

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2016-07-31 through 2016-08-06



Austria

Susanna Rufi (aged 19, Italian citizen, religious pilgrim, **died of meningitis** while returning from World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland)

Date: August 1, 2016

Location: Vienna

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/meningitis-death-of-world-youth-day-pilgrim-prompts-health-alert-52288/>



Belarus

Viktor Kalina (aged 23, indicted on **June 22, 2015** for refusing military service, had been exempted from military service the previous year due to heart disease, trial begun on **August 17, 2015**; **UPDATE**: acquitted, re-tried in a second trial, convicted, fined US\$1,050, appeal rejected, said "alternative service exists now, but not for me")

Dates: September 8, 2015. May 18, 2016, June 24, 2016

Location: Brest

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2204



Belgium

Fr Jos Vanderlee (aged 65, stabbed in his hands by an asylum seeker after he refused a demand for money, hospitalized)

Date: August 1, 2016

Location: Lanaken

Source: <http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2016/08/01/catholic-priest-stabbed-in-belgium/>



China

Bishop Vincent Huang Shoucheng (aged 93, **died of natural causes**, had spent 35 years in prison, labor camps, and house arrest, the government placed restrictions on his wake and funeral)

Date: July 30, 2016

Location: Fujian province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mindong-Bishop-Mgr-Vincent-Huang-Shoucheng-dies-38183.html>

and <http://www.ucanews.com/news/chinese-authorities-interfere-with-bishops-funeral/76731>

Hu Shigen (church elder, disappeared on **July 10, 2015**; formally arrested in **Tianjin** on **January 8, 2016** on a charge of 'subversion of state power'; **UPDATE** sentenced to 7 years' imprisonment)

Date: August 3, 2016

Location: Beijing

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/08/new-york-times-china-sentences-hu.html>

Wang Qiaoling (wife of civil rights attorney Li Heping, who disappeared on **July 10, 2015**; **UPDATE**: spoke in an interview of her love and respect for her husband)

Date published: July 30, 2016

Source: <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/1996642/conscience-conquers-all-wife-detained-rights-lawyer-li-heping>

or <http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/08/south-china-morning-post-conscience.html>



Egypt

Susana Khalaf (aged 11, daughter of Ibrahim Khalaf, home attacked when neighbors considered renovations to be for religious purposes, said "I was terrified. I saw men pour petrol on bundles of wood and throw them on our roof. When it began to fall on us, my father dragged us out")

Ibrahim Khalaf (father of Susana Khalaf, said of pressure to not seek justice for his destroyed home "We are told 'If you don't agree there will be blood. You have daughters who can be kidnapped. The security services won't stay in the village forever to protect you'")

Date: June 2016

Location: Kom El Louf village, Minya province

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20160802194259.htm>

Bishoy Armiya Boulous aka Mohammed Hegazy (aged 34, Egypt's 'most famous' convert, arrested before December 5, 2013 in Minya province and charged with "inciting sedition

by communicating to a US-based [Coptic] channel unfounded information on Copts persecution in Egypt";

attorney claimed on December 6, 2013 that all charges were fabricated by the national security agency;

ordered detained on December 7, 2013 for 15 days for questioning on suspicion of inciting "chaos and sectarian strife" and of "transmitting a false image of persecution of Egypt's Copts";

ordered held another 15 days on April 9, 2014 - has not been released since his December 2013 arrest;

as of April 14, 2014 has been attacked in prison in Minya and threatened with death in an attempt to revert him back to Islam;

told his attorney on April 23, 2014 that he had been beaten, tortured, and electrocuted in prison;

attorney on April 28, 2014 has requested from the Interior Ministry in Cairo a medical exam to document torture;

as of May 14, 2014 has begun a hunger strike to protest his unjust arrest, torture, and death threats;

attorney stated on May 23, 2014 that the court has no intention of releasing him;

convicted on June 18, 2014, sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment and US\$70 fine;

released on bail on July 20, 2014, arrested again on July 21, 2014 on 2009 charges of "defaming Islam", charges were filed after he attempted to have his religious affiliation changed on his government ID card;

attorney denied access to him on July 31, 2014 in a Minya province prison;

attorney said on August 8, 2014 "The commissioner of Tora prison treats him badly. He insults and humiliates him for being a Christian convert. He incites people to beat and attack him";

