

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2017-03-12 through 2017-03-18



### Argentina

Archbishop Alfredo Zecca (condemned a feminist demonstration in front of the cathedral in which a woman dressed as Mary the mother of Jesus submitted to a simulated abortion)

Date: first week of March 2017

Location: Tucuman

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/feminist-dressed-as-virgin-mary-pretends-to-abort-jesus-in-front-of-cathedr>

Bishop Jose Carlos Tissera (denounced an arson attack on the cathedral by two masked men at the end of Mass, worshippers were uninjured, said: "The fire was quickly extinguished by firefighters. Thank God, the fire did cause major damage inside, but the discomfort and confusion created by the smoke lasted a little...Although it is still early to draw conclusions, together with Father Marcelo, we believe that this incident may be related to others that occurred last Wednesday, March 8, against the Metropolitan Cathedral of Buenos Aires and on Friday 10 in front of the Cathedral of La Plata. We condemn similar events that have taken place in recent days, whether or not related to what happened recently in Florencio Varela")

Fr Marcelo Eyheramendy (filed a police report)

Date: March 10, 2017

Location: Quilmes

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/61917-AMERICA\\_ARGENTINA\\_Denunciation\\_of\\_the\\_Bishop\\_of\\_Quilmes\\_after\\_attempting\\_to\\_set\\_fire\\_to\\_a\\_church#.WMiVsW8rKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/61917-AMERICA_ARGENTINA_Denunciation_of_the_Bishop_of_Quilmes_after_attempting_to_set_fire_to_a_church#.WMiVsW8rKM8)

Fr Eduardo Farrell (transferred to another parish due to death threats from drug traffickers)

Bishop Fernando Carlos Maletti (ordered the transfer of Fr Eduardo Farrell)

Date reported: March 15, 2017

Location: Moreno

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/61924-AMERICA\\_ARGENTINA\\_The\\_threats\\_of\\_drug\\_traffickers\\_force\\_the\\_transfer\\_of\\_a\\_priest#.WMnjbm8rKM9](http://www.fides.org/en/news/61924-AMERICA_ARGENTINA_The_threats_of_drug_traffickers_force_the_transfer_of_a_priest#.WMnjbm8rKM9)



## Bangladesh

Gilbert Costa (aged 65, church security guard, stabbed by several young men while guarding his church, hospitalized in stable condition)

Date: March 10, 2017

Location: Chatmohar upazila, Pabna district

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/catholic-church-guard-attacked-over-personal-feud-in-bangladesh-79731/>



## Canada

**Event: Bishops condemned the government's announcement to advance abortions in other countries**

Bishop Douglas Crosby (wrote “Such a policy is a reprehensible example of Western cultural imperialism and an attempt to impose misplaced but so-called Canadian ‘values’ on other nations and people...It exploits women when they are most in need of care and support and tragically subverts true prenatal health care”)

Cardinal Thomas Collins (**UPDATE:** wrote “It is praiseworthy to offer international aid, it is arrogant for powerful, wealthy nations to dictate what priorities developing countries should embrace...Money spent on promoting abortion and contraception could be spent on vaccinating millions of women and girls against malaria or other diseases”)

Date: March 8, 2017

Location: Toronto

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/03/13/trudeaus-overseas-abortion-policy-a-reprehensible-example-of-imperialism-says-bishop/>



## China

Si Guangxiu (mother of Cai Chuangye, arrested for attending a house church, housing application deferred due to her religion)

Cai Chuangye (son of Si Guangxiu, housing application deferred due to his religion)

Date: March 4, 2017

Location: Xinjiang

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/03/xinjiang-christians-denied-housing.html>

**Event: Two Christians were detained for praying for the National People’s Congress and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, both were deported to their home provinces**

Zhou Jinxia (**UPDATE:** said “Today is the opening of a conference between the NPC and the CPPCC, and we wished to pray for our compatriots, the attendees of the conference, and the country itself with the hope that our nation will be blessed with peace and freedom. Sister Shi Xinhong was stopped on the way to the Great Hall. I left her and continued on. I called her later in the day and realized that she had been seized by the police, who questioned Sister Shi about my whereabouts from the other side of the phone. With Sister Shi in their hands, [the police] searched for half an hour and failed to locate me. I proceeded, but the Hall was heavily guarded and there was no way for me to get in. I abandoned the prayer I prepared earlier on the street”)

Shi Xinhong (**UPDATE**)

Date: March 5, 2017

Location: Beijing

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/03/2-christians-detained-for-attempting-to.html>



**Congo, Democratic Republic**

Bishop Emmanuel Bernard Kasanda Mulenga (appealed to UN troops to rescue 25 seminarians who were hiding in the jungle following the February 18, 2017 attack on their seminary by a militia, the seminarians were rescued)

