

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2017-02-19 through 2017-02-25



Central African Republic

Pastor Jean-Paul Sankagui (aged 67, husband, father of 12, **killed**, church destroyed)

Date: February 7, 2017

Location: Bangui

Source: <http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/02/4927187/>



China

Bishop Casimir Wang Milu (aged 74, arrested in 1983, sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment;
UPDATE: died of natural causes)

Date: February 14, 2017

Location: Tianshui

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mgr-Casimir-Wang-Milu,-retired-bishop-of-Tianshui,-has-died-39937.html>



Congo, Democratic Republic

Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya (said "We have learned with indignation...of the fire of part of the Major Seminary of Malole by uncivilized people who later spread terror at the nearby Carmelite sisters in Kananga", added that in another attack a "group of about twenty spiteful young people...knocked over the tabernacle, looted the altar, broke benches, and tried to set fire to the church. The community of the Oblate Fathers was not spared")

Date: February 21, 2017

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/61777-AFRICA_DR_CONGO_Cardinal_Monsengwo_denounces_Acts_of_vandalism_against_the_Church#.WK52KW8rKM8

Fr Richard Kitenge (said of an attack on a seminary "The militias systematically broke the doors of the rooms and destroyed everything that was inside. They entered the teachers' rooms and burned their luggage")

Bishop Felicien Mwanama Galumbulula (denounced "exceptional violence and unimaginable atrocities against the population")

Date: February 18, 2017

Location: Malole, Kananga, Central Kasai

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/61766->

[AFRICA DR CONGO A seminary in central Kasai and a parish in Kinshasa ransacked#.WK52dW8rKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/61766-AFRICA_DR_CONGO_A_seminary_in_central_Kasai_and_a_parish_in_Kinshasa_ransacked#.WK52dW8rKM8)



Egypt

Saad Hana (aged 65, father of Medhat, **shot dead**)

Medhat (aged 45, son of Saad Hana, **burned to death**)

Date: February 22, 2017

Location: el-Arish, Sinai

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/02/22/militants-kill-two-christians-in-egypts-sinai/>

Gamal Tawfiq (aged 50, teacher, **shot dead** while on the way to school)

Date: February 16, 2016

Location: el-Arish, Sinai

Bahgat William Zakher (veterinarian, **shot dead**)

Date: February 12, 2017

Location: el-Arish, Sinai

Wael Milad (merchant, **killed** by militants in his shop)

Date: late January 2017

Location: el-Arish, Sinai

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/02/16/coptic-christian-teacher-shot-dead-in-egypt/>

Hanan Adly Girgis (aged 18, sister of Rezeiky and Romany, abducted from her home, police have taken no action)

Romany Adly Girgis (said "At about 10.30pm our neighbors – cousins of [suspect] Soliman – told my brother Rezeiky that they saw a thief close to our livestock shed. Rezeiky took a blanket and headed to the shed to guard it for the night. At 3am, when my brothers and I returned, we found the door open. Our mother was sleeping but Hanan wasn't in her room. We thought she might be asleep with my sister in-law and woke her, but Hanan wasn't there. We searched everywhere and went to relatives to see if she had gone to

them but none of them had seen her...They [the police] promised us many times that they would help return Hanan but they have done nothing. We don't know why they don't help us. Is it because we are Christians, or do they connive with kidnapers to take Christian girls to convert to Islam? We accuse them of apathy and complicity")

Rezeiky Adly Girgis (said "There was no disagreement between us, she was very happy. She was engaged to a man she'd chosen to be with. They had planned to go and buy jewelry together the following day; and she had just bought new clothes for her cousin's wedding on Sunday")

Barsoum Wahba (attorney, said "There is a state of police indifference towards the case of Hanan. They did nothing to help the brothers...They said 'give us two days and we will bring her back,' but these are words without actions. They aren't serious even though they know they have the capability to know where Hanan is and who kidnapped her. Because the victim is a Christian girl we see inaction. It is a farce. We want people to deal with us as human beings and not deal with us as second-class citizens. We feel we have no rights")

Date: January 26, 2017

Location: Esna

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/02/4929839/>



Greece

Fr Hierotheos Kamitsis (**found dead** in his apartment, had been tied to his bed and suffocated)

Date: February 13, 2017

Location: Gerakas

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/101111.htm>



India

Sajan K George (**UPDATE**: condemned the decapitation of a statue of Mary the mother of Jesus)

Date: February 20, 2017

Location: Kurla district, Mumbai

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mumbai,-a-statue-of-the-Virgin-Mary-vandalized-and-decapitated-39983.html>

