

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2016-04-24 through 2016-04-30



Algeria

Rev Mahmoud Haddad (criticized a government order to close a church, said “The new Constitution, passed in February 2016, has duly established freedom of religious worship. Its Article 36 clearly states that freedom of religious worship is guaranteed in compliance with the law. The house where church conducts its worship was rented on behalf of the EPA [the Protestant Church of Algeria], which has an official agreement from the Ministry of the Interior. The majority of churches affiliated to the EPA are in the same situation. They rent rooms or houses to celebrate their worship. Are authorities going to send such notifications to all these churches?”)

Date: April 24, 2016

Location: Maatkas, Kabylie province

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/04/4437754/>



Bangladesh

Bishop Emeritus Theotonius Gomes (said that Islamic extremism is growing in the country)

Date: April 26, 2016

Location: Dhaka

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/islamic-radicals-slaughtering-christians-bangladesh-dhaka-bishop-warns-162802/>



China

Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-Kium SDB (aged 85, **UPDATE**: led a demonstration against the mainland's cross demolition campaign, said "The freedom is less and less. So we have to speak out because we, in Hong Kong, can see the possibility of the anti- Christian

campaign spreading from the mainland...We need to speak out, to take action to prevent this from spreading")

Date: April 25, 2016

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Hong-Kong,-Christians-protest-against-demolition-of-crosses-37314.html>



Ethiopia

Workitu (aged 50-plus, mother of Mustafa and Kedir, convert from Islam, **beaten to death** by her husband and another man)

Mustafa (son of Workitu, converted to Christianity after his mother's murder)

Kedir (son of Workitu, converted to Christianity after his mother's murder)

Date: March 2016

Location: Addis Ababa

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/muslim-brothers-turn-christ-watching-slain-mother-beaten-converting-christianity-162597/>



India

Bishop Gallela Prasad (aged 54, abducted along with his driver after his automobile was forced to stop, beaten for hours, released, later said "They hit me and punched me resulting in injuries all over my body. I did not resist...They appeared to be paid goons and non-Christians from the way they talked and behaved")

Archbishop Thumma Bala (condemned the abduction and beating of Bishop Gallela Prasad "It's amazing that such violent atrocities have been perpetrated against a senior member of the minority community...against a person who has devoted his whole life to God and to the service of the needy and the marginalized")

Cardinal Oswald Gracias (**UPDATE:** issued a statement on the abduction and beating of Bishop Gallela Prasad "We are deeply saddened by this sacrilegious attack on Bishop Prasad. We assure him of all our support and prayers, and we appeal to the authorities to apprehend the culprits as soon as possible...The fact that this attack was perpetrated as the prelate was performing his duties is a source of anguish and grief. Mgr Prasad has always been concerned for the poor and for women. One of the major commitments of his ministry is in favor of women's empowerment. Since most girls in rural India do not attend school beyond the age of 15 years, the diocese offers an 11-month training program that culminates in the gift of a sewing machine worth US\$ 100. This allows graduates to go

on to earn a living...We pray for the bishop's quick recovery and call on God's merciful love to touch and turn the hearts of those who committed this sacrilegious assault)

Date: April 25, 2016

Location: Kadapa district, Andhra Pradesh state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Andhra-Pradesh:-Catholic-bishop-kidnapped-and-beaten-for-hours-37356.html>

and <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Card-Gracias,-saddened-by-the-attack-on-Bishop-Gallela-Prasad,-champion-of-the-poor-37364.html>

and <http://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-bishop-tells-of-being-kidnaped-and-assaulted/75906>



Iraq

Auxiliary Bishop Shlemon Warduni (**UPDATE:** said "No one is really able to understand what's going on, or anticipate what will happen in the future...They say that this is the land of oil, but what good is it to us today if we do not even have fuel to put in generators. It would be better not to have it because all of our suffering comes from it...you Western Christians, where are you in this Year of Mercy? Iraq and the believers of our land need you")

Yonadam Kanna (member of parliament, **UPDATE:** said that sectarianism has been hurting the country and that "Iraq has many problems that we cannot solve alone because they involve the whole region and the great powers")