Date reported: March 14, 2017

Location: Kananga

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/61920-AFRICA\\_DR\\_CONGO\\_The\\_UN\\_evacuates\\_25\\_seminarians\\_of\\_the\\_Seminary\\_of\\_Kananga\\_assaulted\\_in\\_February#.WMiTyG8rKM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/61920-<u>AFRICA_DR_CONGO_The_UN_evacuates_25_seminarians_of_the_Seminary_of_Kananga_assaulted_in_February#.WMiTyG8rKM8</u>)



**Egypt**

Bishop Pfnotious (asked to find a place for people to pray after they were prevented from gathering)

Date: March 12, 2017

Location: Ezbet Nakhla

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1854&A=29961>



## France

Sara (Iranian citizen, refugee camp resident, said she fears “Maybe violence, maybe [I’ll be] killed”, has been spat upon)

Ramin (convert from Zoroastrianism, Iranian citizen, refugee camp resident, said “The people in the camp know I’m Christian. Sometimes people have thrown small stones at my cabin, but for me it’s no problem, I’m at peace”)

Date reported: March 15, 2017

Location: Dunkirk

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/03/accounts-surface-of-persecution-of-christians-in-dunkirk-migrants-camp/>



## India

Pramod Das (Bethesda Charitable Endeavors, said after the government shut down the U.S. Christian charity Compassion International "We will have to completely stop the program now - it will affect the development of the children", had been assisting 258 children in slums and leper colonies)

Date: March 15, 2017

Location: Uttarakhand state

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/christian-charity-for-children-shuts-operations-in-india/78654>

Pastor Jacob Joseph (church attacked by Hindu radicals, had previously been ordered by police to close his church, said "It is very painful that we had to shut down the church that we have been running for more than 13 years. Even praying in our own homes with our family is restricted and treated as crime")

Date: January 29, 2017

Location: Chhattigarh state

Kailash Markham (aged 25, prevented by Hindu radicals from burying his sister, said "We weren't allowed to bury the dead body of my sister for three days. The only reason for that was because we practice Christianity. While the body was decomposing, we were running to the government offices and to the police station to get help to bury the body. The local BJP leaders told us not to bury the body in the village, unless we first gave up our Christian faith. We hardly had time to grieve over the loss of my sister", beaten after obtaining police approval to bury his sister)

Date: January 2017

Location: Chhattigarh state

Bagathram Mandavi (aged 55, father of Raghuram Mandavi, **died of natural causes**, denied burial until his son converted to Hinduism)

Date: September 2016

Raghuram Mandavi (son of Bagathram Mandavi, said he would convert to Hinduism in **September 2016** to ensure that his father would be buried; **UPDATE**: home demolished by Hindu radicals, said "we don't have freedom to live as we want, all our movements are tracked closely by the Hindu radicals. Now that our homes are demolished, we do not have a place to live in the village, all our belongings including utensils and clothes became unusable. We are in this situation for no crime, except practicing the religion we like")

Date: February 2017

Location: Chhattigarh state

Arun Pannalal (**UPDATE**: said "Christians in Chhattigarh are being discriminated in every aspect of their life particularly in rural areas where their level of vulnerability is higher. Whether it is education, social welfare, or the PDS [Public Distribution System], Christians have been systematically chipped out for their Christian beliefs...There has been shift in the traditional way of incidents of harassment of Christians to an institutional discrimination")

Date reported: March 15, 2017

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2017/03/15/chhattisgarhs-christians-face-challenges-on-multiple-fronts/>



## Indonesia

Basuki Tjahaja Purnama aka Ahok (provincial Governor, named as a suspect in a police blasphemy investigation on **November 16, 2016** despite the fact that a professor of communications has admitted to altering a recording of his original speech to incriminate him, prohibited from leaving the country, if convicted he could be sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment; **UPDATE**: mosques have begun to deny Islamic funerals to his Muslim supporters)

Date: March 13, 2017

Location: Jakarta

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Muslim-supporters-of-Christian-governor-denied-funeral-40179.html>

Alfaro Sinaga (aged 5, son of Hotdiman and Novita, hospitalized in serious condition on following a **November 13, 2016** church attack with Molotov cocktails by an ISIL sympathizer; **UPDATE**: has undergone 17 operations, no longer cries after surgery, has become ashamed of his appearance)

Novita (aged 40, mother of Alfaro Sinaga, said “I always try to encourage him by saying it is important to regain his health and will pray with him before the operation. Seeing him happy is my source of strength and joy as well”)

Hotdiman (father of Alfaro Sinaga, has been looking for employment closer to home)

Date reported: March 14, 2017

Location: Samarinda, East Kalimantan province

Source [warning - graphic]: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/5071305/>



## Nigeria

Josephine Akioyamen (described the murder of 5 Christians, said “Our people are being hunted and hacked down in their sleep by these herdsmen”)

Date: January 5, 2017

Location: Edumoga village, Okpokwu council area

Governor Samuel Ortom (spoke about another Fulani Muslim attack “My people are killed, displaced, vulnerable and above all, rendered homeless in their fatherland”)

