

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2017-08-27 through 2017-09-02



### Australia

Mike (aged 30, assaulted on a train by four Muslim men who ripped off his cross and stomped on it while saying "F\*\*\* Jesus", punched and kicked in the face, back and shoulders, girlfriend hit and kicked by two Muslim women, five uniformed transit officers watched but did nothing other than to call police who met the train at the next stop where they took statements, said "I've always worn my cross. For him to rip it off and step on it has to be a religious crime")

Rev George Capsis (has warned Christians to not wear religious symbols in Muslim enclaves, said: "This is not an isolated incident. There are gangs of these young fellows of Muslim background who have been harassing people they identify as Christian...You don't hear about it because no one's reporting it")

Date: April 4, 2017

Location: Bankstown

Source: <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/rendezview/we-rush-to-condemn-islamophobia-what-about-antichristian-attacks/news-story/2bb6f9a158146e963355a6da3adbe70a>



### 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, released with time served; acquitted on appeal by the Supreme Court on February 8, 2017; **UPDATE**: awarded US\$5,742 in damages against the government)

Valida Jabrayilova (aged 41, same case as Irina Zakharchenko; **UPDATE**: awarded US\$4,832 in damages against the government)

Date: August 8, 2017

Location: Baku

Source: [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2309](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2309)



## Brazil

Fr Pedro Gomes Bezerra (aged 49, **stabbed to death** in his ransacked home)

Date: August 24, 2017

Location: Borborema, Paraiba state

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/brazilian-priest-found-stabbed-to-death-in-his-home-11065/>



## China

### Event: Church members filed applications for administrative review of a US\$7m fine

Li Guozhi aka Yang Hua (husband of Wang Hongwu, incarcerated since [December 9, 2015](#);

**UPDATE:** administrative review application accepted on the condition that certain documents are added, claimed he personally never handled the church's finances)

Su Tianfu (**UPDATE:** said “The so-called illegal income is ridiculous. We don’t have the so-called illegal income. The church was banned. The church’s money was depleted [by the government]. How can we possibly take out 7 million yuan? Why impose the church’s expenses on us? We don’t own the donation money. It is absurd. The accusations and excuses do not hold up. We all know that it is religious persecution”)

Wang Hongwu (wife of Li Guozhi; **UPDATE:** said “I know that the verdict will not be optimistic for us. There’s no way that the [religious affairs bureau] would accept the lawyer’s proposal for an administrative review, but we’ve done what we can”)

Date: August 24, 2017

Location: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/08/pastors-submit-administrative-review.html>

Pastor Xu Shizhen (received notice from officers to stop public preaching, said she will not comply: “The government doesn’t allow me to spread the Gospel. I’ve been doing missionary work for 38 years in Xianning. I established the local churches. They said that my current church was not registered, and that we could not do that. They visited twice, at 11 AM and 7:30 PM. They told me that [my preaching] violated the Regulation on Religious Affairs, because I wasn’t registered. They also said that the certifications that could prove my clerical status had expired...I left [the official church] after I established Hongqiao Church. [The officer] asked me why I refused to accept the inspection of the bureau, and I told him that it was because they had evicted me from the Three-Self Church. ‘I founded so many churches, yet you threw me out. I believe in Jesus Christ. I don’t believe in you”)

Pastor Xu Yuqing (received notice from officers to stop public preaching)

Date: August 23, 2017

Location: Xianning, Hubei province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/08/pastor-to-official-chinese-church-i.html>

Bishop Peter Ding Lingbin (denounced violence against parishioners and priests who have continued a prayer vigil to prevent demolition of a century old church [thugs shouted "Kill the priests first!"], some parishioners' automobiles were destroyed, diocesan web site and social media disabled by the government)

Fr Chen Jun (assaulted during a prayer vigil called to protect a century old church from demolition)

Cui Hewen (assaulted, suffered head injuries)

Fr Gao Binglong (assaulted)

Fr Ma Ning (assaulted)

Fr Shen Xuezhong (assaulted)

Date: August 29, 2017

Location: Wangcun village, Laodingshan township, Changzhi, Shanxi province

Source [with video]: [http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Vigil-continues-around-the-Changzhi-church-at-risk-of-expropriation-and-demolition-\(video\)-41647.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Vigil-continues-around-the-Changzhi-church-at-risk-of-expropriation-and-demolition-(video)-41647.html)

and <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/As-Catholics-keep-vigils-for-Changzhi-church,-social-media-and-diocese-website-are-blacked-out-41659.html>

and <http://www.ucanews.com/news/priests-laypeople-injured-defending-church-property-in-china/80137>



