

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2016-08-21 through 2016-08-27



China

Fang Guojian (said that RAB [Religious Affairs Bureau] officials ordered their church to close and to remove church signs, said “We are still gathering. We wrote a petition. After [the officials] saw it, they were afraid. In the letter, we wrote that we would go to Beijing, go to Beijing and appeal. Now, they are afraid, and they do not dare to provoke us”)

Date: July 15, 2016

Location: Shangqiu, Zhecheng county, Henan province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/08/house-church-rejects-orders-to-stop.html>

Event: A meeting of leaders of several house churches was raided by 200 police, five were taken into custody

Chen Yajie

Liu Yan

Wang Lulu

Yang Zhaocun

Zheng Lan (home raided)

Date: March 5, 2016

Location: Changji, Xinjiang

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/08/detained-christians-case-returned-for.html>



Egypt

Nada Fathy (aged 26, disappeared after dropping her child off at nursery school, cell phone turned off, husband reported that police refuse to investigate her likely abduction)

Date: July 30, 2016

Location: Bakos, Alexandria

Source [with photo]: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1716&A=25892>



India

Rev Roy Shepherd (church attacked most likely by RSS paramilitary members, said his parishioners were now afraid)

Date: August 20, 2016

Location: Kodungallur, Thrissur district, Kerala province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/New-attacks-against-Christians-in-southern-India-38362.html>

Pappu Sadhu (described a Hindu attack on a prayer meeting, 200 Hindu radicals later erected a concrete wall around their uncompleted church, said they were accused of illegal conversions and threatened with dire consequences if they did not stop their prayer meetings)

Samuel Das (said the mob "wanted us to demolish the building after we finished more than half of the construction. We took up the matter from local police station, district officials and to the state Chief Minister. But no one came to our help...The situation in this area is so bad that if you want to be a Christian, you will have to prepare to be martyred. The Hindu activists have a free hand to do anything they want to do as the police and the administration back them")

Arun Pannalal (president of Chhattisgarh Christian Forum, **UPDATE**: said that so far this year there had been at least 20 attacks on Christians in the state)

R D Lall (National Christian Forum, said the attacks were part of a "a well-orchestrated move" to force Christians from the state)

Date: August 21, 2016

Location: Chaitama village, Korba district, Chhattisgarh state

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/hindu-extremists-stop-construction-of-church-building/76944>

Bishop Thomas Aquinas OSB (falsely accused in media reports of having been arrested in a criminal investigation of a former priest)

Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX (**UPDATE**: said "Unfortunately, false news [of the arrest of Bishop Thomas Aquinas and three priests] was published by some newspapers and periodicals. According to the Diocese of Coimbatore the news is false, malafide and defamatory")

Date: August 23, 2016

Location: Coimbatore

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/media-reports-on-murder-investigation-upsets-indian-church-officials/76921>



Iran

Event: Eleven Christians [one unidentified] were arrested in a raid on a house church

Amin Ahanin

Arash Qodsi

Edmund Khachaturian

Fatemeh Amini

Hamed Sepidkar

Maryam Zonubi

Mohammad Alyasi

Mohammad Malek Khatai

Mohsen Khoobyari

Samaneh Shahbazi-Far

Date: August 12, 2016

Location: Isfahan

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/iran-eleven-christians-arrested-while-attending-a-mass-at-a-house-church/>



Iraq

Fr Daniel Alkhory (**UPDATE**: described efforts to educate children in the refugee camps "We want our youth to stay here [in Iraq]. We want them to feel powerful...They feel like they are a molecule ... a grain of sand...When they go to their tents, they don't know what's going on except that their mother's grieving and their father's shouting. The Christian community is really angry about what the Muslims did to them...I don't think we have any problem with the children. The trouble is on the other side [i.e. with Muslims under ISIL influence]")