detention renewed on August 18, 2014 for 15 more days, denied clothing and food;

his attorney said on November 6, 2014 "Bishoy told me when I visited him a week ago in Tora prison that he was beaten and tortured by some police officers who insulted his religion";

appeal on his conviction and sentence of five years' imprisonment will be denied if he does not appear in court on November 18, 2014, as of November 12, 2014 prison authorities have not agreed to allow him to attend the hearing;

reported on December 2, 2014 to have been detained temporarily in an execution chamber by prison authorities;

petition to the Egyptian ambassador to the U.S. in support of his release online as of December 18, 2014;

all but one charge dismissed on appeal in Minya on December 28, 2014, sentence reduced to one year, may be released as he has been jailed since before December 5, 2013;

attorney attempted to visit him in prison on January 20, 2015, found that he had been transferred to another prison without notice;

completed his sentence in December 2014, still incarcerated in Tora Prison, South Cairo as of May 27, 2015, has been beaten and dragged on concrete floors almost daily;

has been told on July 20, 2015 that he is to be allowed only one visit per month from his attorney

UPDATE: returned to Islam, stated in a video "I want nothing from this video. I have no desires. I will not appear again in media. I will not appear again publicly...I say this out of my complete free will. I am under no pressures from anyone. I am not being held by any agency, nor am I under any pressure of any kind. And that's it", released from prison)

Date: July 29, 2016

Source: https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/08/article_4575931.html/



Greece

Metropolitan Anthimos Rousas (said that anarchists "destroyed what they could" during an attack on the cathedral during the Divine Liturgy)

Date: August 1, 2016

Location: Thessaloniki

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/95826.htm>

and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metropolis_of_Thessaloniki



India

Pastor Yohan Maraiah (aged 55, dragged from his home by Maoist guerrillas, beaten and tortured, **throat slit**, body dumped on a road, church set afire)

Date: July 29, 2016

Location: East Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Andhra-Pradesh,-Maoists-torture-and-kill-a-Protestant-pastor-38194.html>

and <http://www.ucanews.com/news/maoists-torture-and-kill-pastor-in-southern-india/76733>

Samuel (described the partial demolition of the centuries old St Peter's Cathedral "Taking the shrine's history and prominence into consideration, VMC [Vijayawada Municipal

Corporation] officials should leave the structure untouched. They carried out the demolition without informing the church authorities or serving a notice”)

Date: July 31, 2016

Location: Tarapet, Andhra Pradesh state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Catholics-protest-in-Andhra-Pradesh-over-the-demolition-of-St.-Peter's-cathedral-38209.html>

Sangeeta Siri (aged 14, daughter of Maner Sori, **raped and murdered** in retribution for the conversion of her parents)

Date: July 22, 2016

Location: Jattarbeda village, Kondagaon district, Chhattisgarh state

Two Christians were abducted by Hindu radicals on **July 21, 2016**, taken into a forest, beaten, tied to a tree and left for hours, untied by police who arrested them on forced conversion charges; **UPDATE**: released on bail

Rev Ramlal Kori

Nanda Lal

Date: July 27, 2016

Location: Gadra village, Rewa district, Madhya Pradesh state

Pastor Jagdish Gill (assaulted during a church service)

Date: July 31, 2016

Location: Panipat, Haryana state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/08/4574211/>



Iran

Naser Navar Gol-Tapeh (aged 45, convert, arrested, whereabouts unknown)

Date: June 24, 2016

Location: Tehran

Nazila Hamidov (Azeri citizen, arrested on espionage charges. beaten, nose broken, forehead lacerated)

Date: January 2015

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3045>



Iraq

Bishop Awa Royel (said "What impresses me and the churches working on the ground is the human aspect of this - that there is no respect for human life. Two years after [Christians and Yazidis] were first displaced, our communities are still in survival mode. And that's not a good thing")

Fr Behnam Benoka (**UPDATE:** said "there is still an urgent need for food. Many families have no work and their supplies are running out. Even if someone gets a job in Kurdistan they often won't get paid")

Date: July 28, 2016

Location: Washington DC, United States

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20160803194233.htm>



Malaysia

Rev Jerry Dusing (said after Islamist political parties proposed the adoption of Islamic law "Sharia will not work in Sabah, which is pluralist in nature. We will guard our shores from injustice, unfairness and extremism")

