

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2017-10-01 through 2017-10-07



### Australia

Archbishop Julian Porteous (**UPDATE**: warned of a “direct challenge to freedom of speech” after two venues cancelled scheduled meetings by supporters of traditional marriage)

Senator Cory Bernardi (**UPDATE**: had planned to speak in support of traditional marriage)

Kevin Andrews (Member of Parliament, had planned to speak in support of traditional marriage)

Lyle Shelton (Australian Christian Lobby managing director, had planned to speak in support of traditional marriage)

Marijke Rancie (blogger, had planned to speak in support of traditional marriage)

Date reported: October 4, 2017

Location: Hobart, Tasmania

Source: <http://ilsismografo.blogspot.com/2017/10/australia-freedom-of-speech-challenged.html>



### China

Bai Fengju (farmer, land seized on [June 5, 2016](#) in an attempt to build 'temples'; **UPDATE**: threatened with death along with his family for harvesting peanuts on his land)

Date: [September 21, 2017](#)

Location: Nanyang, Henan province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/09/christian-family-threatened-with-death.html>

Josiah Chok Kin-ming (former equal opportunities officer, removed from his position in [August 2014](#) after telling fellow church members how to legally resist the homosexual rights movement, denied financial compensation when he refused to apologize for his talk at his church; court ruled in his favor in [2015](#), ordered that the compensation be paid; High Court in [March 2017](#) accepted the appeal of his former employer and ordered a retrial; **UPDATE**: 2015 ruling overturned at retrial, denied compensation, ordered to pay US\$1,260 in court costs)

Date: [September 28, 2017](#)

Location: Hong Kong

Source: <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-crime/article/2113277/former-hong-kong-eoc-official-loses-gratuity-fee-retrial>

Pastor Xu Shizhen (mother of Xu Yuqing, grandmother of Xu Shouwang, received notice on [August 23, 2017](#) from officers to stop public preaching, said she will not comply;  
**UPDATE:** detained)

Xu Yuqing (mother of Xu Shouwang, daughter of Pastor Xu Shizhen, detained)

Xu Shouwang (aged 3, son of Xu Yuqing, grandson of Pastor Xu Shizhen, detained)

Date: September 22, 2017

Location: Xinning, Hubei province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/10/christian-women-three-year-old-taken.html>



## Colombia

Fr Abelardo Antonio Munoz Sanchez (aged 41, **shot dead** during a street robbery)

Date: October 3, 2017

Location: Rionegro

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/63006-](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63006-AMERICA_COLOMBIA_Priest_killed_in_Rionegro_the_second_in_Colombia_in_2017#.WdY3MltSyM8)

[AMERICA COLOMBIA Priest killed in Rionegro the second in Colombia in 2017  
#.WdY3MltSyM8](#)



## Egypt

Mohrael (newborn daughter of Nour Bakhit Khalil and Azza Gamal, abducted and **murdered**)

Date: September 7, 2017

Location: Barba, Assyut province

Azza Gamal (aged 27, wife of Nour Bakhit Khalil, mother of Mohrael, Mariam and Martha, arrested for the murder of Mohrael, beaten by police)

Mariam (aged 2, sister of Mohrael)

Martha (aged 2, sister of Mohrael)

Nour Bakhit Khalil (said "My wife is a very good woman. She is a religious person who has a strong relationship with God and could not do something like killing her daughter. She and I were very happy when God blessed us with this little girl. Mohrael was very beautiful and cute and a great gift from God to us and we loved her so much")

Fr Philemon Abdallah Mashreqi (said "the police's indifference, inaction and complicity gives an opportunity for these criminals to continue with their aggressive acts against us. As

long as no legal action is taken, these attacks will not end but increase over time. We see that we have no rights here and that the law does not apply”)

Rev Ezzat Salib (said "the people of our village will contribute even a small part to pay for these costs" to legally defend Azza Gamal, added “Christians in the west of Barba village have been targeted by thugs and gangs since 2013. Many Christians have been kidnapped and their families had to pay these big amounts of money as ransom for releasing them. If the family is a simple family and doesn’t have the ability to pay the ransom, relatives and friends help and raise the money between them. These kidnapping cases happen repeatedly and are increasing because those kidnappers enjoy complete impunity”)

Date: September 11, 2017

Location: Barba, Assyut province

Awny Mousa (youth, abducted, released after ransom was paid, police did nothing)