Date: August 20, 2016

Location: Ankawa, Erbil, Kurdistan

Source: <http://www.stripes.com/news/iraqi-church-hopes-to-heal-trauma-of-displaced-children-1.424751>

Archbishop Nicodemus Daoud Sharaf (**UPDATE**: said of the result of the ISIL takeover "For the first time in the history of Christianity, there are no Christians praying in Mosul. Even under the Mongol hordes and Hulagu Khan [in the 13th century] it wasn't so bad")

Date: August 20, 2016

Location: Erbil, Kurdistan

Source: <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21705366-archbishop-laments-his-flocks-flight-under-gun>



Mexico

Fr Hugo Valdemar (Archdiocesan spokesman, said “There hasn’t been a confrontation so strong between the government and the Church since the anticlerical laws of [President] Plutarco Elias Calles were promulgated and since General Lazaro Cardenas introduced socialist education...In launching his initiative to legalize marriages between people of the same sex, President Pena Nieto betrayed the Church, because he had promised that the agenda of Pope Francis would be his own. So his initiative has been received by us like a terrible stab in the back”)

Date reported: August 25, 2016

Location: Mexico City

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/mexican-standoff-bishops-draw-line-in-sand-over-presidents-gay-marriage-pus>



Nigeria

Bishop John Danbinta (described an assault on a Christian college student by fellow Muslim students that escalated into a riot that spilled off campus “When I heard this from my pastor and one of my members, I immediately called some security officials because the radicals went on rampage in town. They went to ECWA Church, Living Church, and Anglican Church. They vandalized the Anglican Church pastorium, destroying electronics and other property. I heard they also burnt down the home of the rescue volunteer Muslim man [who assisted the attacked Christian student to the hospital], trapping and killing eight persons inside who, sadly, happened to be Muslims also. Things would have been worse but for the intervention of security agencies...We really need help! Our fellow Christians elsewhere should mobilize resources and support the Church in Zamfara. Things are difficult for us here”)

Date: August 21, 2016

Location: Talata-Mafara, Zamfara state

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2016/08/24/mass-riots-follow-attack-on-christian-college-student-beaten-near-death-in-alleged-blasphemy/>



Pakistan

Frayad Masih (home invaded by four armed men, entire family tortured)

Rubina Bibi (aged 45, suffered a fracture during the home invasion)

Date reported: August 22, 2016

Location: Chak 475/GB, Samundari

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/samundari-armed-assailants-inflict-excruciating-torment-upon-an-exiguous-christian-family/>

Fr Saleh Diego (condemned an attack by the MQM political party's members on media offices – and which was ordered from the party headquarters in London UK - that led to one death and numerous injuries "A common Pakistan cannot tolerate hate speech against the country, let alone its armed forces. We were expecting an ugly situation in the city but thanks be to God that normalcy was restored quickly. There is no justification for ransacking vehicles and news offices")

Date: August 22, 2016

Location: Karachi

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/catholic-church-condemns-attacks-on-media-in-karachi/76925>

Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shah OFM (**UPDATE:** personally delivered items including motorized rickshaws to families affected by the [March 27, 2016](#) amusement park terror bombing, said "With this small gesture, we want to show that the Catholic Church is close to the victims in this difficult period. We also express our gratitude to the federal and provincial governments, to civil society organizations, the Department of Health, that are continuing to help those still in hospital")

Date reported: August 25, 2016

Location: Lahore

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/60614-ASIA_PAKISTAN_The_initiatives_of_Caritas_Do_not_forget_the_victims_of_the_Pass_over_massacre#.V7-2B8KV85t

Event: Christian villagers were attacked by a mob after one had a traffic accident with a Muslim, told to turn the Christian driver over to them or the village would be burned and the women raped, police have taken no action

Adnan Masih (aged 24, accidentally ran over the foot of a Muslim with his motor scooter, escaped after a fistfight, the Muslim victim led five others in an attack on his village but were driven off, later returned with more than 30 men and terrorized the village)

