

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2017-01-29 through 2017-02-04



### Ethiopia

**Event: Four teenaged girls from Babile were released from an adult prison after being sentenced on November 15, 2016 to one month's imprisonment on a charge of inciting religious violence, they had distributed a book that gave Christian answers to questions posed in an Islamic book about Christianity, pretrial incarceration was not counted as time served**

Deborah (aged 18, arrested on September 20, 2016, later said “It is an honor to be jailed for God’s Kingdom”; released on bail on October 19, 2016, re-arrested hours later, reason unknown; **UPDATE:** released)

Eden (aged 15, arrested along with her mother on September 20, 2016, beaten, mother released the next day, later said “This is an honor for us. We should expect persecution. We are not afraid. We are singing and praying here in prison”; **UPDATE:** released)

Gifti (aged 14, arrested on September 23, 2016; **UPDATE:** released)

Mihiret (aged 14, arrested on September 23, 2016; **UPDATE:** released)

Date: December 22, 2016

Location: Gelemiso

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/01/4886909/>

**Event: Three Protestants were acquitted of the arson attack on an Orthodox church, had been convicted in Gulema Iyesus on October 28, 2014 and sentenced to 9 years' imprisonment, still awaiting acquittal of the order to pay the church compensation**

Belete Tilahun

Dawit Jemberu

Tibebu Mekuria (husband, kiosk owner)

Date: January 13, 2017

Location: Addis Ababa

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/01/4898876/>



## Germany

Yvonne T (aged 31, **stabbed to death** in student housing by an atheist fellow student enraged by her refusal to support same sex marriage)

Date: August 2016

Location: Freiburg

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2017/02/02/atheist-sentenced-to-life-for-murder-of-christian-housemate-in-germany/>



## India

Kusuma Anjeneya Swamy (aged 47, husband of Sujatha, father of two daughters, engineering professor, Gideons member, verbally attacked by three Hindus for handing out Bibles in [Hyderabad, Telangana state](#) on [January 21, 2017](#), dragged to a police station, released without charge, collapsed with a cerebral hemorrhage, hospitalized in a coma; **UPDATE:** has been paralyzed on one side, had been threatened with being burned alive)

Rev Ronald John (State Chairman of the Telangana Christian Joint-Action-Committee; **UPDATE:** said "This is a very unfortunate incident. The ultra-Hindu nationalists are taking the law into their own hands [which] is unacceptable. This shows how minorities are being treated in this nation")

Rev M Bhaskar (said that 10,000 Christians wanted to protest against the abuse of Kusuma Anjeneya Swamy but police cancelled the protest, said "It is unfortunate that the police who are supposed to empower the citizens to exercise their right to protest peacefully [stopped the protest] contrary [to the constitution]. They showed unfair bias [against] Christians")

Timothy Ganupalli (said "We want to hold peaceful protest rally. Having a peaceful protest rally is not against the law of the land, but what prompted the police to deny the permission for the rally? It is our right")

Date reported: February 1, 2017

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2017/02/01/christian-evangelist-in-india-fights-for-life-after-mob-harassment/>

Rev Gandham Padma Rao (aged 49, father of Samuel Mark, assaulted by 10 Hindu extremists while walking to his automobile after praying for healing with an elderly parishioner, said "They spoke to me in vulgar language: 'You must never come to our village to pray. You should never enter our village' ...I could not balance myself and fell in a pit nearby. They picked me up, threw me on the road and started battering me again. I tried hard to regain my strength and run, but they followed me quickly held my collar, pushed me off with their feet. When I fell down again, they began kicking and beating me again", police altered his statement to hide the attackers' membership in the Vishwa Hindu Vahini, hospitalized two days later with hypertension after feeling light-headed)

Mariyamma (parishioner, came running with her relatives when she saw the attack on Rev Gandham Padma Rao, the attackers fled)

Samuel Mark (son of Rev Gandham Padma Rao, said "My dad went to visit the families who had been attending our church over years now. He had no business to do with the assailants. He didn't bother anyone. He didn't even respond to them when they shouted at him. All of a sudden, they began kicking him on the road. Don't you see it was all planned?")

