

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2017-07-30 through 2017-08-05



China

Pastor Ma Ke (**UPDATE**: summoned to the police station, told that if his congregation did not join the government sanctioned Three-Self Patriotic Church then it would be subjected to 'extensive' government monitoring, refused on theological grounds, said they knew they were already monitored)

Date: July 26, 2017

Location: Guangzhou, Guangdong province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/07/ultimatum-forces-choice-of-truth-or.html>



Egypt

Helmy Demian (witness to his brothers' 2013 murder; **UPDATE**: victim of attempted murder by associates of his brothers' killer)

Date reported: August 1, 2017

Location: Sahil Salim village, Assiut province

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1950&A=31679>



Greece

Archimandrite Gregory Zumis (criticized the government for failing to repeal a 2012 law which imposed property taxes on monastic properties, wrote "We live on the Holy Mountain. Some of the monasteries on this sacred land have inherited fertile plains, but others—arid and barren mountain slopes. Thus, some of the monasteries [thank God!] can provide for themselves, but others struggle to survive, relying on people's charity")

Date reported: August 1, 2017

Location: Mt Athos

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/105510.htm>



India

Shibu Thomas (founder of Persecution Relief, which has been supporting at least five Christian families "whose bread-winners were killed just because of their Christian faith")

Bishop Jairag Mark (favored state recognition of Islamic school certificates: "Often their degree certificates are not recognized by employers, both private and state, leading to a denial of job opportunities. This adds to the backwardness of the community")

Date reported: August 1, 2017

Location: Jharkhand state

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-state-lacks-support-to-families-of-sectarian-violence/79895>

Cardinal Telesphore Toppo (**UPDATE:** criticized the state government for working to pass an anti-conversion law, said "Forced conversions do not exist. We are free people with a free will and a free conscience and intelligence. No one can force another to convert")

Date: August 1, 2017

Location: Ranchi, Jharkhand

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Jharkhand,-new-anti-conversion-law.-Card-Toppo:-There-are-no-forced-conversions-41440.html>

Event: A father-son pastoral team was attacked outside their church by five men belonging to the Hindu Makkal Katchi, a branch of the RSS paramilitary organization

Pastor Daniel Jebraj (aged 28, son of Pastor Muniyandi Elangoan Jebraj, attacked, suffered bruises and cuts, said "I told them this is not the right place for drinking and smoking activities. I was not aware they were waiting for me. They pulled out the weapons and attacked me. They were spewing very dangerous words – I can't say such words, they are highly derogatory and foul. My father came out running, and he too was beaten", added that an 18 year old Muslim named Mhamadhu Abdullah Barish ran to their aid but was later arrested: "The police falsely framed the boy to prevent exposing the case as Hindu extremist violence on Christians. Abdullah has no relation to this case. He heard our screams and came and tried to take us to the hospital. He did not beat us")

Pastor Muniyandi Elangoan Jebraj (aged 61, father of Pastor Daniel Jebraj, attacked, suffered a brain injury, hospitalized)

Date: July 19, 2017

Location: Thyagaraja Nagar, Sirkali area, Nagapattinam district, Tamil Nadu state

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/police-disingenuous-hindu-extremist-assault-pastors-tamil-nadu-india-sources-say/>



Iran

Maryam Naghash-Zargaran aka Nasim (aged 39, began serving four years imprisonment on [July 15, 2013](#), apparently has had a heart attack in Evin prison in [Tehran](#), transferred to Modares hospital on [September 29, 2013](#), condition unknown;

subjected to an extremely invasive and public strip search upon returning to [Evin prison in Tehran](#) on [November 12, 2014](#) after a four day furlough, health has been precarious;

granted a leave for medical treatment on [October 27, 2015](#), forced to return to [Evin Prison](#) on [October 27, 2015](#) midway through her treatment;

as of [May 21, 2016](#) has continued to endure significant medical problems in prison, currently has nausea and pain in her ear, has been told to not move her head for two weeks, may require surgery, also suffers from spinal pain;

has begun a hunger strike in an attempt to force prison authorities to give her proper medical treatment, is said to be nearly comatose;

has been granted a medical leave, hospitalized on [June 6, 2016](#);

forced to return to prison on [June 18, 2016](#) against medical advice;

as of [July 11, 2016](#) has again begun a hunger strike to force prison officials to grant her a medical leave;

ended her hunger strike on [July 31, 2016](#) after prison officials said she would receive better medical attention;

released from [Evin prison](#) on medical leave on [August 28, 2016](#);

hospitalized, reported on [September 16, 2016](#) to have been ordered to return to prison by the prosecutor's office, is currently physically unable to comply;

sent back to prison on [September 17, 2016](#), needed medical treatment terminated;

returned to prison after a 5 day medical leave was extended due to her plea for conditional release, sentenced on [December 6, 2016](#) to 45 days' additional imprisonment due to the court extension on her leave;

health has taken a turn for the worse as of [March 24, 2017](#), medical treatment denied;

reported on [June 13, 2017](#) to have been beaten by another inmate within the previous week, foot injured; denied medical treatment;

