

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2016-07-10 through 2016-07-16



### Bangladesh

Maya Karmokar (aged 45, nurse, doused with gasoline and set afire while sleeping in her home, hospitalized, released after one day due to lack of funds)

Salomon Das (relative of Maya Karmokar, said that she had no enemies who would want to attack her)

Fr Ananda Gopal Biswas (said "I heard of the attack and I strongly condemn it. I express my closeness to my parishioner")

Date: July 9, 2016

Location: Kajura village, Jessore district

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Bangladesh,-Catholic-woman-doused-with-gasoline-and-set-on-fire-38012.html>



### China

Mou (church leader, **UPDATE:** said that the local government ruled that Christian minors will be prohibited from college or from joining the military "This notice was sent to all of the schools in Huaqiu. They intend to cleanse us and ask us to join the [official] Three-Self Church")

Date: June 23, 2016

Location: Huaqiu, Guizhou province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/07/officials-bar-christian-minors-from.html>



### Egypt

Mariam Khamis (aged 16, **UPDATE:** abducted on her way to school, ransom of US\$28,185 demanded, tortured and abused, freed in a police raid)

Dates: May 12 & 26, 2016

Locations: Beni Mazar, Minya province and El-Isyan village

Source: <http://www.copticsolidarity.org/2016/07/13/wave-of-kidnappings-rock-upper-egypts-christian-community-part-6/>



## India

### **Event: Three Christians and three others were killed by police who claimed they were attacking Maoists rebels**

Sajan K George (**UPDATE:** said “This is not an isolated case. Dalits and Tribals are being killed all the time. Our people are not Maoist. They are struggling to survive and lead a life of dignity despite veiled threats and the climate of insecurity present in the district...[this is a] sinister warning for Christians”)

Fr Madan Singh (said of the government promise of financial compensation to families of the deceased “Compensation might satisfy the families, but it is not enough. Measures to protect Christians are needed. The latest event comes as a shock to Adivasi [aboriginals] and Dalits [untouchables]”)

Fr Ajaya Kumar Singh (**UPDATE:** said "It is a well-planned strategy to create terror among poor villages")

Date: July 8, 2016

Location: between Baligunda and Malapanga, Kandhamal district, Odisha state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Kandhamal:-Christians-mistakenly-killed-as-Maoists-38009.html>

and <http://www.ucanews.com/news/christians-among-those-mistaken-for-maoists-killed-in-india/76546>

Fr Ajaya Kumar Singh (**UPDATE:** described the importance of the new film **Voice from the ruins - Kandhamal in search of justice**, which documents the 2008 pogrom against Christians in which nearly 100 were killed, more than 40 raped, 56,000 displaced, and 350 churches and 6,500 homes destroyed)

Date reported: July 13, 2016

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/First-documentary-on-Kandhamal-martyrs-released-in-Kerala-38030.html>

### **Event UPDATE:**

Pastor Sanjay Kumar Ravi (convert, said “About 100 people from three neighboring villages were waiting when we reached the place and started to tell us that it is wrong for us to pray to Jesus and that we should follow Hinduism and perform puja [Hindu rituals] to the idols only”, gave his personal testimony on his conversion, after all of the Christians refused “They shouted to each other to bring kerosene oil so that they could burn us all”,

suffered a painful internal injury in his chest, lacerations on his hands and abrasions all over his body, filed a police report)

Naresh Ram (father of Eraj Ram, beaten, hands broken)

Eraj Ram (aged 5, son of Naresh Ram, begged that his father be spared from the beatings, thrown aside by the Hindu radicals)

Rev Akash Nandi (**UPDATE**: gave additional details of the attack on the Christians led by Pastor Sanjay Kumar Ravi "The pastor's testimony enraged the crowd more and they started to beat him and the other five Christian men...", when threatened with death the Christians replied "Do whatever you like, we are not going to leave Christ at any cost")

Date: May 8, 2016

Location: Palamu district, Jharkhand state

Pastor Sanjay Kumar Ravi (convert, **UPDATE**: said of the police response to the [May 8, 2016](#) attack "We were forced to sign the bond [that stated they would worship only in their homes], we have no other choice as we have nowhere else to stay except in the village...Our names were also cut off from the list where houses were allotted to the [Dalit] villagers by the state authorities")

Date: May 10, 2016

Location: Palamu district, Jharkhand state

Dharaya Singh (husband of Sumitra Singh, threatened with expulsion from his village)

Sumitra Singh (wife of Dharaya Singh, threatened with expulsion from her village)

Date: June 10, 2016

Location: Palamu district, Jharkhand state

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2016/06/police-in-india-threaten-to-fine-christians-attacked-by-hindu-extremists/>

