

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2017-09-10 through 2017-09-16



Bangladesh

Archbishop Moses M Costa (**UPDATE:** said “Last year a thousand Bengalis attacked a parish in Chittagong, because many miles away two business men had been killed and we Christians were accused of having had something to do with it...The government does not acknowledge their [i.e. minorities] rightful existence and ignores them, so that they have scarcely any possibility of development...[take shipbreaking for example:] This work is carried out in very hazardous conditions and claims innumerable human lives. But I am not permitted to visit this place, because the authorities have refused me permission”)

Date: September 12, 2017

Location: Chittagong

Source: <http://members4.boardhost.com/acnaus/msg/1505178316.html>



Canada

Mary Wagner (aged 43, arrested on [December 12, 2016](#) after entering the waiting room of an abortion clinic in an effort to persuade the clients to leave, refused to agree to bail conditions that required her to avoid entering abortion clinics; convicted of mischief and breach of probation on [August 15, 2017](#); **UPDATE:** released with time served, read letters to the court including one thanking her from a woman who she had persuaded to keep her baby on the day of her arrest)

Date: September 12, 2017

Location: Toronto

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/mom-tells-judge-my-baby-is-alive-because-of-mary-wagner>



China

Gao Zhisheng (aged 53, husband of Geng He, brother of Gao Zhiyi, reported on [November 15, 2016](#) to have disappeared after agents from Beijing arrived at his home in [Shaanxi province](#) and destroyed a copy of his new book, *Year 2017, Stand Up China*, which had been sent him from friends overseas; **UPDATE**: confirmed to be in police custody)

Geng He (wife of Gao Zhisheng, granted asylum in the U.S.; **UPDATE**: said “We finally made contact with the government. They said he has been brought back to Beijing”)

Date: [September 7, 2017](#)

Location: [Beijing](#)

Source: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/gao-police-09072017170316.html>

Pastor Wang Yi (**UPDATE**: detained while travelling to a Christian training conference in Hong Kong, released and sent home)

Jiang Rong (wife of a pastor, not detained while travelling to a Christian training conference in Hong Kong)

Date: [September 12, 2017](#)

Location: [Chengdu, Sichuan province](#)

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/09/pastor-detained-for-traveling-to.html>

Enoch (aged 22, convert, programmer, said his house church has remodeled its apartment "We are trying to look more like a family that are here to chat and drink tea so no one will report us to the police...I'm really afraid it will be shut down one day. At the state church, I felt like I was listening to a lecture. But at the family church, people know about each other and love each other", added that the church has divided its WeChat social media group into several smaller groups to be less noticeable to the police)

Date reported: [September 10, 2017](#)

Location: [Zhuhai, Guangdong province](#)

Source: <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2110433/chinas-underground-churches-head-cover-crackdown-closes>

Pastor Wei Zhelan (required to fill out an 'Underground Christian Church Key Staff [Leaders] Information Registration Form' with her personal information, commented on the government proposal to merge her church with an official church “It’s too far away. We can’t go there. I’m over 60 now, and I can’t go there. It’s dozens of miles away”)

Date: [September 9, 2017](#)

Location: [Xuzhou, Jiangsu province](#)

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/09/jiangsu-authorities-invoke-fear-with.html>

Li (said “Many Sunday schools in Wenzhou were shut down...Many teachers sent messages to their colleagues in group chats in order to prevent children from attending religious gatherings”)

Date reported: [September 14, 2017](#)

Location: [Wenzhou, Zhejiang province](#)

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/09/china-persecutes-christians-for.html>



Egypt

Marilyn Medhat (aged 16, daughter of Medhat Saad Edward and Hanaa Aziz Shukralla Farag, abducted; **UPDATE**: forced into an Islamic marriage)

Fr Boutros Khalaf (said "On Wednesday evening at 5pm, Marilyn disappeared. Her mother searched everywhere but couldn't find her. Some people told us that she had been kidnapped by a young man named Taha. He had taken her to a farm where he works...On August 14th, the prosecution dropped Marilyn's case. We've done everything we could to get our girl back. We even sent a complaint to President Sisi, the Interior Minister and many other important people. Her family lives in bitterness and pain, and we don't know what to do anymore. We just don't know... There is also a state of terror, panic and fear among all the Christians in our village. They worry about their children. No father will allow his daughter to walk on the street alone anymore. He goes with her or sends her mother or brother to accompany her")

Medhat Saad Edward (father of Marilyn Medhat, said "I filed a report in two police stations, and I gave the names of the kidnapers and the place where they hid my daughter. But the police haven't arrested them")

Hanaa Aziz Shukralla Farag (mother of Marilyn Medhat, said of the video in which her daughter announced her conversion to Islam "She was holding the Quran as if she was holding a medal. I see she is under pressure. My daughter is a minor and doesn't know anything, why aren't the authorities doing anything to help her?")

