

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2016-09-18 through 2016-09-24



### Argentina

Archbishop Hector Aguer (**UPDATE**: under criminal investigation by the Secretary for Human Rights for having written that “carnal copulation outside of marriage” has been “transformed into something trivial, common, unsubstantial”)

Date reported: September 20, 2016

Location: La Plata

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/argentine-bishop-not-afraid-to-call-out-sexual-deviance-as-fornication>



### Cameroon

Gazawa Alhadji (father of three, **killed** in a Boko Haram attack, had likely been targeted for his defense of his village in a Boko Haram attack six months earlier)

Date: August 14, 2016

Location: Kolofata

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/news/Kidnapped-Christian-remains-held-in-Cameroon-and-Boko-Haram-takes-revenge>



### Canada

Pastor Brian Coldwell (church operated schools threatened with closure by the provincial government, had previously said “...I wouldn’t put anything past this government. This is about ideology for them. They won’t be satisfied until they have gay-straight alliances and the rainbow ideology in every Christian school”)

Date: September 21, 2016

Location: Edmonton, Alberta

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/alberta-gvmt-investigates-christian-schools-refusing-to-add-gay-clubs>



## China

### **Event: Several detained Christians are still awaiting trial**

Zhang Xiuhong (church board chairwoman, detained in [late July 2015](#); formally arrested on [September 1, 2015](#) on 'illegal business operations' charges)

Wang Yao (detained on [December 9, 2015](#), accused of 'divulging state secrets')

Yu Lei (detained on [December 9, 2015](#), accused of 'divulging state secrets')

Pastor Li Guozhi aka Yang Hua (detained on [December 9, 2015](#), accused of 'divulging state secrets')

Date: [September 14, 2016](#)

Location: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/09/christian-womans-trial-to-take-place.html>

Julia Garratt (wife of Kevin Garratt, Canadian missionary in Dandong, Liaoning province, detained on spy charges on [August 4, 2014](#) after Canada complained about Chinese internet hackers; **UPDATE**: released on bail, left for Canada)

Date: [February 2015](#)

Kevin Garratt (husband of Juila Garratt, Canadian missionary in Dandong, Liaoning province, detained on spy charges on [August 4, 2014](#) after Canada complained about Chinese internet hackers; **UPDATE**: released, left for Canada)

Date reported: [September 21, 2016](#)

Source:

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/evangelicals.celebrate.release.of.detained.christian.missionary.kevin.garrett/95978.htm>

Fr Paul Jiang Sunian (secretary to Bishop Vincent Zhu Weifang, diocesan chancellor, detained by police in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province on [August 23, 2016](#) just prior to the death of Bishop Zhu, reportedly taken to Yunnan province; **UPDATE**: led a "belated" prayer service of 16 priests in memory of Bishop Zhu, detained again and "taken on a tour" to Xining province)

Dates: [September 20 & 22, 2016](#)

Location: Ma Qiao Shan Columbarium, Yongjia county

Bishop Anthony Xu Jiwei (aged 81, reported to be very ill)

Date: [September 22, 2016](#)

Location: Taizhou

Source: [http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Wenzhou-underground-priests-pay-homage-to-the-late-\(official\)-bishop-38655.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Wenzhou-underground-priests-pay-homage-to-the-late-(official)-bishop-38655.html)



## Ethiopia

Habiba Ibrahim (aged 34, convert, mother of three aged 3, 6, and 8, imprisoned and beaten by her husband after he discovered her conversion, rescued by neighbors, hospitalized, released after 3 days, went into hiding with her children)

Date: September 10, 2016

Location: Bokulu Boma

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2016/09/muslim-in-ethiopia-attacks-wife-for-leaving-islam/>



## Germany

Gabriele Kuby (convert, pro-life activist, author of *The Global Sexual Revolution: Destruction of Freedom in the Name of Freedom*, has sued the theater and director of a play that depicted her as a zombie that should be killed)

Date: September 19, 2016

Location: Berlin

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/in-germany-gabriele-kuby-fights-for-democratic-freedom-of-free-speech>



## India

Fr A X J Bosco SJ (Dalit ['untouchable'] activist, spoke during a rally near the parliament building concerning government neglect of Dalits "If the BJP is trying to destroy us, the entire country will be destroyed")