UPDATE: released from prison, sentence completed)

Date: August 1, 2017

Location: Evin prison, Tehran

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/08/iranian-christian-maryam-naghash-zargaran-released-four-years-prison/>



Mexico

Fr Jose Miguel Angel Machorro Alcala (aged 55, stabbed three times in the neck and torso while finishing Mass on [May 15, 2017](#) at the [Mexico City](#) cathedral altar, hospitalized in serious condition; **UPDATE: died**)

Date: [August 3, 2017](#)

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/08/03/priest-attacked-while-celebrating-mass-in-mexico-cathedral-dies-in-hospital/>



Nigeria

Governor Willie Obiano (attended a Mass that was disrupted by supporters of Biafran independence)

Date reported: [July 31, 2017](#)

Location: Ekwulobia, Aguata local government area, Anambra state

Source: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/07/ipob-members-storm-church-protest-obiano/>



Philippines

Event: Church leaders criticized President Duterte for his plan to abolish the Commission on Human Rights

Bishop Arturo Bastes (**UPDATE:** said "My God, Duterte is getting out of his mind!...his desire to abolish CHR is a sign that he has the dangerous tendency to be a dictator. Heavens forbid!")

Bishop Emeritus Teodoro Bacani (said that the CHR was "created and protected" by the constitution and be abolished only by a constitutional amendment, called for prayer that Duterte would recover his "good sense")

Date reported: [July 30, 2017](#)

Source: <http://www.ecumenicalnews.com/article/dutertes-plan-to-scrap-philippine-rights-body-angers-some-catholic-bishops/60388.htm>

Fr Teresito 'Chito' Suganob (aged 57, abducted by Islamic militants along with 13 parishioners in [Marawi, Mindanao](#) on [May 23, 2017](#), cathedral burned, 9 other Christians shot dead; **UPDATE:** still in captivity)

Date: [August 1, 2017](#)

Location: unknown

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/filipino-priest-held-captive-in-marawi-turns-57/79888>



Russia

Archpriest Alexander Novopashin (described vandalism of a statue of Tsar Nicholas II's son Alexei at his cathedral)

Date: August 1, 2017

Location: Novosibirsk

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/105513.htm>

Event: Russians protested the film *Mathilde*, which described an extramarital relationship between Tsar Nicholas II and a ballerina

Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev (**UPDATE**: called the film "vulgar")

Bishop Tikhon Shevkunov (said “Why do they make audiences believe in the historicity of these contrived heartbreaking scenes of a ‘love triangle’ in which Nicholas, both before and after marriage, is melodramatically torn between Mathilde and Alexandra?”)

Fr Evlogy (wrote in favor of the Duma banning the film: “We wholeheartedly support you and share your attitude to the project, which dishonors the memory of the holy Royal Martyrs...We cannot characterize this film other than as a mockery of the sensibilities of the faithful”)

Vladmir Legoyda (church spokesman, wrote against banning the film “I can understand what many do not like in the director’s idea... However, I consider the centralized collection of signatures in parishes of the diocese to ban the film to be a mistake”)

Andrei Kormukhin (member of the church youth group Forty Times Forty, led pickets at government agencies and movie studios which called for the film to be banned)

Date: July 28, 2017

Locations: Moscow, St Petersburg, Mt Athos [Greece]

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/105489.htm>



Sudan

Archbishop Ezekiel Kumir Kondo Kuku (**UPDATE**: installed as Primate of the Anglican Church)

Date: July 29, 2017

Location: Khartoum

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/07/archbishop-of-canterbury-speaks-strongly-to-sudan-president-of-religious-freedom-for-christians/>



United Kingdom

Aisleen Hubert (aged 24, as of [October 27, 2014](#) had brought a private prosecution against 3 doctors implicated in illegal gender-selection abortions after Crown prosecutors refused to prosecute; Crown prosecutors announced on [March 13, 2015](#) that they would take over and then drop the prosecutions as 'not in the public interest', have refused to release her video recordings of the doctors agreeing to abort females, which is a crime under UK law; ordered on [January 17, 2017](#) to pay court costs totaling £36,000 - US\$44,555 by August 18, 2017; **UPDATE:** has filed an appeal with the European Court of Human Rights, claimed that UK law clearly states that private prosecutions are to be paid for by the government unless found to be frivolous)

Date reported: July 28, 2017

Location: Strasbourg, France

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/abortion/christian-legal-centre-files-new-case-to-the-european-court-of-human-rights>