Emmanuel Masih (aged 60, father of Shamsheer Jaan and Nadir Shaan, beaten along with his family by a Muslim mob in an attempt to find where Adnan Masih lived)

Shamsheer Jaan (aged 28, son of Emmanuel Masih, brother of Nadir Shaan, beaten, hospitalized)

Nadir Shaan (aged 24, son of Emmanuel Masih, brother of Shamsheer Jaan, beaten)

Date: August 19, 2016

Location: Khushal Town, Faisalabad

Source: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-community-targeted-by-muslims-after-vehicle-accident-family-seeks-justice-for-the-brutalit>

Sardar Mushtaq Gill (attorney; **UPDATE**: has fled the country with his family due to death threats)

Date reported: August 26, 2016

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6054>



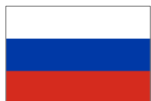
Philippines

Bishop Martin Jumoad (**UPDATE**: said "My heart bleeds upon learning of the beheading of the 18-year old boy. The government must stop and destroy this group. The Abu Sayyaf is a terrorist group and it is not for dialogue. They must be destroyed")

Date: August 24, 2016

Location: Indanan, Sulu province

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/mindanao-bishop-backs-order-to-crush-abu-sayyaf/76950>



Russia

Donald J Ossevaarde (U.S. citizen, convicted on illegal missionary charges after hosting prayer meetings and Bible study in his home, fined US\$700, case under appeal)

Date: August 14, 2016

Location: Oryol

Source: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue27712.html>

Ebenezer Tuah (Ghanaian citizen, detained for performing baptisms in a sanatorium, fined US\$748)

Dates: July 31-August 1, 2016

Location: Tver

Aleksandr Yakimov (charged with illegal missionary activity for speaking at a village festival about his church, which lacks legal status)

Date: August 5, 2016

Location: Mari-Turek

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2211



Syria

Event: Three patriarchs signed an appeal to end economic sanctions against the country
"Since the beginning of the crisis in Syria in 2011, the impact of the economic and financial sanctions increased on the daily lives of Syrian citizens...the ban on international banking transactions with Syria puts the people in a financial difficulty. It impoverishes the citizens and threatens them in their daily bread and deprives them of their human dignity"

Patriarch Gregorios III Laham

Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem II

Patriarch Youhanna X aka Youhanna Yazigi

Date: August 24, 2016

Location: Damascus

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Syrian-patriarchs-call-for-a-lifting-of-sanctions-because-they-only-affect-the-population-38386.html>



United Kingdom

Angus Buchan (evangelist, South African citizen, speaking engagement cancelled due to objections raised against his defense of traditional Christian morality)

Date: August 22, 2016

Location: Galashiels, Scotland

Source: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue27710.html>



United States - Massachusetts

Mother Olga (described the armed robbery perpetrated against a nun from her community, said of the perpetrators "I was immediately concerned to make sure that they would get the help and that they will get the resources that they need because my heart goes after them")

Date: August 21, 2016

Location: Quincy

Source: <http://boston.cbslocal.com/2016/08/22/quincy-nun-rosary-beads-robbed-vanessa-crystal-young/>

United States - Mississippi

Sr Margaret Held SSSF (nurse practitioner, **murdered** in her home during a robbery)

Sr Paula Merrill SCN (nurse practitioner, **murdered** in her home during a robbery)

Fr Greg Plata (said "Both were really down to earth. There was no phony spirituality. They were the real McCoy. They had a deep love of scripture")

Sr Susan Gatz SCN (asked that all "pray in gratitude for the precious lives of Sisters Paula and Margaret...they served the poor so well. Because we are gospel women, please also pray for the perpetrators")

Date: August 25, 2016

Location: Durant

Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2016/08/25/two-catholic-nuns-found-murdered-in-mississippi-home.html>

and <https://scnfamily.org/pray-for-sisters-killed-in-mississippi/>

Today's Martyrs

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

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