Date: January 27, 2017

Location: Medipally village, Telangana state

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/02/pastor-india-assaulted-hindu-extremists/>



## Iraq

Patriarch Louis Raphael I Sako (**UPDATE**: criticized any change in U.S. immigration policy that would give precedence to Christians over Muslims "Every reception policy that discriminates the persecuted and suffering on religious grounds ultimately harms the Christians of the East, because among other things provides arguments to all propaganda and prejudice that attack native Christian communities of the Middle East as 'foreign bodies', groups supported and defended by Western powers. These discriminating choices create and feed tensions with our Muslim fellow citizens. Those who seek help do not need to be divided according to religious labels. And we do not want privileges. This is what the Gospel teaches, and what Pope Francis pointed out, who welcomed refugees in Rome who fled from the Middle East, both Christians and Muslims without distinction")

Date reported: January 30, 2017

Location: Bagdad

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/61622->

[ASIA IRAQ Chaldean Patriarch the selective reception of migrants based on religion announced by Trump is a trap for Christians#.WJLBsVMrKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/61622-ASIA_IRAQ_Chaldean_Patriarch_the_selective_reception_of_migrants_based_on_religion_announced_by_Trump_is_a_trap_for_Christians#.WJLBsVMrKM8)

Archbishop Bashar Matti Warda CSSR (**UPDATE**: unveiled a plan to rebuild Christian homes on the Nineveh Plain that have been destroyed by ISIL)

Date: February 1, 2017

Location: Erbil, Kurdistan

Source: <http://members4.boardhost.com/acnaus/msg/1485919466.html>

Archbishop Bashar Matti Warda CSSR (**UPDATE**: temporarily barred from entry to the United States, Congressional hearing cancelled in response, said "I don't know what the president knows about security risks as they relate to the 'countries of concern' and refugees from them...One other thing: Christians and other minorities have been largely ignored by the American government before now, so even if this step had a bumpy start and required clarification, we in Iraq appreciate that an American administration understands that we are here and wants to help the minorities here who have suffered so much...From my perspective in Iraq, I wonder why all of these protesters were not

protesting in the streets when ISIL came to kill Christians and Yazidis and other minority groups. They were not protesting when the tens of thousands of displaced Christians my archdiocese has cared for since 2014 received no financial assistance from the U.S. government or the UN. There were no protests when Syrian Christians were only let in at a rate that was 20 times less than the percentage of their population in Syria. I do not understand why some Americans are now upset that the many minority communities that faced a horrible genocide will finally get a degree of priority in some manner...I would also say this, all those who cry out that this is a 'Muslim Ban' - especially now that it has been clarified that it is not - should understand clearly that when they do this, they are hurting we Christians specifically and putting us at greater risk. The executive order has clearly affected Christians and Yazidis and others as well as Muslims. Here in Iraq we Christians cannot afford to throw out words carelessly as the media in the West can do. I would ask those in the media who use every issue to stir up division to think about this. For the media these things become an issue of ratings, but for us the danger is real. Most Americans have no concept of what it was like to live as a Yazidi or Christian or other minority as ISIL invaded. Our people had the option to flee, to convert, or to be killed, and many were killed in the most brutal ways imaginable. But there were none of these protests then of ISIL's religious test. Our people lost everything because of their faith - they were targeted for their faith, just like the Yazidis and others too. Now these protesters are saying that religion should not matter at all, even though someone was persecuted for their faith, even though persecution based on religion is one of the grounds for refugee status in the UN treaty on refugees...From here I have to say, it is really unbelievable. It is exactly this reasoning, that religion should not be a factor at all in American policy, that has resulted in Christians and other minority communities being overlooked by U.S. and UN aid programs")

Date: February 2, 2017

Location: Erbil, Kurdistan

Source: <https://cruxnow.com/interviews/2017/02/02/iraq-prelate-backs-preference-minority-refugees-fleeing-genocide/>



## **Mexico**

Juan Gabriel Lopez Perez (aged 28, husband of Eduvina Lopez Santiz, arrested for not supporting "traditionalist" [syncretic] Catholic festivals, told he would be held until he agreed to sell his home and move away, contracted bronchitis in jail, released after 3 days)

Eduvina Lopez Santiz (wife of Juan Gabriel Lopez Perez, took her husband's place in jail while he sought medical treatment for his bronchitis)

Date: January 7, 2017

Location: Rancheria El Encanto, Las Margaritas Municipality, Chiapas state

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/02/christian-jailed-chiapas-mexico-told-to-leave-area-in-exchange-for-freedom/>



## Pakistan

Tania (aged 12, daughter of Nadeem Gill, sister of Johnson and Sheela, abducted, apparently drugged and raped, thrown into a canal, **drowned**, police ruled the death a suicide)

Johnson (aged 21, brother of Tania, had dropped her off at school before she was abducted)

Date: January 23, 2017

Source: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/pakistani-christian-school-girl-raped-killed-and-thrown-into-a-canal>