## Egypt

Hlim Hanna (police officer, **killed**)

Date reported: September 1, 2017

Location: Minya

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1973&A=32083>



## Greece

Metropolitan Nicholas of Fthiotida (said that the authorities “are subverting the spiritual foundations of society and trying to transform our eternal institutional values. Their end goal is the imposition of a secular status and godless state upon Orthodox Greece”, added that the authorities aim to “limit and weaken the Church” and expel it to the periphery of

public consciousness, under the pretext of protecting religious minorities whose rights are already guaranteed by the Greek constitution)

Date reported: September 1, 2017

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/106112.htm>



## India

Dorairaju (aged 63, convert, surrounded by twenty Hindus, accused of forced conversions, searched, escorted to the police station, released)

Date: August 26, 2017

Location: Kollamogru-Kalmakaru village

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Karnataka,-Pentecostal-Christian-accused-of-forced-conversions-41620.html>

Pastor Naresh Paul (commented on threats made after the conviction of a Hindu cleric on multiple sexual assault charges "On hearing about the conviction, followers of Guru Gurmeet rioted in Panchkula. 32 people were killed by fanatical zealots of the sect and an estimated 350 were injured with further riots expected. Rampagers smashed cars, homes and businesses and then set them alight. Christian leaders were warned about attacks on churches should Guru Gurmeet be convicted. The men who made the threats were very serious and extra Police protection was provided to religious buildings which prevented a crises. Christians are an easier target for hooligans like these who have previously targeted Sikhs and have a close link with the reigning Hindu fundamentalist BJP party. I call upon Christians across the world to pray for a restoration of peace in India and an end to the unnecessary violence we have seen in recent days")

Date reported: August 30, 2017

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-leaders-fearful-that-riots-led-by-backers-of-indian-guru-convicted-of-rape-places-them-in->

Ameya Jaal (aged 45, vacation Bible school volunteer, arrested in [Ratlam](#) on [May 21, 2017](#) on forced conversion charges; **UPDATE**: bail granted)

Alkesh Ganava (aged 27, vacation Bible school volunteer, arrested in [Ratlam](#) on [May 21, 2017](#) on forced conversion charges; **UPDATE**: bail granted)

Pandu Singh Vasuniya (aged 31, vacation Bible school volunteer, arrested in [Ratlam](#) on [May 21, 2017](#) on forced conversion charges; **UPDATE**: bail granted)

Nitin Mandod (aged 23, vacation Bible school volunteer, arrested in [Ratlam](#) on [May 21, 2017](#) on forced conversion charges; **UPDATE**: bail granted)

Lalu Babore (aged 28, husband of Sama Babore, vacation Bible school volunteer, arrested in [Ratlam](#) on [May 21, 2017](#) on forced conversion charges; **UPDATE**: bail granted)

Vijay Meda (aged 17, vacation Bible school volunteer, arrested in [Ratlam](#) on [May 21, 2017](#) on forced conversion charges; **UPDATE**: bail granted)

Pastor Hartesh Singh Gundia (**UPDATE:** said “This is an answer to prayer and my heart is filled with gratitude to God and to Christians everywhere...It’s like new day dawning for Christians in Jhabua, particularly for those families whose husbands spent more than three months of rigorous punishment in the jail just because they were going to attend a Christian children’s camp”)

Savita Buria (vacation Bible school volunteer, arrested in [Ratlam](#) on [May 21, 2017](#) on forced conversion charges; granted bail on [May 27, 2017](#); **UPDATE:** said “We did not get sufficient food in the jail and the reason they gave was that we are Christians and we do conversions...I cannot travel in the public mode of transportation as people recognize me as person who converts people into Christianity and they ridicule me, even abuse me”)

Sama Babore (wife of Lalu Babore, said “Our lives have been devastated and the survival of me and my children was an everyday challenge. I was cornered by my own extended family for going to church and also for the present crisis of my husband’s imprisonment. I was all alone and we didn’t have sufficient food to eat during the past three months”)