Sajan K George (**UPDATE**: condemned another arson attack on a church)

Date: July 14, 2016

Location: Karnataka state

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/60457-ASIA\\_INDIA\\_Tempted\\_burning\\_of\\_a\\_Christian\\_church#.V4mSd8KV85s](http://www.fides.org/en/news/60457-ASIA_INDIA_Tempted_burning_of_a_Christian_church#.V4mSd8KV85s)



## Indonesia

Archbishop Nicholas Adi Saputra (criticized the government for arresting hundreds of demonstrators)

Date: July 14, 2016

Location: Papua

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/archbishop-condemns-mass-papua-arrests/76588>



## Iran

Maryam Naghash-Zargaran aka Nasim (aged 38, forced to return to prison on [June 18, 2016](#) against medical advice; **UPDATE**: has again begun a hunger strike to force prison officials to grant her a medical leave)

Date reported: July 11, 2016

Location: Evin Prison, Tehran

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=2992>



## Lebanon

Samir (aged about 50, alias, husband of Sabine, Syrian refugee, converted to Islam under threat from ISIL, fled Raqqa after discovered to have continued to secretly practice Christianity at home, sought refuge in Aleppo and then Beirut but continued to receive death threats from ISIL, now in hiding)

Sabine (aged about 50, alias, wife of Samir, Syrian refugee, converted to Islam...)

Date: July 14, 2016

Location: Beqaa Valley

Source: <http://members4.boardhost.com/acnaus/msg/1468462348.html>



## Nepal

Pastor Shakti Pakhrin (arrested for associating with Christians arrested on June 8, 2016 for handing out Bibles, released after several days)

Pastor Jeevan Lama (described the arrest of Pastor Shakti Pakhrin and the Christians arrested on June 8, 2016)

Date: June 14, 2016

Source: <http://www.bosnewslife.com/37060-nepal-to-prosecute-evangelical-christians-for-spreading-bibles>



## Nigeria

Pastor Eunice Mojisola Olawale (aged 41, wife of Pastor Olawale Elisha, mother of seven including Jessica Olawale, **hacked to death** while street preaching, witnesses said that as she was killed her last words were "Blood of Jesus! Blood of Jesus! Blood of Jesus!")

Jessica Olawale (daughter of Pastors Eunice Olawale and Olawale Elisha, said of her mother's murder "She is innocent; she didn't do anybody any harm. She uses just her megaphone and Bible, just preaching. They just killed her like a chicken and left her there")

Pastor Olawale Elisha (widower of Pastor Eunice Olawale, identified his wife's body, said "My wife always goes out early in the morning for 'Morning Cry.' There was a particular day she went out and she told me that there is a mosque at the back where they commented about what she said. So I just cautioned her. This morning, she went around 5 a.m. and I was still in bed because we did vigil which she participated in for a while because of the Morning Cry she planned to undertake";

later said "My desire is that our persecutors get to know God – our desire is to see God arresting them one by one to confess Jesus Christ. You know when Jesus Christ saves their souls, Satan and hell will lose. If we desire that those who persecute us should die, then we are increasing the population of hell. The Bible says there is rejoicing in heaven when a sinner repents. Our persecutors were also created in God's image. It is because we are weak that we think people that are doing evil are stronger. But if we are committed, God knows how to handle our persecutors and increase people coming to His kingdom")

Date: July 9, 2016

Location: Abuja

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-mother-7-hacked-to-death-nigeria-preaching-severed-head-left-on-bible-166357/>  
and <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/07/4550690/>



## Pakistan

Mehwish Masih (aged 14, daughter of Tanveer Masih and Najma Bibi, hired by a Muslim family as a domestic servant for a party, not allowed to return home)

Tanveer Masih (aged 42, husband of Najma Bibi, father of Mehwish Masih, rickshaw driver, filed a police report after his daughter did not come home)

Date: March 12, 2016

Tanveer Masih (aged 42, husband of Najma Bibi, father of Mehwish Masih, rickshaw driver, filed a police report after his daughter did not come home; **UPDATE: shot dead** after he refused to withdraw his complaint)

Najma Bibi (widow of Tanveer Masih, mother of Mehwish Masih, unable to work or leave her home due to threats, said "several months after my daughter's kidnapping, the police have

not done anything because we have no money to defend our rights. We live in a hopeless situation, we need help. I pray that my daughter will continue to place hope and faith in Jesus Christ...I want my daughter back. I want the perpetrators brought to justice. I have no money to buy food or continue the legal battle. I ask help from God's people")

Date: May 10, 2016

Location: Faisalabad

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Muslims-kidnap-Christian-girl-in-Faisalabad,-kill-father-when-he-tries-to-rescue-her-38020.html>