Date: March 11, 2017

Location: Ugba village, Benue state

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/03/one-year-agatu-massacre-christians-continue-killed-benue-nigeria/>

Rev Dr Musa Asake (**UPDATE:** wrote that the government had pressured churches to not carry out a Day of Mourning for murdered Christians: “CAN [Christian Association of Nigeria] wishes to inform all Christians, both at home and abroad, that based on credible reports of concern, it has decided to suspend the Christian Day of Mourning formerly scheduled to take place globally on Sunday 19th March, 2017,” Asake said in the statement. “We took cognizance of the preparations that various Christian groups have made to participate in the program, which was designed, in all honesty and sincerity, to mourn the death of thousands of Christians murdered by religious insurgents”)

Date: March 15, 2017

Rev Samson Olasupo Ayokunle (said “Recently, a Redeemed Christian Church of God building was burnt down in Dei- Dei, here in Abuja, very early in the morning. What shall we do to these continuous provocations without any visible action by the law enforcement agents?”)

Date: early March 2017

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/03/nigeria-orders-christian-leaders-cancel-mourning-prayer-day-killed-christians/>

Bishop William Naga (**UPDATE:** said “The governor did his best when the Christians had to flee in 2014 and 2015. But when the care of the camps was handed over to other organizations, the discrimination started. They will give food to the refugees, but if you

are a Christian they will not give you food. They will openly tell you that the relief is not for Christians")

John Gwamma (chairman of an informal Christian refugee camp; **UPDATE**: said: "We have started informal, purely Christian camps because Christians were being segregated in the formal camps. They had not been given food, or allowed to go to church. There is a term called 'arne', meaning pagan. Meaning, you are pagan and not a Muslim, and as long as you are not a Muslim, we don't like you to stay together with us")

Mary Charles (refugee; **UPDATE**: said: "We had to flee Boko Haram because they didn't allow us to go to our farm. We had no drinking water and we didn't have anything to eat. I thank God for this food aid and I thank the people who brought it. We now have food that we can give to our children"

Date reported: March 16, 2017

Source:

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians.denied.vital.aid.as.famine.sweeps.sub.saharan.africa/105748.htm>



## **Sudan**

**Event: Three teachers at a Christian school were arrested and then released on bail**

Daud Musa (**UPDATE**)

Yahya Elias

Younan

Rev Yahya Abdelrahim Nalu (**UPDATE**: said of the arrests "There is a big collusion between the police, the attorney and the Ministry of Guidance and Religious Endowment. Police are illegally aiding the company [Education Vision], despite the fact that it has no legal documents of ownership")

Date: March 16, 2017

Location: Omdurman

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/03/christian-teachers-sudan-arrested-take-school/>



## **United Kingdom**

Fr Len Kofler (founder of the Institute of St Anselm, announced that the Institute would be moving to Rome due to the government's revocation of its license to bring in foreign students, the revocation came when 10% of its applicants had been rejected for reason such as a Catholic priest not having a wife or a nun with a vow of poverty not having a

bank account, said “All our priests and religious are sent to train and go back to their own countries after their studies. I think its a total misunderstanding and religious illiteracy from the Home Office. At the age of 82, I am no longer able to work in a situation where my hands are bound due to the Home Office’s inability to function. To work in that mess is not my desire any longer”)

Date: March 16, 2017

Location: Margate, Kent

Source: <http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2017/03/16/catholic-institute-leaves-britain-after-years-of-mental-torture-over-visa-applications/>



### **United States - California**

Catherine Kennedy (Bible study teacher, mother of Alicia de la Rosa, sister of Deborah Ware, **shot dead** while driving home from a prayer meeting)

Fr Fernando Ramirez (was too upset to be able to comment on the death of Catherine Kennedy)

Date: March 7, 2017

Location: Escondido

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/beloved-bible-study-teacher-shot-in-head-on-way-home-from-prayer-meeting-177263/>

Pastor Herbert Valero (aged 68, father of six, **stabbed to death** outside his home by a parishioner while praying with him)

Date: March 14, 2017

Location: Salinas

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/pastor-father-of-6-fatally-stabbed-by-church-member-while-praying-for-assailant-177794/>

### **United States - Hawaii**

Deacon Walter Yoshimitsu (said “The [state] Senate’s approval of assisted suicide ignores the tremendous strides we have made as a community to promote the value of hospice and palliative care to care for those with terminal illnesses and to ensure everyone has access to quality end of life care...Those in favor of assisted suicide have framed this as an issue about individual autonomy and freedom of choice, when it fact it is nothing more than a veiled attempt to make it legal for physicians to murder their patients with immunity”)

Date reported: March 13, 2017

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/despite-warnings-assisted-suicide-bill-advances-in-hawaii-98707/>

## **Today’s Martyrs**

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