Bartu Urawn (aged 50, convert, husband, father of Beneswar, **died after he and his wife were forced into a cold pond overnight for 17 hours** by 15 Hindu extremists, repeatedly said "I will not deny Christ...I will continue to believe till my last breath", wife survived)

Beneswar (forced to watch his parents' torture in the cold pond, said "The villagers kept asking my father if he was ready to forsake Christ. Every time, he said 'I will not deny Christ'")

Date reported: February 14, 2017

Location: Kubuaa village, Palamu district, Jharkhand state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Jharkhand,-a-Christian-dies-a-martyr%E2%80%99s-death-for-refusing-to-recant-and-return-to-tree-religion-39936.html>

Fr Paul Thelakkat (**UPDATE:** reported on activities by the RSS paramilitary organization "The RSS presence in Kerala is widespread, strong and active. Based on their ideology, they are a fascist organization. However, they are not in direct conflict with other communities, except in Kannur district where they are in a violent conflict with Marxists...relations between the RSS, Christians and Muslims have always been peaceful. Kerala has a long tradition of cordial relations between the various religions...The RSS does not want to disturb this model. I think the BJP [the RSS political wing] in this state is different from that in northern India. Here, its political leaders do not offend other religions. Kerala could become a model for the national party. India's future will depend on how the RSS is willing to accept democratic values and respect all religions. Even the Marxist Party, whose ideology was not at all democratic, has changed its attitude over the years and is open to democratic values. This could also happen to the BJP and the RSS")

Date: February 17, 2017

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Hindu-ultranationalists-growing-in-Kerala-with-more-than-5,000-meetings-a-day-39969.html>



Iran

Amin Afshar Naderi (aged 28, convert, arrested without warrant by MOIS agents while fishing and picnicking with his wife in Firuzkuh on August 26, 2016, beaten when he asked to see the arrest warrant; still incarcerated without trial as of February 7, 2017, has threatened to begin a hunger strike; **UPDATE:** stopped his hunger strike after receiving promise of medical care and legal action)

Hadi Askary (arrested without warrant by MOIS agents while fishing and picnicking with his wife in Firuzkuh on August 26, 2016; still incarcerated without trial as of February 7, 2017, has threatened to begin a hunger strike; **UPDATE:** stopped his hunger strike after receiving promise of medical care and legal action)

Date: February 14, 2017

Location: Evin prison, Tehran

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/4916336/>



Mali

Sr Gloria Cecilia Narvaez Argoti (Colombian citizen, abducted)

Date: February 7, 2017

Location: Koutiala

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/61788->

[AFRICA MALI Bogota sends a special anti kidnapping team to investigate the kidnapping of the Colombian nun#.WK51228rKM8](#)



Pakistan

Nabeel Masih (aged 16, arrested on blasphemy charges in [Dina Nath village, Kasur district, Punjab province](#) on [September 18, 2016](#) after accused of posting a photo of the Kabaa in Mecca on his Facebook page near a photo of a pig, family fled their home;

UPDATE: denied bail)

Date: February 7, 2017

Location: Kasur

Source: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/16-year-old-blasphemy-boys-appeal-for-bail-rejected>

Shahzad Masih (aged 25, rickshaw driver, fiancé of Samina, brother of Tariq Masih, **shot dead** after taking two Muslims to a Sufi shrine, police ruled the death a suicide, forced the family to bury the body)

Samina (fiancee of Shahzad Masih)

Tariq Masih (said "I am totally demoralized by the lack of impetus shown by the police. They seem determined to label my brother's death as a suicide but he was the most successful of us and was to be married in a few weeks. I am a simple sewage worker earning very little, Shahzad was earning good money and hoped one day to run his own business. We were all so proud of him we are devastated by news of his death")

Date: February 8, 2017

Location: Patoki, Kasur

Source [warning - graphic]: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-rickshaw-driver-shot-dead-police-refuse-investigation-and-force-family-to-bury-corpse>

Event: A suicide bombing of a Sufi shrine killed at least 75 including 20 children and wounded more than 200

Fr Paulus Gill (prayed for the victims "We are losing human values. What we are witnessing is the result when religion combines with politics...Shrines have relatively low security due to round the clock visitors. Only dialogue can bring peace with religious fundamentalists, the extremism has crept in our society especially after Islamization by General Zia ul Haq who introduced religious and gender biases in Pakistan's laws. Now we are drowning and it will be long before peace prevails in Pakistan")

Fr Abid Habib (**UPDATE:** said "We are getting messages and churches will be attacked now. The terrorists may be based in Afghanistan but they are being funded by Saudis. They follow Wahabi ideology which lauds the concept of jihad and urges hatred of infidels. Visiting shrines to them is idol worship")