Date reported: August 1, 2016

Location: Kota Kinabalu, Sabah state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Sabah,-Evangelical-Church-of-Borneo-opposes-introduction-of-sharia-38193.html>



Pakistan

Event: Christians protested an unrepaired sewer break, said that the sewage was deliberately maneuvered toward their church

Mistry Jallal Javaid

Ehsan Masih Sindhu

Pastor Irfan

Date reported: August 1, 2016

Location: Gujrat, Punjab province

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/gujrat-sewerage-floods-a-130-year-old-church-as-a-result-of-laxity-of-town-municipal-administration/>

Cecil Shane Chaudhry (**UPDATE:** issued a report which described how textbooks are inciting hatred of non-Muslims, said "When I was in Grade 6, I felt proud when reading about my fighter pilot dad in the school book. However his name along with other non Muslim

heroes disappeared by the time I reached in college. For me, this deliberate change set off an alarm bell”)

Date: July 29, 2016

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/For-Justice-and-Peace,-textbooks-are-full-of-intolerance-and-hatred-towards-non-Muslims-38179.html>

Fr Abid Habib (**UPDATE**: condemned the shooting of two Hindu youths in revenge for the alleged Quran desecration by a mentally ill Hindu turned Muslim, one died)

Date: July 27, 2016

Location: Mirpur Mathelo

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/church-leader-condemns-killing-of-hindu-youth-over-blasphemy-furor-in-ghotki/>

Asma (daughter of Gulzar Masih, hearing impaired, abducted, forcibly married and converted to Islam, escaped after 4-5 months and returned to her family, under pressure to return to her abductor)

Gulzar Masih (father of Asma, son-in-law arrested by police in an attempt to force him to return his daughter to her abductor)

Date: August 1, 2016

Location: Sialkot

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6020>



South Africa

Bishop Malusi Mpumlwana (spoke about government corruption and election violence "Has our country descended to these low levels and becoming a mafia State? Let it not be so. God forbid!")

Date reported: July 29, 2016

Source: <http://www.ecumenicalnews.com/article/south-african-church-leaders-appeal-for-calm-ahead-of-heated-elections/48836.htm>

Bishop Abel Gaba (said after 12 people have been killed in election related violence “We must make sure that our country does not become one of those nations where the murder of candidates before elections is considered normal. Given the sacredness of life, the death of even one candidate during an election must be considered one too many”)

Date reported: August 1, 2016

Location: Johannesburg

Source:



Syria

Event: Artillery and air bombardment of Aleppo continues

Stefan Maier (Austrian citizen, Caritas coordinator, said “Pickup trucks constantly drive past the Caritas office, and the loading surfaces in the back are packed with the injured or dead, most of them children”)

Sr Annie Demerjian (said “It is painful to see people without food and water. In them, Jesus is hungry and thirsty. What gives me joy is when I can help them and see the relief and happiness on their faces”)

Joseph (Caritas employee, said “We need from the whole world to stand up with us to stop this war”)

Date reported: August 1, 2016

Location: Aleppo

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2016/08/01/bombardment-of-aleppo-is-destroying-hospitals-and-trapping-civilians-aid-agencies-say/>

Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem Joseph III Yonan (**UPDATE**: said “The very existence of Eastern Churches, those churches that come from the apostles’ time, is at stake, in danger [and] is not going to be assured [by the] hypocritical and Machiavellian agenda of the powerful countries and politicians of the West...Who taught these two young men who slaughtered the priest [in Rouen, France]? Their Iman alienated them as children and as youth, and told them to memorize all the verses of the Quran. If you tell these kids that those verses are literally coming from God, you’ll be able to turn that young man into a beast, since they don’t have exegesis, and they have to memorize those verses, it won’t be easy to prevent them from becoming terrorists or killers”)

Date: August 3, 2016

Location: Toronto, Canada

Source: <https://cruxnow.com/global-church/2016/08/03/syrian-catholic-leader-challenges-claims-islam-non-violent/>