Bishop Mark Davies (**UPDATE:** commented on the government's new anti-extremism policies and public polling that showed one out of three Britons thought Christianity was extremist: "There is a destructive extremism we ought to fear, one which seeks not only to deconstruct marriage and the family, but the very identity of the human person, which calls for medical experimentation with no reference to ethical boundaries, that decrees the unborn may live only to terms fixed by man, and demands legal protections be removed from the sick and the aged. It is such extremism which surely threatens the foundations of society...It is even possible that the very faith in Christ on which our nation was built might become a focus of the Government's counter-extremism agenda")

Date reported: August 1, 2017

Location: Lourdes, France

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/08/01/bishop-of-shrewsbury-christians-could-be-victims-of-new-anti-extremism-strategy/>

Event: A newly ordained priest and seminarians were denied entry to a pub because they were wearing clerical garb, a manager reversed the denial and paid for a round of drinks

Fr Peter McClaren (widower of Marie, newly ordained)

Deacon Nicholas Williams (seminarian)

Deacon Robert James (seminarian)

Elliot Hanson (seminarian)

Dale Cutlan (seminarian)

Date: July 29, 2017

Location: Cardiff, Wales

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/08/01/priests-told-to-leave-pub-because-staff-thought-they-were-a-stag-do/>
and <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/welsh-seminarians-mistaken-for-bachelor-party-nearly-kicked-out-of-pub-89124/>



United States - Alabama

Judge Shaunathan Bell (decision to not recuse himself in a child custody case involving a homosexual parent upheld by an appellate court, the court ruled that his previous rulings demonstrated he was unbiased)

Date: July 28, 2017

Location: Montgomery

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/lesbian-mom-loses-effort-to-have-christian-judge-removed-from-divorce-case-193975/>

United States - Wisconsin

Amy Lawson (photographer, in 2016 posted on her web site that she could not photograph same sex weddings; **UPDATE**: court ruled that anti-discrimination laws did not apply to her because she had no storefront and because artistic expression was protected speech)

Date: August 1, 2017

Location: Madison

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/wisconsin-cant-force-christian-photographer-to-work-gay-weddings-court-announces-194122/>



Venezuela

Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino (**UPDATE**: condemned the shooting of demonstrators who opposed the government's attempt to nullify the constitution via a fraudulent election of a 'Constituent Assembly', said "In the name of God, stop the repression!...there are citizens who were murdered and wounded by Venezuelan military personnel and, presumably, by armed forces that act illegally and criminally. This is totally intolerable and cries out to heaven")

Date: August 2, 2017

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/venezuelan-cardinal-warns-president-maduro-over-deaths-of-protestors-44679/>



Vietnam

Rev Nguyen Trung Ton (abducted at the airport near [Ba Don, Quang Binh province](#) by undercover security men in [late February 2017](#), stripped, beaten, robbed; **UPDATE:** arrested on subversion charges)

Date: [July 30, 2017](#)

Location: Thanh Hoa province

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnam-arrests-four-rights-activists-for-subversion/79887>

Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh (husband of Tran Thi Hong, on [July 31, 2012](#) an appellate court in [Gia Lai](#) upheld his sentence of 11 years for "undermining unity";

as of [September 26, 2013](#) police are preventing his wife and children from leaving their home to visit him;

showed signs of having been beaten by inmates during the an [October 15, 2013](#) visit in prison with his wife, said repeatedly that his life was in danger;

has suffered from high blood pressure and sinusitis, on [August 17, 2016](#) was allowed a visit in prison with his wife who later said "He was too weak to walk and officers had to help him into the meeting room...I give him medicine but officers dispense it irregularly"

reported on [October 12, 2016](#) to have been fed food and water contaminated with ground glass, lead, insecticide, and dead flies along with three other Christians in [Phuoc Co jail, Vung Tau](#);

transferred to [Xuan Loc Prison, Dong Nai province](#) on [December 12, 2016](#), family not notified;

confined to a cramped punishment cell after telling U.S. diplomats on [May 25, 2017](#) about the mistreatment he has suffered;

UPDATE: freed from prison, exiled to the United States with his wife and five children)

Tran Thi Hong (wife of Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh, taken from her home by police on [April 14, 2016](#) after she refused to answer questions concerning her [March 30, 2016](#) conversation with U.S. diplomats, beaten at the police station in [Pleiku, Gia Lai province](#), returned and dumped unconscious in the road in front of her home;

forced by police to attend a meeting at the People's Committee Office on [May 11, 2016](#);

held to the ground on [May 12, 2016](#) by four policewomen who repeatedly pinched her;

taken by police at 6 AM on [May 13, 2016](#) along with her 18 year old son [leaving her other children unattended], abused for 3 hours which including having chopsticks forced into her mouth, released, her son was released later that day;

UPDATE: exiled to the United States with her husband and five children)

Date: [July 28, 2017](#)

Source [with photo]: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnam-frees-kicks-out-ailing-lutheran-pastor-and-family/79874>

Today's Martyrs

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

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