

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2016-10-16 through 2016-10-22



### China

**Event: Several relatively young Catholic priests have died or been hospitalized, parishioners believe the illnesses have been due to physical strains of ministry including lack of proper meals**

Fr Joseph Ge Xiangbing (aged 41, **died from a sudden illness**)

Date: October 6, 2016

Location: northern Hebei province

Fr Peter Liu Zhanfang (aged 65, **died from a sudden illness**)

Date: October 8, 2016

Location: northern Hebei province

Fr Peter Li Bo (aged 50, **died of a cerebral hemorrhage**)

Date: October 7, 2016

Location: northeastern Heilongjiang province

Fr Joseph Song Kexun (aged 44, hospitalized after a cerebral hemorrhage)

Date: October 6, 2016

Location: northwestern Shaanxi province

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/untimely-deaths-of-three-priests-worries-chinese-catholics/77363>

Wang Yao (detained on **December 9, 2015**, accused of 'divulging state secrets'; **UPDATE**: trial held, attorneys and family not permitted to attend)

Date: October 17, 2016

Location: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Yu Lei (detained on **December 9, 2015**, accused of 'divulging state secrets'; **UPDATE**: trial held)

Date: October 19, 2016

Location: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Pastor Li Guozhi aka Yang Hua (husband of Wang Hongwu, detained on **December 9, 2015** for 'illegally holding state secrets'; **UPDATE**: has experienced serious health issues in jail)

including liver pain, threatened with death, family threatened, attorneys plan to sue the prosecutors for torture)

Source: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/charges-10192016111556.html>

Su Tianfu (**UPDATE**: charged of 'revealing state secrets' for reporting on persecution)

Date: September 14, 2016

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/10/after-investigation-house-church.html>

Li Hongmin (criminally detained on **June 6, 2016** on 'illegal business operations' charges for printing religious literature; **UPDATE**: trial held)

Pastor Ma Ke (**UPDATE**: denied entry to the trial of Li Hongmin, said "I asked them why they wouldn't let me in, because I'd applied to add my name to the list a long time ago, and they said they didn't know, but they had to go by the list of names they had, and mine wasn't on it. I just waited outside the court instead...The lawyers told me that the material Li Hongmin had printed was all for internal circulation within the church")

Date: October 17, 2016

Location: Guangzhou, Guangdong province

Source: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/charges-10192016111556.html>

and <http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/10/guangdong-house-church-member-goes-to.html>

Pastor Yang Rongli (wife of Wang Xiaoguang, arrested near Taiyuan, Shanxi province for “gathering a mob to disturb public order” after holding a prayer rally on **September 14, 2009** following the demolition of a house church, sentenced to seven years' imprisonment on **November 25, 2009**; **UPDATE**: released, returned home, health affected due to malnutrition, diabetes, kidney stones, and a cardiac issue, in good spirits, prohibited from being interviewed)

Date: October 10, 2016

Location: Linfen, Shanxi

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/10/megachurch-pastor-released-after.html>



## Estonia

Archbishop Urmas Viilma (Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, condemned an art exhibit for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in which a virtual image of Mary may be destroyed with a kick, wrote “The virgin Mary for a huge number of believers is not some historical figure or event, gone into oblivion, but a reality today. The ridicule was an insult to the feelings of believers...Our Lady is not merely a stature [sic] or an idea, but a real saint who resides with God. She is always present with the faithful on Earth and she intercedes on our behalf. She is the ultimate incarnation of woman, sinless and holy, and the Mother of God. As such, she deserves the utmost respect, not to be treated with disrespect...The Protestant Reformation was largely a political and economic movement, in addition to a religious schism. Our Lady was not part of that evil. Her role in our world

served to facilitate our salvation. She does not deserve for her Holy name, or her image to be desecrated")

Date reported: October 14, 2016

Location: Tartu

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2016/10/14/plans-to-desecrate-image-of-virgin-mary-in-estonian-museum-prompt-protest/>



## Ethiopia

Deborah (aged 18, arrested on [September 20, 2016](#) for distributing a book that gave Christian answers to questions posed in an Islamic book about Christianity, later said “It is an honor to be jailed for God’s Kingdom”; **UPDATE**: released on bail, re-arrested hours later, reason unknown)

Date: October 19, 2016

Location: Babile

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/10/4672884/>



## Iran

Amin Afshar Naderi (aged 26, convert; arrested on [August 26, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: released on a US\$35,000 bail)

Mohamad Dehney (arrested on [August 26, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: released on a US\$35,000 bail)

Ram-eil Beth Tamraz (son of Pastor Victor Beth Tarmez and Shamiram Isavi; arrested on [August 26, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: released on a US\$35,000 bail)

Amir Sina Dashti (arrested on [August 26, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: still detained)