Date: June 28, 2017

Location: Balansora village, Minya province

Neveen Adly Beshai Sawiris (aged 15, abducted while walking on a public street, pushed into a car by 3 men, forced into an Islamic marriage)

Date: June 27, 2017

Location: Cairo

Fr 'S' (said: "Because I advocate for these girls, I received threats. If I wouldn't stop, they would take my daughter too. But I fear no one, only God. Their threats weren't going to stop me", during the 2011 attempted abduction of his daughter he fired his gun in the air: "The kidnapers got scared and ran away", added that he has recovered only 8 girls of the approximately 150 abducted in his area in the last 10 years "Every girl who doesn't return feels like a daughter I am losing...We are one Body. If one suffers, we all do...But I believe my God is a God of miracles. We pray for these girls in church, while our tears flow. I pray also for their kidnapers, that God touches their hearts")

Date: September 14, 2017

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/09/egypt-ex-kidnapper-admits-get-paid-every-copt-christian-girl-bring/>

Fr Daniel Babawy (celebrated the Divine Liturgy after security forces allowed the reopening of his church under guard, some local Muslims offered congratulations)

Date: September 10, 2017

Location: Ezbat Al-Forn village, Minya province

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/09/egypt-coptic-churches-closed-security-reopen/>



Eritrea

Ruth (wife, mother of three, husband in prison for his faith, said “I always worry and wonder how he is. I also find it unbearable to see how my three young children miss him. They always cry for baba. They sometimes perform poorly in school because they miss him so much. It is so hard to care for them by myself”)

Date reported: September 15, 2017

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/09/eritrean-christian-single-mothers-isolation-church-leader-husband-imprisoned/>



India

Fr Cedric Prakash SJ (**UPDATE**: wrote following the assassination of writer and journalist Gauri Lankesh "Gauri represented the best of free and fearless India, respecting the rights of every citizen, celebrating pluralism and, above all, defending the highest values of democracy! Gauri had the courage to challenge the Sangh Parivar [the Hindu supremacist umbrella organization] and all sectarian people. She hated the caste system, struggled for the emancipation of women, fought for the poor and marginalized. Hers was an unstoppable crusade for the freedom of thought and expression. No one was spared when there was injustice in the center of the matter")

Date: September 1, 2017

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/'I-am-Gauri':-in-Bangalore,-15,000-demand-justice-for-the-murdered-journalist-41764.html>

Cardinal Telesphore P Toppo (**UPDATE**: burned in effigy at a BJP rally)

Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX (**UPDATE**: wrote a letter to Prime Minister Modi "I am making this appeal to you with much sorrow and anguish but also with hope. You must be aware of the recent happenings in Jharkhand, a State ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party. You might be aware that there is spiraling hatred being created by the Chief Minister [Governor] belonging to your Party, which if not controlled immediately, could take the State and its people down the streets of violence and hate...last night as I was about to go to bed, I received this frightening, disquieting and scary photo. A Christian youth from Jharkhand had sent it to me...Here is the burning of effigy of probably the most prominent and respected religious leader in Jharkhand. Cardinal Telesphore P.

Toppo, as you would be aware, is a non-controversial leader, respected not only in Christian circles but also in civil society and by Tribals and non-Tribals...History shows us that hatred which begins as a tiny spark can engulf into an unstoppable fire. As you know the burning of effigies can very well turn into physical violence...I appeal to you, honorable Prime Minister, with trust and hope to intervene and curb the spread of hate created by the Chief Minister of Jharkhand. Jharkhandis and Jharkhand deserves better. If the Chief Minister is unable to control his ideological hatred, then it is time for him to go")

Date reported: September 14, 2017

Location: Ranchi, Jharkhand state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Jharkhand,-Card.-Toppo-'in-flames'.-Msgr-Mascarenhas:-curb-the-hatred-of-the-chief-minister-41778.html>

Event UPDATE: Two pastors may face trial and a 10 year sentence for desecration of Hindu idols, the pastors claim "We are not suicidal" and that the evidence was fabricated

Pastor Bajinder (attacked and beaten by a mob of Hindus during a November 9, 2014 service, arrested, released 5 days later)

Pastor Sanjay (arrested on July 19, 2017 for his involvement in the alleged November 9, 2014 desecration despite the facts that he was not present and did not know Pastor Bajinder)

Date reported: September 8, 2017

Location: Karnal district, Haryana state

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/indian-pastors-call-for-prayers-to-exonerate-them-from-false-blasphemy-charge>



Israel

Bishop Attallah Hanna (aged 52; **UPDATE** spat upon and cursed by more than 20 Jewish extremists)

Date: September 13, 2017

Location: Jerusalem

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=1983&A=32259>



Nepal

Event: The government enacted a law banning religious conversions, which will go into effect in August 2018

