

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2017-05-28 through 2017-06-03



Algeria

Slimane Bouhafis (aged 50, arrested in [Setif](#) on blasphemy charges on [July 31, 2016](#), suffers from inflammatory rheumatism, sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment on [August 7, 2016](#); sentence reduced on [September 7, 2016](#) to 3 years' imprisonment, fine of US\$900 dropped; **UPDATE**: transferred to another prison where there are fewer Christians, family fearful for his safety)

Date reported: [May 26, 2017](#)

Location: [Jijel](#)

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/05/fears-imprisoned-algerian-christian-ramadan-begins/>



Central African Republic

Pastor Ange-Apoleon Ngakolada (aged 36, husband, father of eight, **killed**)

Rev Aiah Foday-Khabenje (General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa, said “Saddened and shocked at the news of this targeted fatal attack on religious leaders, who have demonstrated courage and brought hope to their people in CAR. Pray for God’s grace and comfort for the family. I cannot understand how a small group of people, in the tiny nation, bent on evil, continue to defy the collective will of the rest of the world for peace, represented by the United Nations. Surely, the UN ought to be a force for good and needs to stand up against the seeming triumph of evil forces around the world”)

Date reported: [May 26, 2017](#)

Location: [Alindao](#)

Paul Zidoro (son of Geoffrey Zidoro, nephew of Rev Nicolas Guerekoyame-Gbangou, **killed**)

Geoffrey Zidoro (father of Paul Zidoro, brother of Rev Nicolas Guerekoyame-Gbangou, **killed**)

Date reported: [May 16, 2017](#)

Location: [Alindao](#)

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/05/church-leader-among-dead-central-african-republic/>



China

Pastor Su Tianfu (**UPDATE**: issued an administrative penalty for failure to pay a fine of over 7 million yuan [one million dollars], said “Someone knocked on my door at 7 p.m...It was four officials from the ethnic and religious affairs bureau. I told them it was late, but they said they were working overtime. Nothing could be done about it. Then they delivered an administrative penalty notice to me...By this 7 million yuan total, the government meant the total sum of donations the church received from the very first gathering on April 10, 2009 to the last one on Dec. 9, 2015, when the church was banned. The [officials] confiscated the church’s account book after arresting Zhang Xiuhong. They used that to calculate the donation money we have received”)

Date: May 19, 2017

Location: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Tu Yulei (detained by police in [Guiyang, Guizhou province](#) on [December 22, 2015](#) along with his daughter; **UPDATE**: sentenced to 1 year's imprisonment)

Wang Yao (detained in [Guiyang, Guizhou province](#) on [December 9, 2015](#), accused of 'divulging state secrets; **UPDATE**: sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment)

Date: October 2016

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/05/guizhou-officials-levy-7-million-yuan.html>

Pastor Chen Shixin (arrested on [April 12, 2017](#) and charged with 'damaging forestry resources'; **UPDATE**: arrest formalized)

Date: May 18, 2017

Location: Lieshan District, Huaibei, Anhui province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/06/officials-arrest-pastor-detained-on.html>



Egypt

Fr Boulos al-Samuely (commented on the recent terror attack “I never imagined that this would happen to us, that I would see this day. Why do they do this to people, some of them children, going on an excursion?...We would chose Christ, if we were made to choose between him and death. But the right to life is a gift from God. It is only He who can decide to reclaim it, not just anybody. That is why people must know that Christianity loves life. I am a monk, which means I am not captured by life and its pleasures. However my feelings for my family do not die, because a monk without feelings is dead.

This is why we all called to reassure our families we are alright. We did this, even though we are monks. Can you imagine how those whose children went on this trip, and died and who will not return again must feel? Christians must know that Christianity orders us to be always ready to go to heaven. But this readiness does not mean we don't want life")

Date reported: May 29, 2017

Location: St. Samuel Monastery, Minya province

Source: <https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/05/29/the-st-samuel-monastery-death-on-the-road-to-a-life-giving-monastery/>

Julia Ibrahim (child, survived the attack on the religious pilgrims, said "We refused to become Muslims, so they shoot us!")

Date: May 26, 2017

Location: Anba Samuel Monastery, Minya province

Source: <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/survivor-julia-ibrahim-speaks-on-coptic-bus-attack/>

Miled Salama (attorney, said "I lost my voice while shouting on the phone for the police to come to the scene of the shooting [of the pilgrims]...I arrived well before the police after my family informed me that they had been shot...The security forces are neglecting us")

Date: May 26, 2017

Location: Anba Samuel Monastery, Minya province

Source: <https://international.la-croix.com/news/soft-egyptian-security-policies-put-christians-under-threat/5284>

and <https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/06/03/soft-egyptian-security-policies-put-christians-under-threat/>

and <http://www.aina.org/news/20170602121818.htm>



Eritrea

Tedro Negel (newlywed husband, arrested along with his wife and 47 others at a Hamauti [a celebration one week after the wedding which includes prayer])

