible as quickly as possible")

Fr Emmanuel Yousaf Mani (**UPDATE:** said "We are in a situation similar to that in Syria. The terrorists are followers of a religion of terror. They spare neither Christians nor Muslims. They think they have license to even kill families and children”)

Naveed Aziz (**UPDATE:** began reporting from the crime scene)

Wilson Chowdhry (**UPDATE:** said in London, UK "This recent attack is a clear targeting of Christians during their Easter celebrations. Families celebrating the resurrection of their Lord and Savior have lost mothers and children as a consequence of this depraved violence. The bomb attack happened on the same day that thousands of 'average' Muslims marched through Islamabad incensed by the judicial hanging of Mumtaz Qadri, murderer of Governor Salman Taseer an advocate for minorities in Pakistan. The majority of Muslims in Pakistan believe he is an Islamic martyr and national hero for killing a man who stood for Christians and other minorities. I am sure that this growing hatred of minorities in the wake of Mr Qadri's death was a trigger for today's blast, one that we predicted and called on Pakistan's government to protect Christians during this tenuous period. Pakistan is not safe for Christians as there is a genocide taking place there. Not a genocide that is state sponsored in it's entirety but a genocide nevertheless. Unless western governments wake up to this problem the death toll for Christians living there is set to rise exponentially"

Juliet Chowdhry (Trustee of the British Pakistani Christian Association, lost 13 family members in the [September 22, 2013 Peshawar church bombing](#), two cousins killed in the Lahore bombing, said in London UK "The evil men that planned this event need to be caught and punished. My family grows smaller year by year while the world looks on and does nothing. God will bring rest to the weary souls who have lost their lives and I take solace in knowing that he will care for my family members in a place they will not be discriminated against or persecuted. I will weep for them now but one day God will restore my joy")

Date: [March 27, 2016](#)

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Taliban-in-Lahore:-We-wanted-to-kill-Christians.-But-victims-include-Muslim-women-and-children-37059.html>

and [warning - graphic] <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/Bomb-Blast-Devastates-Lahore-Easter-Celebrations-Death-Toll-50-and-Rising>

and <http://www.ucanews.com/news/church-condemns-easter-bomb-attack-in-lahore/75587>

and [warning - graphic] <http://morningstarnews.org/2016/03/taliban-splinter-group-in-pakistan-targets-christians-in-easter-suicide-bombing/>
and <http://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistan-mourns-lahore-park-massacre-victims/75598>
and <http://members4.boardhost.com/acnaus/msg/1459290844.html>
and <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Survivors-of-Lahore-attack:-A-sudden-flash-of-light-and-then-flames-everywhere-37084.html>
and <http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2016/03/31/pakistan-christians-bury-their-dead-after-easter-massacre/>
and <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=5860>



Syria

Mariam Dawod Talia (abducted by ISIL from Tal-Shameran village on February 23, 2015;
UPDATE: released)

Date: March 27, 2016

Location: Tel Tamar

Source [with photos]: <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/?p=46628>



United Kingdom

Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chief Executive of Christian Concerns; **UPDATE:** described how a former Muslim has been banned by court order from taking his 9 year old son to church, said "This is a form of judicial bullying. The wife is abusing the law to coerce and silence a father's right to determine his son's religious education and experience. There is a general tendency with the judicial system to avoid upsetting Islam, a willingness to suppress the Christian faith and punish those who practice it...This would not have happened the other way around. If a Christian parent was trying to deny a child access to a mosque, there would be a huge outcry and claims of Islamophobia")

Date: March 31, 2016

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/islam/father-banned-from-taking-son-to-church>



Uruguay

Bishop Alberto Sanguinetti (aged 70, wrote concerning government opposition to the erection of a statue of the Blessed Virgin "In Uruguay 'secularism' has been used as a weapon to exclude religion from public life. Secularism has been used by some groups against religion that brings together a large part of the population, the Catholic religion, to obstruct the Catholic presence in the life of the country")

Date: March 30, 2016

Location: Canelones

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/59704-AMERICA_URUGUAY_Secularism_to_obstruct_the_Catholic_presence_in_the_life_of_the_country#.Vv9PI8IUUfg



Venezuela

Fr Darwin Antonio Zambrano Gamez (aged 38, **found dead**, had been beaten and stabbed)

Date: March 31, 2016

Location: San Cristobal

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/59723-AMERICA_VENEZUELA_Priest_found_dead_in_San_Cristobal#.Vv9RLsIUUfg

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