Date: August 24, 2017

Location: Indore, Madhya Pradesh state

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2017/08/29/christians-in-madhya-pradesh-remain-under-pressure-despite-six-prisoners-being-released-on-bail/>



## Iran

Ebrahim Firouzi (convert, aged 32, welder; **UPDATE:** hunger strike continued, health at risk)

Date: August 30, 2017

Location: Rajai Shahr Prison, Karaj

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6603>



## Iraq

Rana Behnam Issa (freed from ISIL captivity by the Iraqi military, returned to her family)

Date: August 28, 2017

Location: near Tel Afar

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/62821-ASIA\\_IRAQ\\_Even\\_a\\_Christian\\_among\\_former\\_jihadist\\_prisoners\\_freed\\_in\\_Tal\\_Afar#.WaV\\_CrKGOM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62821-ASIA_IRAQ_Even_a_Christian_among_former_jihadist_prisoners_freed_in_Tal_Afar#.WaV_CrKGOM8)

and <https://www.facebook.com/ThisIsChristianIraq/>



## Kazakhstan

Fr Vladimir Vorontsov (arrested on [August 2, 2017](#) at a Christian youth summer camp on charges of extremism, smuggling of religious literature, and illegal detention of minors; subjected to an [August 10, 2017](#) administrative trial with other priests as witnesses; **UPDATE:** acquitted, court ruled that the law regulating worship in unauthorized locations did not mention the outdoors)

Date: [August 23, 2017](#)

Location: Merke, Jambyl region

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Orthodox-priest-accused-of-praying-in-the-mountains-acquitted-41614.html>



## Malaysia

Pastor Raymond Koh Keng Joo (aged 62, husband of Susanna Liew, father of Jonathan Koh, questioned in [2011](#) for converting Muslims to Christianity, case dropped for lack of evidence; abducted by 5 armed and masked men in [Petaling Jaya](#) on [February 13, 2017](#), police initially refused to file a report despite witness accounts of the abduction; **UPDATE:** still missing)

Date: [August 25, 2017](#)

Source: <http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2017/08/25/200-days-and-still-no-sign-of-pastor-koh/>



## Nigeria

Baba Kale Dankali (aged 62, husband, father of Micah Kale, **shot dead**)

Micah Kale (aged 20, son of Baba Kale Dankali, **shot dead** after his cries over his murdered father were heard)

Date: [August 15, 2017](#)

Location: Tudun Wada, Kano state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/08/kano-nigeria-father-and-son-killed-three-women-and-a-baby-kidnapped/>



## Pakistan

Shahroon Mashi (ninth grade student, **beaten to death** by his Muslim fellow students)

Date reported: August 31, 2017

Location: Burewala district, Punjab province

Source: <https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/christian-student-of-9th-class-killed-by-his-muslim-school-fellow/>



## Russia

Yury Viktorovich Zalipayev (aged 54, under investigation for inciting hatred against clergy of another church)

Date: August 24, 2017

Location: Maysky, North Causasus

**Event:** Two Christians were investigated beginning in **April 2013** for 'incitement of hatred'; acquitted on **March 4, 2016**; acquittal overturned in **Moscow** on **March 26, 2016**; verdict reached on re-trial on **June 21, 2017** but not disclosed

Vyacheslav Yuryevich Stepanov (aged 40, acquittal announced on **June 23, 2017**; **UPDATE:** acquittal upheld after prosecutorial appeal)

Andrei Petrovich Sivak (aged 43, acquittal announced on **June 23, 2017**; **UPDATE:** acquittal upheld after prosecutorial appeal)

Date: August 24, 2017

Location: Sergiyev Posad, Moscow region

Dennis Ole Christensen (Danish citizen, husband of Irina, arrested on **May 25, 2017** for 'continuing the activities of a banned extremist organization', ordered held for 2 months pending trial; **UPDATE:** detention extended to November 23, 2017)

Date: July 20, 2017

Location: Oryol

Source: [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2310](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2310)

Evgeny Vorontsov (retreat center director, shot along with his assistant by three men with rubber bullets while at the retreat center, both hospitalized in satisfactory condition)

Date: August 28, 2017

Location: St Petersburg

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/106036.htm>



## South Sudan

Natalina Andrea Mabu (church coordinator, arrested after soldiers attending an UN human rights seminar were sickened by alleged food poisoning from a local hotel, 3 died, 57 were hospitalized)