Date: May 21, 2017

Location: outside Asmara

Patriarch Abune Antonios (disappeared in 2007, reportedly detained by the government in a darkened room, health declining, diabetic condition requires medical attention;

UPDATE: has passed 10 years' in house arrest)

Date: May 27, 2017

Location: Asmara

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/05/100-christians-detained-10-years-after-eritrea-put-patriarch-under-house-arrest/>



India

Dr John Dayal (**UPDATE**: reported on the state seizure of 71 young teens on their way to a summer Bible camp on the grounds that their families had not legally converted to Christianity, said “The traumatization of these tribal and Dalit children from the villages of western Madhya Pradesh is symptomatic of the paranoia and targeted hate that is currently sweeping across north India. No laws were broken by anyone in this instance, as indeed in incidents of anti-Christian violence in recent weeks. These are Christian children going to a summer camp in Nagpur. The involvement of the police and local civil authorities needs closer study apart from rampant impunity and turning a blind eye to [Hindu nationalist] violence, the law and order institutions have been heavily infiltrated and radicalized under almost 15 years of Bharatiya Janata Party rule in Madhya Pradesh. [The government should give] a categorical assurance, in clear language, that targeting of Christians of all denominations will stop forthwith and district police and administrative heads will be held personally responsible”)

Dates: May 21 & 22, 2017

Location: Nagpur, Madhya Pradesh state

Source: <https://cruxnow.com/global-church/2017/05/30/christian-children-detained-india-state-claims-hindu-law/>



Indonesia

Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama aka Ahok (husband of Veronica Tan, sentenced on [May 9, 2017](#) to 2 years' imprisonment on blasphemy charges despite the court ruling there was no evidence of guilt and the prosecutorial recommendation of a suspended sentence, detained, said he will appeal; **UPDATE**: withdrew his appeal after the prosecution filed its own appeal of the sentence, issued a statement asking his supporters to stop demonstrating for his release “I know this is not easy for you to accept this reality, let alone me, but I have learned to forgive and accept all this”, added that demonstrations would cause “great losses, in the form of traffic congestion and economic losses resulting from the rallies...It’s not right to hold rallies against each other over what I’m experiencing now. I’m concerned that many sides will exploit the rallies. There may be clashes with those who take issue with our struggle”)

Veronica Tan (wife of Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama aka Ahok, read her husband's statement at a press conference)

Date: May 23, 2017

Location: Jakarta

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/05/jakartas-christian-ex-governor-drops-blasphemy-appeal-sake-people/>

Yohanes Bao Keraf (church security leader, said after two suicide bombings at a bus terminal
“There is a feeling of fear...we are coordinating with police on heightened security
measures”)

Date: May 24, 2017

Location: Jakarta

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/05/indonesias-social-and-political-fabric-stretched-as-bombs-hit-jakarta/>

Event: Christians fear the success of the Philippine military offensive against Islamic militants will force the militants into their country

Fr Steven Lalu (said "The close proximity to the Philippines has raised anxiety...We asked people to look out for people who are not known entering the community. The church always coordinates with security")

Date: May 30, 2017

Location: Manado, Sulawesi

Boy Pangemanan (parish council member, said "Do not let these groups come and harm us. Terrorist are the enemy of all people from all religious backgrounds")

Date: May 30, 2017

Location: Pineleng, Sulawesi

Rev Emmy Situmorang Milos (said "We always work with security officers to check on new and suspicious looking people")

Date: May 30, 2017

Location: Minahasa, Sulawesi

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/indonesian-christians-fear-philippine-violence-spillover/79368>



Malaysia

Susanna Liew (aged 61, wife of Raymond Koh Keng Joo, mother of Jonathan Koh; **UPDATE:** issued a statement that read “What my children and I want most of all is the release of my husband, safe and sound; and for his abductors and their accomplices to be brought to justice...[My husband was] forcibly pulled out of his car against his will [while] other abductors directed traffic and filmed the abduction. The entire abduction took less than 60 seconds and reflected a professional precision and efficiency not usually seen in conventional kidnappings in Malaysia...Despite public speculation and suspicion against the authorities, up to 6 April [2017], I still appealed to Malaysians to give the police space to conduct their investigations. However, this trust in them has been in vain. I was shocked and disappointed when I read the IGP’s [Inspector General of Police’s] words as quoted [in the local newspaper] Berita Harian. The victim is now being investigated [for

alleged preaching to Muslims]’ How will this help find him and bring his abductors to justice?’”)