Mukhtar Masih (aged 70, father of Shaima Masih and Anjum Mukhtar, grandfather of Romilla, Nehmeeia, and Shaima, arrested on blasphemy charges after a note was found at a mosque, beaten)

Shaima Masih (aged 38, daughter of Mukhtar Masih, arrested, released)

Anjum Mukhtar (aged 40, son of Mukhtar Masih, arrested, beaten, released, said "These charges are completely false my father is innocent. We tried explaining this to the police but they still arrested us and they beat my elderly father and I with their lathi trying to force a confession. I am sure that if you look at the letters the writing will not match my fathers. He would never dare enact such an offensive crime knowing it would endanger his family. Some men have been chasing us for our property and were offering a very low price. They threatened to kill us if we did not leave and now this has happened. There is never any peace for Christians in Pakistan Muslim's hate us)

Romilla (aged 14, child of Anjum Mukhtar, grandchild of Mukhtar Masih, arrested, released)

Nehmeeia (aged 10, child of Anjum Mukhtar, grandchild of Mukhtar Masih, arrested, released)

Shaima (aged 8, child of Anjum Mukhtar, grandchild of Mukhtar Masih, arrested, released)

Date: January 28, 2017

Location: Lambanwali village, near Gujranwala

Source: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/70-year-old-christian-man-arrested-and-detained-for-alleged-blasphemy-in-gujranwala>

Aasiya Noreen aka Asia Bibi (aged 52, wife of Ashiq Masih, mother of five including Isham, daughter of Soran Masih, sentenced to death for blasphemy in 2009; **UPDATE**: Supreme Court hearing to be heard in March 2017)

Wilson Chowdhry (Chairman of the British-Pakistani Christian Association, said: "I met with the First Minister at The Pakistan High Commission last Friday and he has informed me that a trial date for Asia's appeal is sure to be fixed before the end of March. We organized the protests across the UK to galvanize support for Asia in the west. Its clear by the huge numbers of protesters calling for her hanging in Pakistan, that most Pakistani's want her dead. Moreover, the last judge retired from his position after refusing to preside over her case in a court debacle when he stated the reason for the adjournment was a conflict of interest. We want Asia to know the world is following her case and supports her freedom

so we have collaborated with partners across the UK to make sure her plight is kept in the international spotlight. Our belief is this is the only way to save her from the fundamentalists who wish to see her dead"

Date: February 3, 2017

Location: London, United Kingdom

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6297>

**Event: The Anti-Terrorism Court exonerated 115 defendants from the March 9, 2013 arson attacks in Johnson Colony [ghetto] in which 125 Christian homes were destroyed for 'lack of evidence', one Muslim leader said "our faith in legal system has shattered. The political leaders of Punjab province and the ruling elite have strong alliances with jihadi groups. There is no justice for minority who continue to be victimized"**

Roger Randhawa (Operations Management at Caritas Pakistan Lahore, said "It's a sheer disappointment. The message is clear for us; those who attack minorities and openly preach hate can go spot-free. Perhaps the pictures and video footages clearly showing faces was not enough evidence")

Ijaz Farhat (former President of Christians Lawyers Association of Pakistan CLAP; **UPDATE:** said "The victims are hijacked by NGOs, many try to flee the country and nobody pursues the case. The Church leaders only visit the day court passes judgments. Christian lawyers are at high risk when taking up cases of minority persecution. Nobody provides us security from the crowd of hundreds waiting outside the court")

Date: January 31, 2017

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/en/pakistani-christian-leaders-disappointed-at-acquittal-of-arsonists-of-joseph-colony/>

Dr Nazir S Bhatti (**UPDATE:** wrote that the Interior Minister Nisar Ali presented no evidence to back his claim that the blasphemy laws were not being used to target Christians)

Date: February 2, 2017

Location: Karachi

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6296>

Rev Maurice Shahbaz (Director of Prisons Mission Society of Pakistan, wrote "The Christian community inside the prisons of The Punjab in Pakistan are being persecuted and denied the same religious freedom as other religions. Christian prison missionaries have increasingly limited access to the prisoners, while Muslim religious teachers can preach and teach with no limits")

Date: February 2, 2017

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6295>

Pastor Adnan Prince (aged 29, accused of blasphemy on **October 7, 2013** by Muslim clerics who are members of Jamait-ul Dawa [JUD] - an affiliate of al-Qaida - by writing derogatory comments in an Islamic book written by a JUD member; surrendered to police on

November 6, 2013 due to fears of assassination; described on December 16, 2013 being tortured in jail; **UPDATE**: released on bail)

Date: February 1, 2017

Location: Lahore

Source: [https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2013/12/article\\_2891083.html/](https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2013/12/article_2891083.html/)