James Nadeem (brother of Najma and Samreen, accused of sending a blasphemous poem via social media)

Najma (sister of Samreen and James Nadeem, arrested and tortured by police in an attempt to force the surrender of her brother)

Samreen (sister of Najma and James Nadeem, arrested and tortured by police in an attempt to force the surrender of her brother)

Date: July 10, 2016

Location: Lahore

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/60429-ASIA\\_PAKISTAN\\_Blasphemy\\_via\\_WhatsApp\\_Christian\\_arrested\\_risk\\_of\\_collective\\_punishment#.V4W1bcKV85s](http://www.fides.org/en/news/60429-ASIA_PAKISTAN_Blasphemy_via_WhatsApp_Christian_arrested_risk_of_collective_punishment#.V4W1bcKV85s)  
and <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=5991>

Aqeel Masih (gasoline station attendant, abducted, refused to renounce Christianity and convert to Islam, arms amputated below the shoulders, attempted to file a police report but was relocated by police)

Date: July 12, 2016

Location: Lahore

Source [warning - graphic]: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/lahore-a-christian-youth-arms-lopped-off-after-his-refusal-to-denounce-christianity-and-convert-to-islam/>

Chaudhary Amon Emmanuel (activist, led a demonstration against the rape of a 16 year old Christian girl in Farooqaabad)

Date reported: July 12, 2016

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/lahore-christians-rant-and-rave-about-sexual-assault-on-a-14-year-old-christian-girl-in-farooqabad/>

Sonia (aged 16, daughter of Naseer Masih, granddaughter of Inayar Masih, raped while returning from church)

Date: July 7, 2016

Location: Farooqaabad

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=5990>

Farazana (aged 16, daughter of Ilyas Masih, sister of Serish, abducted and gang raped on December 3, 2014 in Jaranwala district, laughingly told by her attackers that hers' was the fate of 'poor Christian girls', released half naked; two men on motorcycles demanded

on [February 10, 2015](#) that her family drop the criminal charges against her attackers, fired repeated shots into her home and took deliberate aim at her 12 year old brother but missed, after exhausting their bullets they spent 20 minutes threatening her with another gang rape and other atrocities, family fled her home and is living with her pastor; **UPDATE:** moved to a safe house, worked as a domestic, falsely accused of theft, accusations likely resulted after the discovery of funds donated to help the family relocate)

Serish aged 20, daughter of Ilyas Masih, sister of Serish, abducted and gang raped on...; **UPDATE:** moved to a safe house, worked as a domestic, falsely accused of theft, accusations likely resulted after the discovery of funds donated to help the family relocate)

Date reported: [June 28, 2016](#)

Location: Faisalabad

Source: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/gang-raped-sisters-now-fraudulently-accused-of-theft-while-cleaning>

James Nadeem (husband, brother of Najma and Samreen, accused on [July 10, 2016](#) of sending a blasphemous poem via social media; **UPDATE:** arrested, case likely triggered by his marriage to a Muslim woman who converted to Christianity, the pastor who baptized his wife has fled into hiding)

Amir James (brother of the pastor who baptized the Muslim wife of James Nadeem, arrested)

Date: [July 14, 2016](#)

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/sarai-alamgir-fracas-absconded-christian-incriminated-as-blasphemer-arrested-from-lahore/>

Michelle Chaudhry (President of the Cecil & Irish Chaudhry Foundation; **UPDATE:** has petitioned the Lahore High Court after a subway project has threatened 27 protected cultural sites including 4 historic churches)

Date: [July 14, 2016](#)

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Lahore:-Christian-foundation-against-the-new-metro-line-going-through-church-land-38044.html>



## **Russia**

Abbot Daniel Sokolov (aged 42, **killed** in his cell, suspect is a 36 year old novice)

Date: [July 7, 2016](#)

Location: Holy Trinity-Danilov Monastery, Pereslavl-Zalessky

Source: <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/abbot-of-holy-trinity-danilov-monastery-killed-in-pereslavl-zalessky/>

**Event: Reaction has grown to the signing of an anti-missionary law by President Putin**

Bishop Sergei Ryakhovsky (appealed to President Putin on [June 23, 2016](#) to not sign the new anti-terrorism law which would criminalize unregistered missionary activity and which has been passed by the Duma; **UPDATE**: wrote “The obligation on every believer to have a special permit to spread his or her beliefs, as well as hand out religious literature and material outside of places of worship and used structures is not only absurd and offensive, but also creates the basis for mass persecution of believers for violating these provisions. Soviet history shows us how many people of different faiths have been persecuted for spreading the Word of God. This law brings us back to a shameful past”)

Sergey Rakhuba (Mission Eurasia, wrote “[It’s] the most draconian anti-religion bill to be proposed in Russia since Nikita Khrushchev promised to eliminate Christianity in the Soviet Union. For years we have watched as huge changes take place in Russia under the increasingly dictatorial rule of President Putin and his administration. Freedom of religion represents a threat to the current political agenda in Russia. Today, few — if any — foreign Christian mission groups have an official presence in Russia, having been pushed out by anti-evangelical regulations”)

Oleg Goncharov (wrote "It is impossible for believers to comply with the requirements not to express their religious beliefs and to be silent even in their own homes as required by the legislation...")