United Kingdom

Aisleen Hubert (aged 23, as of [October 27, 2014](#) has brought a private prosecution against 3 doctors implicated in illegal gender-selection abortions after Crown prosecutors refused to prosecute; Crown prosecutors announced on [March 13, 2015](#) that they would take over and then drop the prosecutions as 'not in the public interest'; on [April 13, 2015](#) has been ordered to pay £25,000 - US\$36,800 - to the Manchester court in costs for bringing the prosecution; **UPDATE**: the court have ordered her to pay a total of £47,000 - US\$61,965, could be imprisoned for non-payment, said "There is a huge injustice here. There was

clear video evidence that doctors were willing to offer abortion on the grounds of the child being the 'wrong' gender. That is against the law and yet the CPS refused to prosecute, refused to release important video evidence and then squashed my attempt to fight for justice. Now I have been landed with a huge costs order which I cannot pay...The CPS conceded that there was sufficient evidence for a prosecution. It was reasonable for me to test the law in the courts. Now I'm being punished for doing so...Gender-abortion is a horrible practice. I brought prosecutions because those who should have done so were turning a blind eye...These two doctors were filmed offering gender-abortion. I sought to bring them to justice. Now I am being punished and told to pay a huge sum to them. Where is the justice in that? It is completely immoral...This isn't just about abortion, it's about our justice system. Private prosecution is an important check and balance on state power. It allows private citizens to fight for justice when the state apparatus has failed or turned a blind eye. But these massive costs will make it impossible for people like me in the future")

Date reported: August 1, 2016

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/abortion/23-year-old-who-pursued-gender-abortion-justice-faces-crippling-47000-legal-b>

Fr David Barnes (reported that his church had been vandalized, tables, pews, and candlesticks were overturned, wrote "This is tiresome, but nothing compared with what the church near Rouen has endured. Pray for them")

Date: July 26, 2016

Location: London

Source: <http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2016/08/02/central-london-church-vandalised/>



United States - Kansas

Brian Bergkamp (aged 24, seminarian, on July 9, 2016 rescued a woman from drowning in the Arkansas River but was then pulled under; **UPDATE: body found**)

Jimmy Schibi (seminarian, said of Brian Bergkamp "He gave up his life to be a priest, but before he could do that, he gave up his life for another. Probably one of the most selfless individuals that I'd ever met")

Date: July 28, 2016

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/body-of-missing-wichita-seminarian-found-23396/>

United States - Tennessee

Lois McGinnis (wife of Curtis McGinnis, Christian bookstore owner, newspaper ad not printed because it contained the offensive word 'Christian')

Curtis McGinnis (husband of Lois McGinnis, Christian bookstore owner, obtained an apology and free advertising from the newspaper in compensation)

Date reported: August 1, 2016

Location: Knoxville

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/tennessee-newspaper-explains-christian-ad-banned-for-being-offensive-167334/>

United States - Texas

Pastor Antonio Armstrong (aged 42, husband of Dawn Armstrong, former professional football player, **shot** while sleeping allegedly by his son, hospitalized, **died**)

Dawn Armstrong (wife of Pastor Antonio Armstrong, daughter of Pastor Kay Shorter, **shot dead** while sleeping allegedly by her son)

Pastor Kay Shorter (mother of Dawn Armstrong)

Date: July 29, 2016

Location: Dallas

Source: <http://www.charismanews.com/us/58983-former-nfl-star-turned-pastor-shot-dead-by-his-own-son>



Zimbabwe

Rev Evan Mawarire (arrested on **July 12, 2016** for inciting public disorder after encouraging people to protest economic deprivations; released on **July 13, 2016**; **UPDATE**: tried, charge changed to treason at the beginning of the trial, acquitted after his attorneys stated that the change of charge that day deprived him of a fair trial)

Date: August 3, 2016

Location: Harare

Pastor Patrick Mugadza (aged 45, arrested in **mid-December 2015** on a charge of criminal nuisance for silently holding a sign that read 'Mr. President, the people are suffering. Proverbs 21:13' outside the Zanu PF party conference in Victoria Falls, ordered held on an excessive bail of US\$500, trial postponed on **January 5, 2016** when the arresting officers failed to appear in court; **UPDATE**: released)

Date: January 2015

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/news/Zimbabwean-social-media-campaign-pastor-acquitted-of-treason-charges>

Today's Martyrs

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

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