

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2017-05-14 through 2017-05-20



### Azerbaijan

Irina Zakharchenko (aged 57, widow, disabled, cited for distributing religious literature door to door in [Pirallahi](#) on [December 5, 2014](#), detained in [Baku](#) by the NSM secret police on [February 17, 2015](#); convicted on [January 28, 2016](#) of illegally distributing one religious booklet, fined US\$4,391, fine suspended due to time served, released; **UPDATE**: acquitted on appeal by the Supreme Court, no written verdict issued)

Valida Jabrayilova (aged 41, cited for distributing religious literature door to door in [Pirallahi](#) on [December 5, 2014](#), detained in [Baku](#) by the NSM secret police on [February 17, 2015](#); convicted on [January 28, 2016](#) of illegally distributing one religious booklet, fined US\$4,391, fine suspended due to time served, released; **UPDATE**: acquitted on appeal by the Supreme Court, no written verdict issued)

Date: [February 8, 2017](#)

Location: [Baku](#)

Source: [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2278](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2278)



### Central African Republic

Cardinal Dieudonne Nzapalainga (**UPDATE**: convinced anti-Balaka rebels to leave a city where they had perpetrated violence for weeks)

Bishop Juan Jose Aguirre Munos (**UPDATE**: shot at by anti-Balaka rebels while standing with other Christians in defense of a mosque containing 1,000 Muslims, unhurt but the man next to him was killed)

Date: [May 14, 2017](#)

Location: [Bangassou](#)

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/62289->

[AFRICA CENTRAL AFRICA Cardinal Nzapalainga and Bishop Aguirre mediate with the rebels in Bangassou#.WRvQ8esrKM8](#)

Rev Nicolas Guerekoyame-Gbangou (aged 58, husband of Priscilla; **UPDATE**: youngest son and grandson killed in the continuing violence)

Date reported: May 16, 2017

Location: Alindao

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/05/more-tragedy-for-church-peacekeeping-cleric-as-son-and-grandson-killed-in-latest-violence/>



## China

Pastor Zhang (described the closing of a neighboring church “Since the government can’t accuse the church of collaborating with the U.S., the officers now use Korea as an excuse. Since religions are founded in different countries, the people are unavoidably ‘collaborating with foreign powers’ when they choose a religious belief. Jesus himself was a foreigner. This logic is ridiculous. Our government has armed itself to the teeth in order to control people’s minds”)

Date reported: May 12, 2017

Location: Xiamen, Fujian province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/05/fujian-church-banned-after-accusation.html>

Pastor Ma Ke (**UPDATE**: received notice of his church's eviction, called the landlord to find police had brought pressure to force the eviction, along with other parishioners was denied online renewal of his residency permit, wanted notice issued for him)

Date: May 4, 2017

Location: Guangzhou, Guangdong province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/05/church-evicted-christians-barred-from.html>

Tu Yan (detained on [October 22, 2015](#) for 'cult activity', released, arrested a month later on the same charge; **UPDATE**: still jailed, prosecutors have again delayed her trial)

Date: April 28, 2017

Location: Yunnan

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/05/christians-case-delayed.html>



## Egypt

**Event UPDATE: A suicide bomber attacked a church during the Divine Liturgy, killing 30 and wounding 78**

Mina Abdo (husband of Yvonne, father of Kerollos and Miriam, engineer, Kuwaiti resident, had returned for a visit, **killed**)

Kerollos (aged 11, son of Yvonne and Mina Abdo, brother of Miriam, Kuwaiti resident, injured in the explosion with shrapnel wounds to the face and right leg, hospitalized)

Yvonne (widow of Mina Abdo, mother of Kerollos and Miriam, doctor of gynecology, Kuwaiti resident, present during the attack, said "I love Egypt. I love my memories here. But I'm scared now. We will come back for visits, we must. My husband is buried here")

Miriam (aged 14, daughter of Yvonne and Mina Abdo, sister of Kerollos, Kuwaiti resident, present during the attack)

Date: April 9, 2017

Location: Tanta

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20170514153146.htm>



## India

### Event: Christians were prosecuted and fined for attending Easter services

Somari Komra (aged 40, forced to stand in the village square, fined, said "I will not stop going to church and I am ready to pay the fine and face the consequences of social boycott")

Shivaram Tekam (forced to give offerings to the local Hindu deity "I had to do this because I attended church on Easter Sunday", later told a local pastor "They can stop me from going to church but they cannot take Jesus from my heart. I will find ways and secretly come to church")

Kanesh Singh (aged 51, refused to pay his fine or renounce his faith, said "What crime have I committed that I should pay the fine? I have not stolen anything. I have not defiled any woman. I have not quarreled. I have not killed anybody. If you think going to church and worshipping Jesus is the crime, I will commit this crime every day")

Date: April 17, 2017

Location: Junwani village, Chhattisgarh state

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2017/05/13/indian-christians-fined-and-forced-to-convert-to-hinduism-for-attending-easter-service/>