Date: [July 7, 2016](#)

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/07/4555259/>



## Syria

Archbishop Antoine Audo SJ (**UPDATE**: said "We are again under bombs. We do not know what is about to happen. Even last night we could not sleep, and this morning an artillery shell also fell in the street of our cathedral, resulting in one death and three injuries. Also for this reason we have decided not to reopen the Caritas offices, which had been closed for a few days during the Muslim feast for the end of Ramadan...we are all heartbroken by what is happening, on the other side there are many that in this state meet to celebrate the sacraments, pray, share a spirit of hope and mercy. I have just been called by the participants in a spiritual retreat organized on the mountains by the Focolare members. There were two hundred people, with ten priests. From next Thursday we will meet in Tartus with 175 operators and Caritas volunteers from all over Syria, for a few days of formation and meetings. It is a mysterious and wonderful paradox: on one hand there is the desolation of war, and on the other there is the consolation of God")

Bishop George Abu Khazen OFM (**UPDATE**: said "heavy shelling throughout the day...[which] have also affected our pastoral center...there have been no casualties, as was unfortunately the case elsewhere...[the church] has suspended all activities in the summer program, including playtime and recreation for the children...only the church will stay open so that the faithful can come and pray or attend services. Everything else has been stopped for now...Unfortunately here we are not facing a clash between two armies,



because the front is elsewhere. This is about attacks against civilians out of sheer vindictiveness, with increasingly sophisticated weapons")

Date: July 11, 2016

Location: Aleppo

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Vicar-of-Aleppo:-Too-much-violence,-we-have-to-suspend-activities.-But-our-churches-will-stay-open-38015.html>

and <http://www.fides.org/en/news/60421->

[ASIA\\_SYRIA\\_Aleppo\\_still\\_under\\_bombs\\_Bishop\\_Audo\\_we\\_live\\_among\\_the\\_desolation\\_of\\_war\\_and\\_the\\_consolation\\_of\\_God#.V4W-BsKV85s](http://www.fides.org/en/news/60421-ASIA_SYRIA_Aleppo_still_under_bombs_Bishop_Audo_we_live_among_the_desolation_of_war_and_the_consolation_of_God#.V4W-BsKV85s)



### Thailand

Noshad Young (aged 52, husband, father of three, Pakistani refugee, has been held in immigration detention for over two months along with his son, requires hospitalization due to a heart condition and digestive problems, unable to eat)

Date: July 14, 2016

Location: Bangkok

Source: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/deteriorating-health-of-detained-pak-christian-asylum-seeker-in-bangkok-creates-international-concer>



### United States - Kansas

Brian Bergkamp (aged 24, seminarian, rescued a woman from drowning in the Arkansas River but was then pulled under, **possibly drowned**)

Date: July 9, 2016

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/wichita-seminarian-missing-after-rescuing-woman-in-arkansas-river-74552/>



### Venezuela

Archbishop Diego Rafael Padron Sanchez (**UPDATE**: criticized the government for calling for peace while prevented the church from distributing food and medicine “The interests of the government are not the interests of the country...The ungovernability, aside from the brutal repression, the lack of serious and stabilizing responses that would be more than

improvisational and provisional, create the widespread perception that the global crisis is getting more acute and is being prolonged with no end in sight”)

Date reported: July 12, 2016

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/venezuelan-government-blasted-for-blocking-church-aid-36659>



## **Zimbabwe**

Rev Evan Mawarire (arrested for inciting public disorder after encouraging people to protest economic deprivations, released)

Date: July 12-13, 2016

Location: Harare

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/60427->

[AFRICA ZIMBABWE The leader of the protest movement Baptist pastor Evan M awarire has been arrested#.V4W2M8KV85s](http://www.fides.org/en/news/60427-)

and: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/60454->

[AFRICA ZIMBABWE Christian leaders We risk social explosion and the collapse of the State#.V4mPRcKV85s](http://www.fides.org/en/news/60454-)

## **Today's Martyrs**

*For more information please visit our web site at: <http://todaysmartyrs.org/>*

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