Date: April 27, 2016

Location: Bagdad

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/For-Baghdad-auxiliary-bishop,-Iraq-“is-a-mess”,-at-a-“low-point”-of-its-history-37341.html>



Kenya

Patrick Macharia (aged 29, father, quarry worker, shot in the back by al-Shabab terrorists, saw the terrorists kill his Muslim pregnant landlady because she tried to stop the killings, survived, permanently disabled, later said "My wife left me because I could not put food on the table. Life became hard and we went for a day or two without food. She could not bear the kind of life our family was living, so she decided to go back to her maternal home together with our two-year-old baby")

Date: July 7, 2015

Location: Soko Mbuji, near Mandera and Garissa

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2016/04/28/persecution-in-kenya-destroys-lives-tears-families-apart/>



Malaysia

Roney Anak Rebit (aged 41, born a Christian but converted to Islam by his parents at age 8, returned to Christianity in 1999, A High Court ruled on [March 24, 2016](#) to allow Islam be removed from his national ID card; the Attorney General has appealed the High Court decision)

Date: April 28, 2016

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/news/Attorney-general-of-Malaysia-appeals-against-Christian-being-allowed-to-change-religion-on-identity-card>



Mexico

Bishop Jose de Jesus Martínez Zepeda (condemned the armed robbery of a church and attack on a priest and two female parishioners, said "there is crime everywhere, in homes, families are robbed, on the street, even with violence, crime does not respect anyone, not even priests")

Date: April 26, 2016

Location: Irapuato, Guanajuato state

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/59911-AMERICA_MEXICO_Priest_assaulted_and_handcuffed_the_arms_trade_is_flourishing_denounces_the_Bishop#.VyR05sIUUfg



Myanmar

Bishop Saw Stylo (called on Christians to not hold grudges after Buddhists seized church land and built a pagoda on it)

Date reported: April 26, 2016

Location: Hlaingbwe township, Karen state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Karen-State:-Buddhist-militants-erect-a-pagoda-on-land-owned-by-an-Anglican-church-37326.html>



Nigeria

Christiana Joel (aged 14, sister of Levi Joel and seven others, escaped their village during a Boko Haram attack)

Levi Joel (brother of Christiana Joel, disappeared during a Boko Haram attack)

Date: April 2015

Location: Lassa, Borno state

Maria Saidi (aged 26, abducted by Boko Haram, whipped, forcibly married, escaped)

Date: December 2015

Location: outside Maiduguri

Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/23/world/africa/boko-haram-nigeria-samantha-power.html?_r=0

Bishop Emmanuel Olisa Chukwuma (**UPDATE**: wrote a press statement concerning the Muslim Fulani attacks that have moved into the south of the country “What happened in Agatu is again being spread to other areas, and this is breeding serious civil war that is very much in breach of peace in this country. We don’t want war, but the way things are happening, if care is not taken, there is going to be another war which nobody can avert. It is either Nigeria must be one, or we disintegrate and go our ways”)

Date: April 27, 2016

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2016/04/muslim-fulani-herdsmen-massacres-reach-southern-nigeria/>



Pakistan

Ruth Bibi (wife, mother of three, entire family trapped in bonded labor, repeatedly raped by her landlord-employer, 12 year old daughter now subjected to sexual demands, landlord is demanding US\$3,817 for their freedom)

Date reported: April 23, 2016

Location: Lahore, Punjab province

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/a-landlord-subjects-a-christian-family-to-bonded-labour-demanding-4-lac-rupees-for-their-release/>

'Shazia Masih' (alias, husband away on military duty, raped by two Muslim men at gunpoint during a home invasion, rescued by neighbors, under pressure to drop charges after police took action)

Zahid Masih (rescued 'Shazia Masih' from her rapists)

Ayub (rescued 'Shazia Masih' from her rapists)

Date reported: April 23, 2016

Location: 291-GB village, Rajana town, Toba Tek Singh district, Punjab province

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/toba-tek-singh-stinking-rich-brats-gang-rape-a-christian-woman-at-gunpoint/>