## Iraq

Raghd Al-Aswad (wife of Adwer Al-Aswad, refugee from Mosul, will have to leave their apartment and return to the refugee camp to live in a shipping container "We call it the cemetery. It looks like dead bodies stacked side by side with a giant hospital sheet on top of them")

Adwer Al-Aswad (husband of Raghd Al-Aswad, refugee from Mosul, said he cannot honor his Muslim former neighbors who look forward to his return "We don't have any more trust. This wasn't the first time. The next time we might die")

Date reported: May 14, 2017

Location: Erbil, Kurdistan

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20170514153146.htm>

**Event UPDATE: Three archbishops signed a request for international protection for the minorities of the Nineveh Plain after the expulsion of ISIL**

Metropolitan Daoud Matti Sharaf

Archbishop Timotheus Mousa Shamani

Archbishop Yohanna Petros Moshe

Date: May 12, 2017

Patriarch Louis Raphael I Sako (**UPDATE**: issued a statement that his church did not agree with the request for international protection)

Date: May 13, 2017

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20170515172959.htm>

and <http://www.fides.org/en/news/62277->

[ASIA IRAQ Three Syriac Bishops ask for international protection for Christians in the Nineveh Plain But the Chaldean Patriarchate dissociates itself#.WRp-K krKM8](#)



## Mexico

Fr Jose Miguel Angel Machorro Alcala (aged 55, stabbed three times in the neck and torso while finishing Mass at the cathedral altar, hospitalized in serious condition)

Date: May 15, 2017

Location: Mexico City

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/62284->

[AMERICA MEXICO Priest stabbed in the cathedral immediately after Mass#.WRv QQusrKM8](#)

and <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/priest-stabbed-during-mass-at-mexico-city-cathedral>



## Nigeria

Grace (daughter of Peter Pogu, sister of Yakubu, abducted in Chibok by Boko Haram on April 14, 2014; **UPDATE**: freed)

Peter Pogu (father of Grace, celebrated her freedom from Boko Haram)

Yakubu (son of Peter Pogu, brother of Grace)

Maimuna (daughter of Yakubu Nkeki Maina, abducted in [Chibok](#) by Boko Haram on [April 14, 2014](#); **UPDATE**: freed)

Yakubu Nkeki Maina (father of Maimuna; **UPDATE**: celebrated her freedom from Boko Haram)

Date: [May 6, 2017](#)

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/05/chibok-parents-relieved-grace-is-out/>

Daniel Kadzai (Christian Association of Nigeria youth official, **UPDATE**: released a statement concerning the elimination of Christian classes from schools “The worse form of social injustice, terrorism and religious bias is to deny Christian children their right to practice their religion despite the role of Christian Religious Studies in helping to shape the moral character and integrity of our children as future leaders...Perhaps, it is in furtherance to its Islamic agenda that the APC government appointed the likes of Prof. Ishaq Oluyede, a known Islamist, who has never hidden his bias and prejudice against Christians, to head a most relevant educational institution like the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, JAMB...Since 1999 no Christian has been appointed minister of FCT, it is not by error it is a religious agenda”)

Date: [May 16, 2017](#)

Source: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/05/buharis-running-nigeria-muslim-organization-can/>



### **North Korea**

Kim Chung-Seong (missionary, defector, said Christianity has continued to grow in his country despite persecution)

Date: [May 12, 2017](#)

Location: Washington DC, U.S.

Source: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue28120.html>



### **Pakistan**

Jacqueline Sultan (attorney; **UPDATE**: has received death threats)

Date: [May 12, 2017](#)

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/christian-lawyer-raising-voice-against-forced-conversions-receives-death-threats/>

and <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6446>

Salim Masih (aged 35, husband of Salma, father of Anum, Naveed, and Nabeel, home invaded on [April 21, 2017](#) by a former employer's henchmen, beaten, abducted, ransom of US\$382 demanded, police took no action; **UPDATE**: released after the ransom was paid, had been beaten and tortured, taken to a safe house and reunited with his family)

Date: May 14, 2017

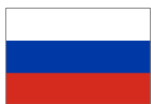
Source: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/kidnapped-and-tortured-ex-slave-set-free-after-payment-of-ransom>

Prof Anjum James Paul (appeared before the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority [PEMRA] on [April 3, 2017](#) with documentation concerning the television drama 'Baji Irshad' depiction of Christians "There is desecration of religious symbol as there are vulgar dialogues wearing holy Cross. There is racial discrimination as well because there are nick names like Kala Joseph [black Joseph], Peeno, Meedan, Chitti etc...Only Christians in the drama have been presented as non-serious, inferior, beggars, thieves, greedy, without etiquettes, superstitious, scandalizing their daughters, disrespecting parents, disrespecting husband, disrespecting mother...and love affairs but Muslims have been presented very decent and well-mannered. Only Christians have been presented doing menial jobs...Only Christians have been presented uneducated as they wrongly speak Urdu and English language. But it is strange that when they speak with any Muslim then no wrong pronunciation. The biased writer has deliberately ignored the true picture of Christians who have been torch bearers in education, health, defense and many other fields", the PEMRA officials showed little interest in his presentation; **UPDATE**: said that PEMRA ruled in favor of the TV show except to require a pro forma apology prior to the airing of each episode, has plans to appeal to the Supreme Court)