Bishop Paul Simick (said "We did not expect that the country would curtail international practices since Nepal is a member of several treaties and conventions on human and religious rights...Now there is fear that charges will be levelled at priests, who do not ask anyone to convert but help people to conduct religious practices. There is the possibility that the right of priests to exercise their faith and duties will be curtailed")

Pastor Chari Bahadur Gahatraj (**UPDATE:** said "This code aims to control religious freedom and freedom of conversion...We strongly condemn such control in every form. Minorities were forced to follow traditional Hindu practices. But because of discrimination and oppression, people are interested in Christianity...We do not force anyone or ask them to change religion. They come to join us and we cannot deny them entry into the Christian community")

Rev Bharat Giri (said "This is a conspiracy against the increasing Christian population. But we will not stop our evangelical work, which is our priestly duty. God will defend us")

Date: [September 11, 2017](#)

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Nepal%E2%80%99s-new-criminal-code-punishes-all-religious-conversions-41746.html>



Nigeria

Bulus (aged 32, alias, convert, beaten, threatened with death, jailed on false allegations that he stole livestock from his family, said "I remembered that even Jesus, who didn't sin, suffered. He died a painful death on the Cross, alongside criminals. I realized I had to live as He did and take up my cross. From the moment I decided that, my burdens were lifted and I saw how God gave me enough strength for every day to preach the Good News also in prison")

Date reported: [September 11, 2017](#)

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/09/bulus-fulani-family-jailed-false-charges-hes-christian/>

Event: Twenty Christians were killed and six injured in a revenge attack after the alleged murder of a Muslim child

John Bulus (said "On Saturday, September 2, while we were working on our fields and farms, we saw the Fulanis moving their cattle and families out of their camp, a settlement that is just some few kilometers away from here. So we rushed to them to inquire why the sudden departure from camp. They responded by telling us that one of them was some time ago killed in another village 5 kilometers from our village, hence, their decision to move away...One of them ran after me into the house, and he stood by the door to my room without entering the room or shooting, and after a few minutes he went out to join his colleagues outside. And just as I was thinking about what to do, I heard sporadic gun shots all over the village. They were shooting everywhere in the village and this lasted for about 25 minutes")

Sati Ishaya (aged 9, killed)
Aveh Ishaya (aged 5, killed)
Azumi Monday (aged 3 months, killed)
Lami Monday (aged 3, killed)
Emmanuel Sunday (aged 6, killed)
Ishaya Sunday (aged 8, killed)
Friday John (aged 17, killed)
Ayo John (aged 10, killed)
Deba John (aged 7, killed)
Bulus Rohun (aged 50, killed)
Laraba Bulus (aged 45, killed)
Musa Ishaya (aged 21, killed)
Gado Odo (aged 75, killed)
Sei Musa (aged 19, killed)
Kande Ahmadu (aged 48, killed)
Ishaya Ahmadu (aged 40, killed)
Bala Ishaya (aged 18, killed)
Tina Monday (aged 20, killed)
Lami Ishaya (aged 40, killed)
Ahmadu Rohun (aged 80, killed)
Talatu Gado (aged 60, injured)
Mai'angwa Monday (aged 16, injured)
Talatu John (aged 46, injured)
Monday Ahmadu (aged 24, injured)
Vou Monday (aged 4, injured)
Tina Ahmadu (aged 28, injured)

Date: September 8, 2017

Location: Ancha village, Miango district, Bassa local government area, Plateau state

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/09/muslim-fulani-herdsmen-massacre-20-christians-plateau-state-nigeria/>

Fr Daniel Nwankwo (shot outside his church after Mass, hospitalized)

Date: September 8, 2017

Location: Ikeja, Lagos state

Source: <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-west/242739-catholic-priest-shot-lagos.html>



Pakistan

Mary James Gill (Member of the Provincial Assembly; **UPDATE**: criticized a government advertisement calling for people to not throw trash in the streets during a Christian religious festival since Christian sanitation workers would not be available to pick it up)

Date: September 10, 2017

Location: Lahore, Punjab province

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/christians-upset-over-controversial-pilgrimage-advert/80233>

James Nadeem (brother of Najma and Samreen, accused on or before **July 10, 2016** of sending a blasphemous poem via social media; arrested on **July 14, 2016**, case likely triggered by his marriage to a Muslim woman who converted to Christianity, the pastor who baptized his wife has fled into hiding; **UPDATE**: sentenced to death)

Date: September 14, 2017

Location: Lahore

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-man-sentenced-to-death-for-alleged-blasphemous-whats-app-message>



Philippines

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle (wrote in a pastoral letter stating "the country cannot be governed by violence...With pain and horror we continue to receive news of murders every day, largely victims of suspected drug dealers or drug addicts. We cannot allow the destruction of life to become an ordinary fact. We cannot rule the nation with homicides, this is not human", ordered all churches to ring their bells every night at 8 PM to remember those killed)