Date: May 23, 2017

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/05/wife-of-abducted-malaysian-pastor-why-are-police-investigating-him-rather-than-looking-for-him/>



Pakistan

Maria Bibi (aged 14, daughter of Ashraf Masih and Bushra Bibi, abducted at gunpoint and raped by 4 men, forced into an Islamic marriage; unable to defend herself when presented in court)

Bushra Bibi (widow of Ashraf Masih, mother of Maria Bibi)

Taimoor (aged 10, sibling of Maria Bibi)

Hanooq (aged 8, sibling of Maria Bibi)

Kiran (aged 5, sibling of Maria Bibi)

Dates: April 20 and 26, 2017

Location: Tehsil Bure Wala village, Vehari district, Punjab province

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6470>

Muqadas Sukhraj (student, niece of Munir Nasir, said of efforts to pressure her to take Islamic studies: "class teacher, Zahida Parveen unnecessarily began creating problems for me and expressing her displeasure with me because I chose Ethics. First, the teacher argued over the textbook of the Ethics class. Then she sent me out of the class as punishment. Later, she told me that if I could not study Islamic education, then why do I study in a Muslim school in the first place? She even told me, that, when she comes into the class, I must leave")

Munir Nasir (uncle of Muqadas Sukhraj, municipal councillor, wrote to the school administration that his niece's teacher also told Muslim students not to eat or drink with her "Rather than addressing the matter, Sukhraj was shifted to evening classes", received no answer)

Date: early April 2017

Location: Attock

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/05/pakistani-christian-schoolgirl-told-do-islamic-studies-instead-of-ethics-or-leave-this-school/>



Philippines

Fr Teresito 'Chito' Suganob (abducted by Islamic militants along with 13 parishioners, cathedral burned, 9 other Christians shot dead)

Date: May 23, 2017

Location: Marawi, Mindanao

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/cardinal-pleads-for-islamist-militants-to-release-philippines-hostages-21603/>

and <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/05/terrorists-linked-islamic-state-abduct-priest-attack-mindanao-philippines/>



Thailand

Ijaz Paras Masih (aged 36, husband of Shahida, father of Joel, Angel, and Smittha, Pakistani asylum applicant, detained on [June 6, 2016](#) for overstaying his visa; suffered a stroke while in custody on [October 22, 2016](#), hospitalized with partial paralysis, later returned to detention; **UPDATE: died in custody after undergoing mandatory physical exercise**)

Shahida (aged 33, Pakistani asylum applicant, widow of Ijaz Paras Masih)

Joel (aged 11, Pakistani asylum applicant, son of Ijaz Paras Masih)

Angel (aged 8, Pakistani asylum applicant, daughter of Ijaz Paras Masih)

Smittha (aged 18 months, Pakistani asylum applicant, child of Ijaz Paras Masih)

Date: May 27, 2017

Location: Bangkok

Source: <http://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/34-y-o-man-dies-from-neglect-in-thailands-brutal-ide>



Ukraine

Archpriest Sergei Taran (removed his vestments and used them to cover an icon during a religions procession when it was attacked by radicals)

Date: July 2016

Location: near Boryspil

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/103963.htm>



United States - District of Columbia

Mary Hassan (attorney, wrote of new Illinois Department of Children and Family Services policies that will require Christian social workers who adhere to traditional teachings on gender to be fired)

Date: May 30, 2017

Source: <http://thefederalist.com/2017/05/30/illinois-purges-social-workers-foster-families-dont-facilitate-transgenderism/>

United States - Michigan

Steve Tennes (farmer, has been banned from a farmer's market due to his Facebook posts in support of traditional marriage and refusal to host same sex weddings on his farm)

Date reported: June 1, 2017

Location: East Lansing

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/catholic-family-banned-from-farmers-market-for-christian-view-of-marriage>



Venezuela

Bishop Enrique Perez Lavado (said "The situation in the Country is dramatic, there is no food and people have reached the limit of tolerance. The attitude of closure of Nicolas Maduro's government only aggravates the context. The Bishops' Conference and Venezuelan Caritas continue to make proposals to establish an aid channel. Many Caritas from other countries, as well as other NGOs, are willing to help us by bringing medicines and food. However, the Government hampers any kind of intervention. I happened to see miles of people in a row to buy food. Hundreds of people are dying, including many chronically ill children")

Date: June 1, 2017

Location: Maturin

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/62384-AMERICA_VENEZUELA_Dramatic_situation_children_and_sick_people_die#.WTLANuvyuM8



Vietnam

Tran Thi Hong (wife of Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh [who has been serving 11 years in prison since 2011 for 'undermining national unity']; **UPDATE:** visited her husband in prison for 45 minutes with their four children, said "I was shocked when my husband said on May 11 that public security officials from Hanoi came to the camp and told him that I had

been unfaithful. The officials asked him 'don't you know anything about your wife?' and said 'she is committing adultery with a man. The communist government maliciously lied to separate our family and force my husband to accept his crimes as a condition for his freedom. He did not commit any crime. He is a victim of religious persecution. As a pastor, he only fought for the free religious practice of Christians from ethnic minority groups in the central highlands...I told him that we are God's children and we must trust each other. If you believe their vicious slander, you will fall into their trap. Be brave. People are working hard for you to be freed soon...I gave him food and medicine but the guards took his medicine and will only give it to him at irregular intervals")

Date: May 11, 2017

Location: Xuan Loc Prison, Dong Nai province

Pastor A Dao (sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment for 'illegally taking people to Thailand')

Date: April 28, 2017

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnam-officials-smear-jailed-pastors-wife/79363>

Today's Martyrs

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

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