Date: August 2017

Location: Barba, Assyut province

Mohsen Rizk (store owner, store burglarized, police took no action)

Date reported: October 2, 2017

Location: Barba, Assyut province

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/10/latest-attack-copts-egypt/>



## Greece

Archbishop Ieronymos II aka Ioannis Liapis (aged 79, criticized the government for a new bill that would allow 15 year olds to change their gender, said “All that is game playing. The Church has its own views. Our homeland has its own traditions, it has the family, everything else is just contrivances so that we waste our time...Have you considered what the role of the Church is, not only in Europe but the entire world?...The [Church] has more to offer than all embassies”)

Date: October 2, 2017

Location: Athens

Source: <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2017/10/03/archbishop-of-athens-criticizes-govt-over-gender-identification-at-15/>



## India

**Event: A Hindu mob attacked a parochial school after an 11 year old student killed himself and reportedly left a note accusing his teacher of bullying**

Bishop Gerald Almeida (**UPDATE**: said "This is not a one-off incident. Christian schools often become the target of mob violence in northern Indian states, where Christians are a minority...They are out to tarnish the image of Christian missions and attack our institutions to scare people away from Christians and to intimidate missionaries...We always offer quality and cheap education to children in remote rural areas and in towns where the focus is on the poor and socially weaker sections. But many in the Hindu groups are opposed to educating lower caste people and making them equal to the higher caste in education")

Christy Abraham (general secretary of the state chapter of the Rashtriya Isai Mahasangh [National Christian Federation], said police concoct false allegations of sexual abuse against school managers and principals)

Shibu Thomas (Persecution Relief; **UPDATE**: said "This is a hard time for Christian education institutions. Christian schools are the only place for the poor to get educated. This is inviting the ire of those who always want the hegemony of the Hindu upper caste")

Date: September 15, 2017

Location: Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/hindu-hardliners-try-to-damage-mission-schools-image/80407>



## Iran

### **Event: A married couple were arrested for praying at a funeral**

Mehrdad Houshmand (convert, husband of Sarah Nemati)

Sarah Nemati (convert, wife of Mehrdad Houshmand, told her husband would be charged with 'corruption on earth' [which carries the death penalty], advised to divorce him)

Date: September 11, 2017

Location: Tehran

Source: <https://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/human-rights/23623-iran-the-situation-of-arrested-christian-couple-is-still-unclear>



## Iraq

Patriarch Louis Raphael I Sako (**UPDATE**: said "The referendum of Kurdistan, toward independence from Baghdad, is creating an escalation of tension between the two governments and we can almost hear the beats of war drums...Today, our people are

living with fear of being engaged in another war, which means more chaos, more bloodshed, destruction and refugees. They are concerned about stability, security and worried about going back to live with daily crimes of robberies, gang rapes, torture and murder of Christians that has become so common...Everyone is waiting. What will happen tomorrow? Will there be a new war or not? Will there be peace? They don't know. Everyone is waiting, waiting with fear, without certainty")

Date: September 28, 2017

Location: Rome, Italy

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/iraqi-church-leaders-pray-for-peace-after-kurdish-referendum-83075>

Sr Silvia OP (told how one-third of her religious community of sisters has died since the 2014 capture of the Nineveh Plain by ISIL "We pray for them every day as sisters. We pray for them, for those bringing peace, for our soldiers, for those who help people have a better life. This prayer helps us forgive – not to forget, because you can't forget, but to not hate the other person. If we hate others, that means that we're doing what the devil wants, not what Jesus wants...My dream is to live in peace. Both my own peace, within myself – because we are also at war within ourselves – and the peace we physically live. Living in tranquility, in love, and helping the people know Jesus because he is love")

Date: October 2, 2017

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/iraqi-nun-we-pray-for-members-of-isis-it-helps-us-forgive-80498>

### **Event: Christians have returned home to rebuild after ISIL destruction**

Lawrence Janan (police officer, said "It's hard for Christians to go back to Mosul City, but here, at least, we were always a clear majority. We have to come to our areas. This is our land. If we don't watch over it, who will?")