Hadi Askary (arrested on [August 26, 2016](#); **UPDATE**: still detained)

Date: October 10, 2016

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3168>

Pastor Behnam Irani (husband of Kristina Irani, as of [June 8, 2012](#) is still detained in Karaj, is still beaten in prison, is experiencing internal bleeding, has been refused medical care; **UPDATE**: has completed his prison sentence, released)

Date reported: October 19, 2016

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Tehran-frees-Protestant-pastor-sentenced-for-crimes-against-the-state-38906.html>



## Iraq

Archimandrite Emanuel Youkhana (Christian Aid Program in Northern Iraq; **UPDATE:** wrote concerning the Iraqi military operation to drive ISIL from Mosul "Liberating Mosul means the liberation of Nineveh Plains. Intensive coalition air strikes and heavy shelling from Iraqi Army and Peshmerga started since Sunday evening against ISIL positions in the different front lines heading to Mosul. Normally, such intensive bombing is followed by ground troops advance, maybe this morning. Let us pray for the protection of innocent lives and civilians. Let us pray for political stability post-ISIL, which is the main challenge. Let us pray for the protection of the properties and infrastructure")

Date: October 17, 2016

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20161017184132.htm>



## Kazakhstan

Lozovoi (detained in [Kalbatau](#) on [June 16, 2016](#) while handing out religious literature on the street; **UPDATE:** fined US\$444)

Pikalina (aged 67, pensioner, detained in [Kalbatau](#) on [June 16, 2016](#) while handing out religious literature on the street; **UPDATE:** fined US\$444)

Date: September 13, 2016

Location: Taldykorgan

Source: [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2225](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2225)



## Kyrgyzstan

Marat Niyazaliev (husband, father, Russian citizen, house church leader, church closed in [spring 2015](#); arrested on a charge of indecent assault of an 8 year old girl on [December 8, 2015](#), released; church closing ruled illegal on [March 3, 2016](#); **UPDATE:** jailed after the indecent assault charge was changed to attempted rape, the exonerating statements from the girl's mother and other witnesses have disappeared from the police record - prompting fears of witness tampering by the police, stated he believes the charges are meant to pressure him into returning to Russia)

Date: October 6, 2016

Location: Kemin

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/news/Kyrgyzstan-church-leader-in-custody-as-authorities-take-apparent-revenge-for-churchs-court-victory>



## Lebanon

Fr Elian Nasrallah (described government actions following the [June 27, 2016](#) terror attacks that have isolated a refugee camp from his town "Before the bombings, we had nearly 350 Syrian children coming to our center every day for classes and activities. It will be hard to convince the kids to come back. But we'll try again. Life has to go on...We're not in a normal situation. What happened was very hard. We need to think about the martyrs and their families")

Fawza Ibrahim Ali (Syrian refugee, said "We're now doing nothing. I get up in my tent, I get cleaned and get dressed, I do my housework, and I sit for the rest of the day. There's nowhere to go...They [the locals] used to come to our tents for tea. Now, we don't get any visitors...I want to return to Raqqa. I know it's impossible. If you saw Raqqa, you wouldn't recognize it anymore. It's over")

Date: [October 19, 2016](#)

Location: [Qaa](#)

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20161019052004.htm>



## Niger

Jeffery Woodke (aged 55, missionary, U.S. citizen, abducted by armed men who forced him to strip to his underwear, guard and housekeeper killed)

Date: [October 14, 2016](#)

Location: [Arcata](#)

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/us-missionary-evangelizing-muslim-world-forced-to-strip-then-kidnapped-by-armed-men-in-niger-170912/>



## Nigeria

**Event: A Fulani Muslim herdsmen two day attack on a village ended**

Ajiya Hamza (aged 20, **killed**)

Monday Hamza (aged 18, **killed**)

Musa Gwari (aged 45, **killed**)

Joseph Nok (aged 46, father of Baba Joseph Nok, **killed**)

Luka Ali (aged 22, **killed**)

Ishaku Ali (aged 26, **killed**)

Ikechukwu James (aged 30, **killed**)

Daniel Silas (aged 30, **killed**)

Baba Joseph Nok (aged 20, adult child of Joseph Nok, wounded, hospitalized)

Menshack Waziri (aged 22, wounded, hospitalized)

Gideon Peter (aged 29, wounded, hospitalized)

Solomon John (aged 41, wounded, hospitalized)

Blessed Musa (aged 35, wounded, hospitalized)

Inuwa Tanet (aged 32, wounded, hospitalized)

Abba Samuel (aged 30, wounded, hospitalized)

Uba Monday (aged 28, wounded, hospitalized)

Samuel Musa (aged 60, church elder, said after the attack "We have lost so much to the attacks by the herdsmen")

Ishaya Danladi Mallam (aged 46, church elder, said "We covet your prayers and those of other brethren. We are facing very threatening, tough times")