Fr Z Devasagayaraj (secretary for Scheduled Class/Backward Class and tribal affairs; **UPDATE:** said "We welcome any movement which speaks for the Dalits and their welfare")

Date: September 16, 2016

Location: New Delhi

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/dalits-christians-and-communists-march-on-dehli/77168>

**Event: A pastor and a husband and wife were abducted, threatened, abused, and beaten after they handed out religious literature**

Pastor Prashant Bhatnagar (urinated upon)

Sachin Shenge (husband of Manisha Shenge)

Manisha Shenge (wife of Sachin Shenge)

Pastor Jackson George (witnessed the abduction of Pastor Prashant Bhatnagar, said he was bleeding from the nose and ear after his beating and that he had been threatened with being shot and set afire)

Date: September 16, 2016

Location: Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra state

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/news/Christian-man-in-India-abducted-and-severely-beaten-for-distributing-Christian-literature>  
and [http://www.fides.org/en/news/60802-ASIA\\_INDIA\\_A\\_Pastor\\_and\\_a\\_Christian\\_couple\\_attacked\\_by\\_Hindu\\_extremists#.V-NMKMKQI5s](http://www.fides.org/en/news/60802-ASIA_INDIA_A_Pastor_and_a_Christian_couple_attacked_by_Hindu_extremists#.V-NMKMKQI5s)



## Indonesia

Rev Daur Sanpe Rurun (denied the claims of radical Muslim demonstrators that his church lacked proper building permits)

Date: September 23, 2016

Location: Makassar, South Sulawesi

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Islamic-radicals-in-Makassar-tell-Protestant-church-it-does-not-have-the-right-to-a-building-permit-38666.html>



## Iran

Maryam Naghash-Zargaran aka Nasim (aged 35, released from prison on medical leave on August 28, 2016; **UPDATE**: hospitalized, has been ordered to return to prison by the prosecutor's office, is currently physically unable to comply)

Date reported: September 16, 2016

Location: Tehran

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3119>



## Malaysia

**Event: Christians complained when the movie *Ben Hur* was released with all scenes of Jesus deleted, the local distributor said it "is required to oblige local legal requirements and guidelines for the movie to be released locally in the market"**

Jasmine Sia (said "I felt cheated. The novel from which this movie is adapted is *Ben-Hur: A Tale of Christ*. It means Jesus is central to the plot. It was censored so much the storyline made no sense! How did Judah's mother and sister get cured from leprosy? They just appeared at the end of the movie healed. That's why it made no sense. The original story was that when Jesus died, they got healed")

Farshid Rezaee (said "I chose to watch that movie precisely because of its strong Christian message. The movie made no sense without those scenes. Is there an obligation to screen a movie like this knowing you have to remove crucial scenes? Had I known about those changes, I would not have paid any money for it")

Date reported: September 19, 2016

Source: <http://www.christianexaminer.com/article/malaysian-authorities-say-they-did-not-remove-christ-from-latest-ben-hur-film/51068.htm>



## Mexico

Fr Alejo Nabor Jimenez Juarez (abducted, **found dead**)

Fr Jose Alfredo Suarez de la Cruz (abducted, **found dead**)

Bishop Jose Trinidad Zapata Ortiz (said following the murder of the two priests "We are dismayed by this news and we pray for their eternal rest. Once more we see that violence and insecurity have taken root in our society")

Dates: September 18 & 19, 2016

Locations: Poza Rica & Papantla, Veracruz state

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/two-priests-murdered-in-mexico-60205/>  
and [http://www.fides.org/en/news/60788-AMERICA\\_MEXICO\\_Two\\_priests\\_kidnapped\\_and\\_killed\\_in\\_Veracruz\\_state#.V-IU3MKQ15s](http://www.fides.org/en/news/60788-AMERICA_MEXICO_Two_priests_kidnapped_and_killed_in_Veracruz_state#.V-IU3MKQ15s)

Fr Jose Alfredo Lopez Guillen (abducted from his rectory, automobile stolen)

Cardinal Alberto Suarez Inda (**UPDATE**: offered prayers for the release of Fr Jose Alfredo Lopez Guillen)

Date: September 19, 2016

Location: Janamuato

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/another-catholic-priest-has-been-kidnapped-in-mexico-48996/>