Archbishop Joseph Coutts (**UPDATE:** said "It is sad that a Muslim shrine has been attacked in a Muslim country. We feel so helpless. The scourge of terrorism has spread like a cancer. It has long roots in our society. The government or army alone cannot fight it alone. The whole nation should stand united, without discrimination of faith, use all peaceful methods and reject these terrorists. Terrorists lie when they claim to target only government departments and spare public or religious places. Attacks on shrines is a wider problem emerging from sectarianism, terrorism has no borders")

Fr Qaiser Feroz (**UPDATE:** said "shrines are being targeted simply because they are crowded and people of all faiths visit them especially to listen to devotional songs. The religious fundamentalists only want bloodshed, there is no faith motivation")

Date: February 16, 2017

Location: Sehwan

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Pakistan's-Catholic-Church-strongly-condemns-Sufi-temple-attack--39967.html>

and <http://www.ucanews.com/news/women-children-among-72-killed-at-pakistan-sufi-shrine/78419>

Suneel (injured in the suicide bombing of the Punjab Assembly, hospitalized)

Archbishop Joseph Coutts (**UPDATE:** said it is difficult to understand and to predict the Taliban following the suicide bombing of the Punjab Provincial parliament that killed 14 "It depends on what they think, how they interpret the enemy and link things. They are very slippery like a snake in the grass. They can make anything out of a visiting army officer in a Church or a police guard on duty during Sunday Mass. It is a different kind of guerrilla warfare and we have to learn to protect ourselves")

Date: February 13, 2017

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/pakistan-is-under-seige-another-bomb-detonation-rocks-lahore>

and <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Taliban-attackers-warn-churches-that-they-can-be-targets-if-they-back-the-government-39960.html>



Sudan

Rev Yahya Abdelrahim Nalu (**UPDATE:** described a government order to demolish 25 churches in the capital area "This is not an isolated act but should be taken with wider perspective")

Rev Mubarak Hamad (said that mosques were spared from demolition order)

Date: February 11, 2017

Location: Khartoum

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/02/sudan-orders-demolition-least-25-church-buildings-christian-leaders-say/>



Turkey

David Byle (aged 47, Canadian-U.S. citizen, husband of Ulrike, father of five, detained without charge in [Istanbul](#) on [April 6, 2016](#) for 30 days pending deportation, labelled 'a danger to public order' by the Interior Ministry; released from detention on [April 15, 2016](#), deportation still pending; deportation still pending as of [October 14, 2016](#) due to the post-coup arrests of judges and prosecutors; **UPDATE**: deportation stopped by the Constitutional Court pending evidence justifying the deportation)

Date: February 13, 2017

Location: Ankara

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/02/4923497/>



United States - Indiana

Pastor Brad Flaskamp (reported on the beheading of a statue of Jesus on two days "It makes me sad that somebody would do something like that. I was hoping it was just a random act to destroy it in the first place. I can tell you that I don't think it's kids. It would have to be a kid that can wield a sledgehammer...I'd say we love you, we'd love to have the statue head back and we'd love to have you in our church. We'd welcome them, we'd forgive them")

Dates: February 10 & 18, 2017

Location: Indianapolis

Source: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/feb/21/jesus-statue-decapitated-twice-outside-indiana-chu/>



Venezuela

Event: Pro-government militants invade and stop a Mass

Luis Arias (aged 67, catechism teacher, said “Some people were scared, obviously, but no one was hurt. They [the demonstrators] said ‘Because the priests have spoken about politics, we have the right too”)

Archbishop Diego Rafael Padron Sanchez (**UPDATE**: said “There must be a line, an order, to intimidate the Church, to lower its discourse, to [silence it]”)

Date: February 12, 2017

Location: Caracas

Source: <http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2017/02/16/socialist-militants-storm-mass-in-venezuela/>



Vietnam

Bishop Paul Nguyen Van Hoa (aged 86, **died of natural causes**, had been questioned by police and prohibited from pastoral duties for over a decade following the 1975 reunification of the country)

Date: February 14, 2017

Location: Nha Trang

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnamese-catholics-remember-humble-bishop/78447>

Event: Christian, Buddhist, and Cao Dai religious leaders from an interfaith organization that opposed persecution were detained, questioned, and released

Pastor Nguyen Manh Hung (detained)

Fr Anton Le Ngoc Thanh CSSR (**UPDATE**: detained)

Date: February 13, 2017

Location: Dong Thanh, Vinh Long province

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/members-of-interfaith-council-detained-in-vietnam/78414>

Today's Martyrs

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

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