## Sudan

Petr Jasek (aged 52, Czech citizen, arrested in December 2015 for making a video for Voice of the Martyrs on Christian persecution and financially aiding a wounded Christian; **UPDATE**: convicted of 'waging war against the state, violating restrictions in military areas, spreading rumors to defame the state, and inciting strife between communities', sentenced to 23 and a half years' imprisonment)

Abdulmonem Abdumawla Issa Abdumawla (convert, held in jail as of May 24, 2016; **UPDATE**: convicted, sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment)

Rev Hassan Abdelrahim Tawor (husband, arrested in Omdurman on December 18, 2015 by the NISS secret police; charged in court on August 14, 2016 with espionage, complicity to execute a criminal agreement, waging war against the state, calling for opposition of the public authority by violence or criminal force, and inciting hatred between classes; **UPDATE**: convicted, sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment, mother fainted when the verdict was read)

Date: January 29, 2017

Location: Khartoum

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/01/4874643/>



## Syria

Archbishop Antoine Audo SJ (**UPDATE**: criticized any change in U.S. immigration policy that would give precedence to Christians over Muslims "We Christians of Syria and the Middle East do not like any speeches that make differences between us and Muslims when justice, peace and aid to those in need are at stake. Who makes these differences, feeds fanaticism and extremism")

Date reported: January 31, 2017

Location: Aleppo

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/61633->

[ASIA SYRIA Are US borders open only to Christians Who makes these differences feeds fanaticism says Chaldean Bishop of Aleppo#.WJK5DIMrKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/61633-ASIA_SYRIA_Are_US_borders_open_only_to_Christians_Who_makes_these_differences_feeds_fanaticism_says_Chaldean_Bishop_of_Aleppo#.WJK5DIMrKM8)



## Uganda

**Event: Eighty Christians at an evening church service were attacked and beaten by Muslims, 15 women raped, 9 disappeared**

Pastor Moses Mutasa (disappeared)

Pastor Musa Mukenye (pleaded with parishioners to forgive their attackers and to not attack a mosque in retaliation, said “This act is evil, and police should not relent until the attackers are arrested and charged in a court of law”)

Date: January 15, 2017

Location: Katira village, Budaka district

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/01/pastor-eight-others-missing-uganda-muslims-beat-rape-congregation/>



## Ukraine

Fr Viktor Katkalo (hospitalized after a bottle was broken over his head during a fight with 3 other priests from another church)

Date reported: January 27, 2017

Location: Katerinopol, Cherkasy region

Source: <http://uoj.org.ua/novosti/sobytiya/tri-svyashchennika-uapts-izbili-nastoyatelya-svyato-mikhaylovskogo-khrama-upts-v-katerinopole> - with translation  
and <http://vikka.ua/novini/21436-plyashkoyu-po-golovi-na-cherkaschini-pobilisya-chetvero-svyaschenikiv-foto.htm> - with translation



## United Kingdom

Susan Preston (magistrate, removed from hearing family cases after declining to hear a case involving same sex parenting)

Date reported: February 3, 2017

Location: Derbyshire

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/adoption/magistrate-disciplined-for-not-hearing-same-sex-parenting-case>





### **United States - New Jersey**

Auxiliary Bishop Manuel Cruz (struck in the face at the beginning of Mass, motive unknown)

Date: January 28, 2017

Location: Newark

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/newark-auxiliary-bishop-assaulted-during-mass-33964/>



### **Vietnam**

Fr Phan Van Loi (detained, said “I asked them why they were blocking me from attending church services. I asked if they were police. Of course, I knew they were police because I had previously seen them around my house. We demanded that they show us their IDs, but one man said they were not policemen. I told them that even if they wear plainclothes, they are still Thua Thien Hue province policemen”)

Fr Nguyen Van Ly (arrested in 1977; arrested in 2001; arrested in 2007; **UPDATE**: detained)

Fr Nguyen Huu Giai (detained)

Date: February 2, 2017

Location: Hue

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Hue,-plainclothes-police-attack-a-group-of-priests-and-block-prayer-service-39839.html>



### **Zimbabwe**

Rev Evan Mawarire (**UPDATE**: left for the United States in July 2016, arrested upon his return on charges of subversion for having organized an anti-government demonstration at the UN in New York in September 2016)

Date: February 1, 2017

Location: Harare

Source: <http://www.ecumenicalnews.com/article/zimbabwe-protest-pastor-evan-mawarire-who-fled-to-us-faces-20-years-in-jail/58521.htm>

## **Today's Martyrs**

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