Laveeza Bibi (aged 23, daughter of Sarwar Masih, abducted at gunpoint during a home invasion, father and mother threatened with death, forced into an Islamic marriage)

Sarwar Masih (father of Laveeza Bibi, threatened with death during his daughter's abduction, filed a police report)

Afzal Masih (said "Within this month at least five Christian girls have been abducted and converted to Islam and married with their abductors in this village from where this girl has been abducted and no legal protection for them in such issues")

Date: April 14, 2016

Location: Jodh Singh Chak No.13 village

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=5885>

Shaukat Masih (pistol whipped by two drunken Muslims)

Shafique Masih (tailor, beaten by two drunken Muslims after he asked for payment for his work, hospitalized, said "They have several times tried to extract money from us, they ask us to pay them tax. I call upon the authorities to take strong action against them", said the two had also terrorized young Christian girls)

Date reported: April 27, 2016

Location: Pind Jora village, near Kasur

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/kasur-influential-men-terrorize-local-christians-extort-money-and-harass-young-girls/>

Teddy Masih (forcibly evicted from his home of 30 years by a land mafia which had presented false documents to a court, family now sleeping outdoors)

Date: April 21, 2016

Location: Fatehgarh, Sialkot district

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/a-flat-broke-christian-family-spends-days-and-nights-under-open-sky-as-land-mafia-expropriates-their-house/>

Sardar Mushtaq Gill (attorney; **UPDATE:** present during a hearing on the [November 4, 2014](#) lynching of Shahzad Masih and Shama Bibi, objected when prosecutors verbally and physically assaulted Christian witnesses to the lynching and relatives of the deceased, the judge overruled his objections)

Khurram (eyewitness to the [November 4, 2014](#) lynching of Shahzad Masih and Shama Bibi, prosecutors pushed him and pulled his hair while he was giving testimony)

Shahbaz (eyewitness to the [November 4, 2014](#) lynching of Shahzad Masih and Shama Bibi, prosecutors physically assaulted him while he was giving testimony)

Date: April 28, 2016

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/lahore-eye-witnesses-of-christian-couples-lynching-assaulted-by-prosecution-during-court-hearing/>

Asher Azeem Gill (movie director, movie of a fictional story concerning corruption banned by the federal government despite having been filmed with military support)

Date: April 27, 2016

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=5890>



Philippines

Fr Amado Picardal CSSR (alleged that a death squad operated by Mayor and presidential candidate Rodrigo Duterte killed 1,424 people between 1998 and 20015, asked for prayers)

Date: April 22, 2016

Location: Davao, Mindanao

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/filipino-priest-lays-bare-existence-of-davao-death-squad/75844>

Fr Angel Calvo CMF (Spanish national, condemned the beheading of a Canadian citizen "It is shameful. This is the work of evil people, people of no faith", said the national failure to stop terrorism was also to blame)

Date: April 26, 2016

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/canadians-death-points-philippines-failure-combat-terror-says-missionary/75872>



Syria

Diana Yaqo (said: "All I can say on this situation, that it is incredibly sad and it's not a surprise either. We are being hunted all the time, not just for being a minority people but for our religion also...This week was the commemoration 101 years since the genocide of Armenians, Assyrians at the hands of Ottoman Empire. This genocide I feel will continue to follow us, world leaders can recognize it, stamp it onto papers, but what's the use when we are still being killed for the same reasons we were being killed 101 years ago?")

Sevag Tashdjian (said of recent shelling of the Armenian neighborhoods in which 17 were killed including 3 children "We woke up under the bombs, it is Turkey's gift, entire neighborhoods have caught fire and we went under the bombs to bring relief to sick and elderly trapped in their homes and take them to safety, to safer underground shelters...Where are you Bashar [Assad]? You claim to protect Christians, why have you forsaken our neighborhoods at the mercy of Islamic terrorists for 4 years now? Syrian troops are freeing areas controlled by 'Isis all over the country, even in the desert so why not here?")