Date: May 16, 2017

Location: Islamabad

Source: <https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/pemras-verdict-over-baji-irshad-petition-is-heavily-biased-says-pmta/>



## Russia

Bishop Konstantin Andreev (reported on a Victory Day celebration in which an Orthodox priest verbally attacked Protestants "The father continued to insist, meaningfully informing the audience that there are many 'different kinds of people in Russia today,' and among them there are those who 'prevented our victory - namely, Pentecostals, Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses...'", following this a Protestant pastor at the ceremony was detained by police and told that his church was banned, the police later reversed this decision and released him but still demanded he produce documents)

Date: May 9, 2017

Location: Ugut village, Surgut district, Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug

Source: <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue28117.html>



## Thailand

Sarafina Sarfaraz (refugee from Pakistan, as of [April 7, 2017](#) has obtained a retirement visa to avoid arrest, cannot afford to renew the visa; **UPDATE:** thanks to donations has been able to renew her visa)

Date: [April 27, 2017](#)

Location: Bangkok

Source: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/thanks-to-your-donations-sarafina-now-has-a-retirement-visa-for-thailand>



## Uganda

Pastor Christopher James Kalaja (husband, father of seven, home, barn, and church in [Nakabale village, Kaderuna sub-county](#) destroyed by 9 Muslims on [March 27, 2017](#); **UPDATE:** family relocated due to death threats, have no bedding or food)

Date: [May 7, 2017](#)

Location: undisclosed for security reasons

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/05/muslim-extremists-uganda-threaten-kill-family-pastor/>



## Ukraine

**Event: Church officials criticized pending legislation that would allow churches to be seized and turned over to a competing denomination**

Metropolitan Luka Kovalenko (wrote “Using their methods of pressure on the Church, they propose to adopt new legislation aimed at destroying the prayer life of our Mother Church, the established Church-administrative structure for centuries”)

Date: [May 14, 2017](#)

Location: Zaporizhia

Metropolitan Agafangel Savvin (said in a homily that he prayed that the legislature would reject “anti-people, ungodly laws, aimed at the destruction of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church on the territory of Ukraine...We always pray for our God-protected country, and for the authorities and we desire that God would enlighten them. Through crisis and catastrophe the Lord calls all to repent and change...Therefore, we need to strengthen our prayer...that the Lord would give us patience and courage, for he is always with us”)

Date: May 14, 2017

Location: Odessa

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/103474.htm>

Metropolitan Nathanael (wrote concerning pending legislation that would allow churches to be seized and turned over to a competing denomination "It is hard to believe, but today, in the democratic Ukrainian society, which declares its desire to embody European values and freedoms, a new persecution is unfolding, against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church...I appeal to all the faithful of Volynia, who value peace and do not desire new conflicts in the state, to stand against hatred with prayer, love, and faith... We, who are the 'light of the world,' must first of all convey to the public the truth that the Church is not a political institution, but the Body of Christ. Today, the future of Orthodoxy is in our hands...The clergy and laity are trying to get the people's representatives to hear the opinion of the religious part of society and to prevent the legalization of discrimination on religious grounds in Ukraine")

Date: May 15, 2017

Location: Volhynia

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/103495.htm>

and <http://volyn.church.ua/2017/05/15/zvernennya-jepiskopa-volinskogo-i-luckogo-nafanajila-u-zvyazku-zi-sproboyu-prijnyattya-anticerkovnix-zakoniv-u-verxovnij-radi/> - with translation



### United States - Kentucky

Blaine Adamson (print shop owner, declined to print T-shirts which promoted a gay pride event in 2012, ordered to attend diversity training by a county human rights commission; order reversed by a circuit court; **UPDATE**: court decision upheld by the state Court of Appeals in his favor)

Date: May 12, 2017

Location: Lexington

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/free-speech-protects-printer-from-promoting-gay-pride-fest-ky-court-rules-71867/>

and <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/victory-court-affirms-christians-right-to-refuse-in-good-faith-to-make-lgbt>



### Vietnam

Fr Anthony Dang Huu Nam (**UPDATE**: under attack by government media for supporting fishermen impoverished by an environmental disaster)



Fr John Baptist Nguyen Dinh Thuc (July 1, 2012 Mass in Yen Khe village, Con Cuong district, Nghe An province attacked by a mob likely sent by provincial authorities, physically hit, 20 parishioners and 2 nuns beaten; **UPDATE**: under attack by government media for supporting fishermen impoverished by an environmental disaster)

Date: May 11, 2017

Location: Vinh diocese

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Catholic-media-launch-appeal-for-Vietnamese-priests-defamed-by-the-government--40719.html>

and <http://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnamese-priests-targeted-by-govt-smear-campaign/79177>

## Today's Martyrs

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

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