Fr Benjamin Alforque SCJ (contrasted the extrajudicial killings with the government's acceptance of the wealth of the Marcos family "The Marcoses get the red carpet while the government deprives drug suspects of due process")

Date: September 10, 2017

Location: Manila

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/church-leaders-criticize-dutertes-stance-on-marcos-heirs/80215>

Fr Albert Alejo SJ (**UPDATE:** said "In the so-called crusade against drugs launched by President Duterte, extrajudicial killings continue at a pace of about a thousand per month. The poor are those most affected. To understand the seriousness of the phenomenon, one must bear in mind that under the dictatorship of Marcos, one of the darkest periods of national history, there were 250 a year. We have a serial killer president and the state is becoming a state-killer. As Christians we cannot remain indifferent")

Date: September 11, 2017

Location: Manila

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/62893-ASIA PHILIPPINES Catholic leaders you cannot rule the country with murders#.Wbff8rKGOM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62893-ASIA_PHILIPPINES_Catholic_leaders_you_cannot_rule_the_country_with_murders#.Wbff8rKGOM8)

Bishop Pablo Virgilio David (**UPDATE:** threatened with arrest for obstruction of justice for hiding 2 children who witnessed the extrajudicial murder of a criminal by police)

Date: September 11, 2017

Location: Caloocan

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/scared-drug-war-witnesses-seek-church-protection/80230>

Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Soncuaco Pabillo (**UPDATE:** said "Any person who is said to be a drug suspect in the eyes of the government must have an opportunity to defend themselves in a right and lawful court with due process, accessing the judicial system. The government cannot apprehend people without proper investigation and facts... The Philippine government has no moral responsibility nor political right to kill people on the basis of mere suspicions. What about people's inalienable human right to defend their position with due process?...The government's relentless war against drug is nothing but extra-judicial killing, which is uncalled for. It is nothing but an 'abuse of power'")

Date: September 12, 2017

Location: Manila

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Duterte%E2%80%99s-war-on-drugs-is-unjustified,-says-Mgr-Pabillo-41763.html>



United Kingdom

Sally Rowe (wife of Nigel Rowe, told that her six year old son could be disciplined if he could not accept the transgender change of a classmate, in reply said that the school's promotion of gender theory was psychologically damaging of the other students and therefore constituted abuse under the law)

Nigel Rowe (husband of Sally Rowe, said "I cannot contemplate my six-year-old son being disciplined and stigmatized as a bully simply because he believes that another six-year old born as a boy, is actually a boy...the school's behavior has created a direct clash between our family's beliefs, and the imposition of this new ideology. We, and our

children, are being bullied into accepting a new moral framework which strongly conflicts with what we really believe")

Date reported: September 12, 2017

Location: Isle of Wright

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/education/parents-to-challenge-church-schools-transgender-policy>



United States - Kentucky

Ruthie Carolyn New (aged 70, widow of Pastor J S New, mother of Jonathan New and Richard New, **murdered** in her church)

Pastor Jeff Griffith (said "She supported me, supported the new pastor, supported my wife. She was 100 percent a Christian lady")

Jonathan New (son of Ruthie Carolyn New)

Date: August 24, 2017

Location: Somerset

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/man-confesses-to-murder-of-70-y-o-widow-who-was-found-dead-inside-church-199192/>

United States - Michigan

Carrie DeKlyen (aged 37, wife of Nick DeKlyen, mother of six, **died of brain cancer**, had decided against aggressive treatments due to pregnancy)

Nick DeKlyen (husband of Carrie DeKlyen, father of six, said "We love the Lord with everything in us. We talked about it, prayed about it...Under no circumstance do we believe you should take a child's life. She sacrificed her life for the child")

Life Lynn DeKlyen (newborn daughter of Carrie and Nick DeKlyen)

Date: September 9, 2017

Source: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/faith-helped-couple-choose-baby-over-chemotherapy-treatment-93100/>



Vietnam

Br Stanislas Tran Minh Vong OSB (aged 81; **UPDATE**: said the current drought has led his fellow monks to again ask the government to return a seized reservoir to their monastery "We are very worried about our orange gardens that are in danger because water supplies have become scarce")

Date: September 15, 2017

Location: Thua Thien Hue province

Source: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/scarce-water-threatens-benedictines-livelihood/80231>



Yemen

Fr Tom Uzhunnalil SDB (aged 57, Indian citizen, abducted when armed men attacked a nursing home in [Aden](#) on [March 4, 2016](#), killing 16 employees and residents including 4 nuns;
UPDATE: freed from captivity, has left the country)

Date: September 12, 2017

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Fr.-Tom-Uzhunnalil-is-freed-41761.html>

Today's Martyrs

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

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