Date reported: August 28, 2017

Location: Wau

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/62811->

[AFRICA SOUTH SUDAN The coordinator of Justice and Peace of the diocese of Wau arrested#.WaQc7j6GOM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62811-)



## Sudan

**Event: Seven Christian leaders were detained for six hours and then released, six others went into hiding**

Rev Ayoub Mattan

Pastor Kowa Shamal (**UPDATE:** said “Police asked if we still maintain our stance on our refusal to acknowledge the committee appointed by the Ministry of Guidance and Religious Endowments, and we said yes, because it is not the work of the [government] ministry to appoint committees for the church”)

Rev Yagoub Naway

Pastor Musa Kodi

Abdulbagi Ali Abdulrahman (church finance secretary)

El-Amin Hassam Abdulrasool (church deputy finance secretary)

Date: August 23, 2017

Location: Omdurman

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/pastors-arrested-sudan-government-moves-take-church/>



## Turkey

Andrew Brunson (U.S. citizen, husband of Norine Brunson, detained as a 'national security risk' in [Izmir](#) on [October 7, 2016](#), denied access to U.S. diplomats, attorneys, and fellow

parishioners; **UPDATE:** four new charges have been added by prosecutors including ‘gathering state secrets for espionage, attempting to overthrow the Turkish parliament and government, and to change the constitutional order’)

Date reported: August 25, 2017

Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/detained-u-s-minister-faces-new-charges-in-turkey-1503688846>

and <http://www.christianpost.com/news/us-pastor-andrew-brunson-faces-new-charges-attempting-overthrow-turkish-government-196941/>



## **Uganda**

Sophia Nakisaala (aged 35, convert, wife, mother of four, beaten by her husband for converting, fled her home with her children)

Date: August 10, 2017

Location: Bulopa village, Kamuli district

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/08/mother-uganda-beaten-driven-home-embracing-christianity/>



## **United States**

Senator Marco Rubio (attacked by an atheist group for tweeting 'unconstitutional' Bible passages)

Date reported: August 25, 2017

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/atheists-demand-pro-life-senator-stop-tweeting-bible-verses>

## **United States - California**

Shannon Fitzpatrick (wrote in an email to Catholic school authorities after the school removed its statues in deference to other faiths: “Articulating an inclusive foundation appears to mean letting go of San Domenico’s 167-year tradition as a Dominican Catholic school and being both afraid and ashamed to celebrate one’s heritage and beliefs”, the school has also stopped classes for catechism, First Communion, and Confirmation)

Date reported: August 29, 2017

Location: San Anselmo

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/californias-first-catholic-school-sparks-controversy-by-removing-statues-71228/>

Pastor Greg Laurie (church broken into by two naked men with a fake gun, no one else was present, minor damage found after they surrendered)

Date: August 30, 2017

Location: Irvine

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/2-naked-men-guns-arrested-inside-greg-lauries-harvest-megachurch-197475/>

### **United States - Ohio**

Fr Mikel Hill (church damaged in an arson attack)

Date: August 27, 2017

Location: Marlboro Township

Fr Ilie Nemes (church cross vandalized)

Date: August 27, 2017

Location: Alliance

Source: <http://www.the-review.com/local%20news/2017/08/28/two-orthodox-churches-victimized>

### **United States - New Hampshire**

Terry Rombot (Indonesian citizen, refugee, had fled Indonesia due to persecution, denied asylum, detained, held for deportation)

Date reported: August 26, 2017

Source: <http://www.christiandaily.com/article/trumps-deportation-crackdown-snags-christian-indonesians-in-new-hampshire/61007.htm>

### **United States - South Carolina**

Ann McFadden (Christian book store owner, mother of Vivian McFadden Worthy, shot in the leg while in the store allegedly by her son-in-law, hospitalized in stable condition)

Vivian McFadden Worthy (daughter of Ann McFadden, shot at in her mother's Christian bookstore allegedly by her husband, uninjured)

Date: August 28, 2017

Location: Chester

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-man-allegedly-shoots-mother-in-law-tries-killing-wife-inside-christian-bookstore-197063/>



### **Venezuela**

Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino (aged 75; **UPDATE**: submitted his resignation upon reaching retirement age)

Date: August 28, 2017

Location: Caracas

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/08/31/archbishop-of-caracas-submits-resignation-upon-reaching-75th-birthday/>

## **Today's Martyrs**

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

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