**Date:** [September 26, 2016](#)

**Location:** [Godogodo, Kaduna state](#)

Pastor Isaac Balason (aged 34, said of a Fulani massacre "It is now 8:30 PM, and the attack is ongoing. We're not sure we'll survive this time. Please be in prayers with us", the next day said "Thank God we survived, but many others have lost their lives...Three out my 120 members were killed during the first attack, and the rest, including myself, have been displaced. I cannot say whether they all survived this latest attack, as it is difficult at this moment to know the situation they are in")

Rev Thomas Akut (aged 41, escaped a Fulani massacre with his family, said "We fled into the bushes, and some of us escaped to safer areas. The attackers were in the hundreds and were well armed. Some of them wore army uniforms, while others wore police uniforms. Some of them exchanged gunfire with the few soldiers stationed at the post office in the town, while others burned down houses of Christians...This casualty figure [22 Christians killed] is only those I saw the following morning, but the number of deaths may be higher as many were killed in the bushes too...Our farms have been destroyed. Crops that are now ready for harvest have all been destroyed by the herdsmen. Members of our churches cannot even go to these farms, as anyone who attempts to do so is murdered by the herdsmen. Most of the villages around Godogodo have been destroyed and thousands of Christians displaced...This is a jihad. It is an Islamic holy war against Christians in the southern part of Kaduna state")

Date: October 15, 2016

Location: Godogodo, Kaduna state

Solomon Musa (attorney; **UPDATE:** said at a press conference “Godogodo communities once again came under very fierce, terrifying, brutal, savage and barbarous attack by Fulani herdsmen without provocation of any nature from Saturday 15th October, 2016, to Sunday afternoon. So far, the locals have been able to identify not less than 40 corpses, aside from the several other corpses burnt beyond recognition. The savagery and barbarity of the attack is beyond belief. Yet, governments at the federal and state levels appear quiet and noncommittal. We have been abandoned, deserted and neglected”)

Date: October 17, 2016

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2016/10/more-than-48-christians-killed-in-kaduna-nigeria-massacres/>  
and <http://thenationonlineng.net/killings-govt-left-us-mercy-killer-herdsmen/>



## Pakistan

Bishop Rufin Anthony (aged 76; **UPDATE:** died of natural causes)

Date: October 17, 2016

Location: Rawalpindi

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/rawalpindi-bishop-of-islamabad-rawalpindi-diocese-hon-rufin-anthony-passes-away-at-the-age-of-76/>

**Event: Christians were threatened with death by armed men after leaving a candlelight vigil for Asia Bibi**

Sooba Bhatti (attorney)

Bishop Younus Gill

Date reported: October 18, 2016

Location: Hari Camp, Kotri, Jamshoro district

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/extremists-hurl-death-threats-at-christians-who-held-candle-light-vigil-for-asia-bibi/>



## Spain

Fr Ignacio Torres (said that his church would be unable to pay a possible fine of US\$17,500 for ringing church bells twice a day at 85 decibels, the bells have been rung since medieval times)

Date: October 18, 2016

Location: Mostoles

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2016/10/18/church-in-spain-may-be-fined-over-noisy-bells/>



## Turkey

Yako Hanna (aged 36, Iraqi refugee, fled [Tel Kaif in Iraq](#) in 2014; **UPDATE**: has been awaiting UN resettlement with family in Australia, said "The first year [as a refugee] was the worst year of my life. My future was unknown. What would I do for work? What would happen when I face a problem here? So many strange thoughts. I cried many times. I had to start not from zero but from under zero")

Basima Kamil (aged 42, wife, mother, Iraqi refugee, teacher, fled [Bagdad in Iraq](#) in December 2012; **UPDATE**: has been awaiting resettlement in Canada, said "I cannot go back to Iraq. Now there are even fewer Christians. And I have daughters, it is more difficult for them")

Date: October 19, 2016

Location: Istanbul

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20161019160446.htm>



## Vietnam

Fr Đang Huu Nam (under threat of arrest for supporting parishioners who lack food, medicine, and money for their children's education following a local environmental disaster)

Bishop Nguyen Thai Hop (refused a People's Committee demand that Fr Đang Huu Nam be removed "We have our pastoral plans for this year. Fr Nam will serve again in Phu Yen parish")

Date reported: October 17, 2016

Location: Nghe An province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Fr-Đang-Huu-Nam,-the-voice-of-justice-against-the-environmental-disaster,-receives-threats,-risks-arrest-38880.html>

## Today's Martyrs

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

or write to

2490 Black Rock Turnpike #455

**Fairfield CT 06825-2400**

Permission is granted to copy, disseminate and forward this document without charge or fee, provided no changes are made and full attribution is made to Today's Martyrs