Date: April 25, 2016

Location: Suleymaniye and Ashrafiyah districts, Aleppo

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/In-memory-of-the-genocide,-Armenian-districts-of-Aleppo-bombarded.-Christians-rail-against-Assad-37323.html>
and <http://www.aina.org/news/20160426131112.htm>

Joseph Yeghia (commented on the recent attacks that have killed at least 202 in the last week "Violence, attacks, and bombs are everywhere in the city...[The streets are] full of wounded, many of them children, [the skies are] obscured by a thick blanket of black smoke, [the] sound of ambulances is nonstop...We do not know the exact number of dead and wounded. Not even hospitals have a precise idea...We ask you to pray for us. We only need your prayers. All we want is for God to grant us peace")

Date: April 29, 2016

Location: Aleppo

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/As-Aleppo-comes-under-attack,-with-hundreds-of-dead-and-wounded,-Caritas-Syria-aid-crucial-37362.html>



United Kingdom

Event: Several Christian charities issued a statement that read in part "Requiring churches in England to register before they are legally allowed to help children learn the Christian values our nation was built on is an unjustified restriction of religious liberty. Whether the threshold is 6 hours in any week or higher, the principle of outlawing 'unregistered churches' from teaching children the gospel is an unacceptable overreach of the state...We call on Christians, churches and affected organizations in England to contact their MPs and urge them to oppose these plans"

Andrea Minichiello Williams (CEO of Christian Concern, **UPDATE:** wrote "Christians teaching biblical truth on Sunday or any other day of the week should not be looked upon as if they are somehow doing something so awful that the State needs to be constantly looking over their shoulder. Christians are not terrorists and should not be treated as if they are")

Colin Hart (Director of The Christian Institute, **UPDATE:** wrote "Christians are justifiably alarmed at the prospect of OFSTED conducting 'British values' inspections of church youth work. The freedom to proclaim the Gospel, and indeed our wider civil liberties, must be protected, not undermined in the name of 'counter-extremism'")

Mark Jones (wrote "The Lawyers' Christian Fellowship condemns violence and terrorism. We have grave concerns about the proposals, which could be counter-productive to the stated aims and may arguably place the UK in breach of its international human rights obligations")

Nola Leach (CARE Chief Executive, wrote "The Government's plans to empower OFSTED to inspect Sunday Schools and other church activities is simply not the best way to tackle

the radicalization of young people. It is a wholly unwarranted undermining of religious freedom. We support tackling extremism, but not in this sweeping, overly broad manner")

Simon McCrossan (Evangelical Alliance Head of Public Policy, wrote "These proposals amount to the wholesale nationalization of youth work and the state regulation of private religious practice, more akin to 'Big Brother' than 'Big Society'. If implemented, there is a real risk churches will feel forced to step back from the valuable services they currently provide to young people across society")

Date: April 18, 2016

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/freedom-of-speech/christian-charities-urge-opposition-to-government-plans-for-registrat>



United States - Colorado

Jack Phillips (bakery owner, cited in 2013 for refusing to make a cake for a same gender wedding; **UPDATE**: the state Supreme Court refused to hear his appeal)

Date: April 25, 2016

Location: Denver

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/colorados-high-court-rejects-appeal-of-christian-ordered-to-bake-gay-weddin>

United States - Missouri

Andrew Cash (graduate student, dismissed from a master's program in counselling after stating his religious beliefs would require him to refer same-gender couples to another counselor, has filed a discrimination lawsuit against Missouri State University)

Date reported: April 21, 2016

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/this-counseling-student-says-he-was-expelled-for-his-christian-beliefs-66893/>

United States - New Jersey

Fr Edwin Leahy OSB (assaulted by a mentally ill man while in church, said "People like this, who suffer, don't tend to take their medication. So they are dangerous to themselves and to somebody else")

Fr Philip Waters (witnessed the assault on Fr Edwin Leahy, aided police in the arrest of the perpetrator)

Date: April 24, 2016

Location: Newark

Source: <http://abc7ny.com/news/newark-church-assault-highlights-crisis-of-mentally-ill-priests-say/1307757/>

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