## Nigeria

Deborah Shettima (alias, convert, wife, mother of three, husband shot dead in a Boko Haram attack on her home, two daughters abducted, son killed in a Boko Haram attack three months later)

Sarah Shettima (aged 9, alias, abducted by Boko Haram)

Tabitah Shettima (aged 7, abducted by Boko Haram)

Date: April 25, 2012

Location: Maiduguri

Source: <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/take-action/pray/tag-prayer-updates-post/deborahs-story-from-nigeria/>

**Event: Doctors Without Borders reported "We are in a catastrophe. There are huge mortality rates. In parts of north-east Nigeria, the under-5 mortality rate is quite low because all the young children have already died"**

Rev Samuel Dali (**UPDATE**: spoke regarding the results of Boko Haram activities in the Lake Chad basin "Unfortunately, the relief materials are not always reaching the right persons. Some officials keep them for themselves, leaving the IDPs in hunger")

Date: September 23, 2016

Fr Maurice Kweirang (said "This crisis is a result of a deliberate act of mismanagement by officials. Food and other non-food items destined for IDPs have been diverted. They are selling them in open market in Maiduguri and elsewhere")

Date: September 23, 2016

Location: Yola, Adamawa state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/09/4643894/>



## Pakistan

Nabeel Masih (aged 15, arrested on blasphemy charges after he linked to a photo in which the Kaaba in Mecca was disrespected)

Imran Masih (aged 24, cousin of Nabeel Masih, said his cousin was illiterate and did not know that the photo was disrespectful)

Pastor Samuel Masih (said "many of the Christians have left the area due to fear of security")

Date: September 18, 2016

Location: Dina Nath village, Kasur district, Punjab province

**Event: Five Christians were beaten and hospitalized after Christians attempted to dissuade Muslims from attacking another Muslim, police refused to register a case**

Sharifan Bibi (home invaded, beaten, clothes torn, dragged into the street)

Parveen Bibi (mother of Shahbaz and Zahid, beaten, said “My sons are laborers and they had just returned from their work. I [pleaded with the attackers] and tried to save my sons, after which they beat me with clubs and attacked us with bricks”, hospitalized)

Shahbaz (aged 25, son of Parveen Bibi, brother of Zahid, laborer, beaten, hospitalized)

Zahid (aged 23, son of Parveen Bibi, brother of Shahbaz, laborer, beaten, hospitalized)

Arif Masih (aged 55, laborer, beaten while returning home from a wedding, hospitalized, said “I could not even understand why they were beating me”)

Razaq Masih (had attempted to protect a Muslim from attack, said “They had a grudge against him because of a relationship he had a year ago with a young woman, who was also Muslim. The Christians intervened and said that if the relationship had ended, then why should he be beaten? Within no time, about 30 men arrived, yelling that we will teach these ‘churras’ [‘dirty’, ‘filthy’, a derogatory term for Christians] a lesson for raising their heads”)

Date: September 16, 2016

Location: Chajwal village, Samundri district, Punjab province

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/09/4638977/>

Razzak Masih (aged 48, father of Rukhsana, Sumera, Fayaz, Samina, and Haroon, held in slave labor for the last 5 years along with his family after charged extortionary interest on a loan of US\$572 that he took out for his daughter's wedding, forced to leave his municipal job and benefits for a brick kiln, was not able to read the contract due to illiteracy, said "Everyday I have been threatened and laughed at, my family too. We have been taking a lot of abuse from the brick kiln owners who tell us we are worthless and keep telling us how much we owe and how the amount keeps growing...They kept offering to buy one of my daughters to reduce the loan, but I declined their offer. I have been very worried that something might happen to the girls and have prayed for a way out for so long, it has now been five years...It is hard being a father but the pressure they put on me was unbearable, sometimes I just wanted to take my own life. But I knew that if I did God would not forgive me and I would never get to see my children in the peace of heaven. This earth is harsh but I will not give up the blessing of heaven to escape the pain", rescued)

Sumera (aged 18, daughter of Razzak Masih, forced to work as slave labor at a brick kiln, rescued)

Kanwal Amar (rescuer of the family of Razzak Masih, said "For as long as we could muster the strength everyone praised God through worship songs, eventually we all fell asleep, as our travel to the city safe house was many hours away. When the family got to the home they were welcomed by an existing family who we helped escape a blasphemy allegation, together we shared a time of praise and worship. We thanked God for bringing us through a very dangerous situation to a place of sanctuary it had been a terrifying moment for all of us - but God was our strength and shield")

Mehwish Bhatti (rescuer of the family of Razzak Masih)

Date reported: September 20, 2016

Location: Kasur

Source: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-slave-family-emancipated>



## Russia

Alexander Whitney (U.S. citizen, arrested after leaving a church, fined US\$46, effectively told he could not pray while travelling on a tourist visa)

David Kozan (U.S. citizen, arrested after leaving a church, fined US\$46, effectively told he could not pray while travelling on a tourist visa)

Dates: September 10-11, 2016

Location: Kaluga

Source: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue27763.html>

and [http://www.invictory.com/news/story-63514-](http://www.invictory.com/news/story-63514-%D0%BF%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%B5%D1%82-%D0%AF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B9.html)

[%D0%BF%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%B5%D1%82-](http://www.invictory.com/news/story-63514-%D0%BF%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%B5%D1%82-%D0%AF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B9.html)

[%D0%AF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B9.html](http://www.invictory.com/news/story-63514-%D0%BF%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%B5%D1%82-%D0%AF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B9.html) - with translation



## Syria

Archbishop Jacques Behnan Hindo (**UPDATE:** narrowly missed death when Kurdish militia fired into his residence, said "At that moment, the area was presided over by Kurdish militias, and there were no other armed persons nearby...Whenever the Kurdish militia enter in action to reaffirm its military hegemony over the city, the epicenter of their raids and acts of force is always the area of the six churches, where most of the Christians live. In many cases they expelled the Christians from their homes under the threat of Kalashnikovs. And where they enter, they loot everything")

Date: September 21, 2016

Location: Hassake

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20160921175532.htm>



## Turkmenistan

Mansur Masharipov (aged 34, arrested in his Dashoguz home on July 3, 2014, beaten in and on the way to prison, threatened with prison gang rape, forced to sign a document in Turkmen [which he does not know], transferred to a drug rehabilitation center where he



was injected with an unknown substance that caused headaches, fever, vomiting, and partial paralysis, fled from the rehab center on [July 3, 2014](#), in hiding; **UPDATE:** arrested in a park, convicted of assaulting a police officer in June 2014 and sentenced to one year's imprisonment in a labor camp)

Dates: June 30 and August 18, 2016

Locations: Ashgabad and Dashoguz

Source: [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2217](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2217)



### **United States - Pennsylvania**

Pastor Rob Cook (husband of Stephanie Cook, father of Christian Cook, struck in the back of the head with a nail gun during a robbery, hospitalized and released, later said “I want you all to know we serve a God of forgiveness. Because He is our example, we forgive others when they wrong us, even if they don’t ask for it. This includes the man who attempted to rob us. He is not beyond salvation. Jesus can change him, just like he changed me. We forgive him and we have no ill will toward him. However, there are consequences to sin and this man is finding that out now [after his arrest]”)

Christian Cook (son of Pastor Rob and Stephanie Cook, witnessed the assault on his father)

Stephanie Cook (wife of Pastor Rob Cook, shot her husband's attacker in the leg)

Date: September 20, 2016

Location: Philadelphia

Source: <http://www.assistnews.net/index.php/component/k2/item/2203-pastor-s-wife-fires-22-caliber-bullet-at-suspect-in-a-spiritual-war-zone>  
and <http://www.mommypage.com/2016/09/pastors-wife-shoots-armed-intruder-to-protect-12-year-old-son-after-concert/>

### **United States - Washington, DC**

Ron Crews (Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty executive director; **UPDATE:** announced that the Veterans Administration would no longer prohibit Christian caroling or religious displays at Christmas)

Date: September 23, 2016

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/religious-christmas-carols-to-be-allowed-in-veterans-hospitals-76122/>



### **Vietnam**

Nguyen Huu Vinh (aged 60, former police officer, arrested in [May 2014](#) on 'abuses of freedom and democracy' and 'violating State interests' charges; sentenced in Hanoi to 5 years'

imprisonment on [March 24, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: conviction upheld on appeal by the Supreme Court)

Date: September 23, 2016

Location: Hanoi

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Hanoi,-Catholic-blogger-Nguyen-Huu-Vinh-back-in-prison-38658.html>

## **Today's Martyrs**

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

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