Louis Yousif (law school graduate, businessman, has been building a bakery "We need help to create the conditions for people to come back. The international community must stand with Iraqi Christians. We don't want money for our pockets. We need help to rebuild...We are stuck between the Kurdish Regional Government [KRG] and the central government in Baghdad unable to make our own decisions. They call us a disputed area, but in reality there are no Kurdish families here. That's why we were abandoned in the hands of ISIL without a single shot being fired")

Khudr Baham Anab (liquor store owner, said "This is the most dangerous business as we are always targeted. If people see that I am here, that I came back and opened a liquor store, regular citizens will be reassured. They will think it is safe, although in reality it is not safe")

Falah Baqus (said "We are Iraqi citizens, but the state has not granted us protection. It breaks my heart to see my town littered like this, but if I do not come back, things will never be restored")

Amir Toma (former print shop manager, fruit stand operator, home destroyed, said "Security here is a mixed salad. Some forces support the KRG. Others Bagdad. Us poor people are in the middle")

Date: October 4, 2017

Location: Qaraqosh

Source: <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2017/1004/Can-Christians-rebuild-their-own-homeland-in-Iraqi-Kurdistan>



## Malaysia

Rev Dr Justin Wan (**UPDATE:** spoke against creeping Islamic radicalism and thanked a local Muslim leader for opposing a Muslim-only launderette)

Date: September 27, 2017

Location: Johor, Sarawak

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsight.com/s/16275/>



## Mali

Fr Edmond Dembele (spokesman for the Episcopal Conference of Mali; **UPDATE:** said "The jihadists have started to target Christian communities and it is a worrying development. In the diocese of Mopti, in the center-north of the Country, there are at least three churches that have received the visit of jihadists who prevented the faithful from gathering to pray, sound bells, and have destroyed some furniture and sacred objects...last week some armed forces forced the door of the church in the village of Dobara, took crucifixes, pictures and statues of the Virgin Mary and burned them in the churchyard. Earlier in the village of Bodwal, Christians were expelled from the place of worship by armed men who threatened them, saying they would kill them if they had prayed again in church...The area of Mopti so far had not been affected by the actions of jihadist groups that have long been present there. What worries us is that these groups had not targeted Christians up till now. The situation has changed in the last few months and for this reason we have launched the alarm. This is a border area with Burkina Faso that has been attacked for some time by jihadists")

Date reported: October 5, 2017

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63018->

[AFRICA MALI Christian churches targeted by jihadists A new and disturbing development#.WdY3\\_VtSyM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63018-AFRICA_MALI_Christian_churches_targeted_by_jihadists_A_new_and_disturbing_development#.WdY3_VtSyM8)



## Nigeria

## **Event: Fulani Muslims attacked four Christian villages, killing 26 and wounding 19**

Godfrey F (said “I got ready and set out for school. I met the fiercely looking Fulani on the way and ran back. I met my father on the way and warned him that it was not safe. We ran into the grass, but they set the grass on fire. It burnt me on my back. I ran out to the other side of the village, but they trapped and attacked me multiple times with machete. They asked me who had a gun in the village and I told them no one had. They set the bush on fire, burning my father in it. They also killed my brother. I started running, and met some boys and told them. I ran and saw my younger sister and held her hand to run. The Fulanis pushed her down into the fire. Help later came and we were eventually taken to the hospital. I was on oxygen in the ICU for a week, but got better and moved to the regular ward”)

Date: February 20, 2017

Location: Ashim, Mif, Zilang, and Bakin Kogi villages, Attakar district, Kaduna state

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2017/10/05/icc-provides-medical-assistance-to-victims-of-fulani-radicals-in-south-kaduna/>

Pastor Apostle Lucky Eni (husband of Pastor Itohan Eni (church burglarized and destroyed by arson)

Pastor Itohan Eni (wife of Pastor Apostle Lucky Eni)

Gladys Ajayi (parishioner)

Monday Efedhoma (parishioner)

Date: October 4, 2017

Location: Evbuotubu, Benin City, Edo state

Source: <https://www.itvradionigeria.com/pastor-burnt-church-attributes-incident-criminal-act/>



## **Pakistan**

Afzad Masih (father of three, son of Safia Bibi, abducted by a neighbor who has threatened to kill him if the family does not vacate their home)

Safia Bibi (mother of Afzad Masif, husband disabled, said "the only purpose of [the abductor] Ullah is to occupy our home, as he has already occupied two other Christian homes. We are very poor and we have no strength to oppose the judges, especially because he is very influential and has power. We work all day in a brickwork and we only have a small property. We do not want our home to be occupied")

Date: September 19, 2017

Location: Malkhanwala, Faisalabad

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Faisalabad,-Christian-kidnapped-by-a-Muslim-landowner:-They-want-his-home-41925.html>

Washaal Masih (arrested along with a Hindu coworker on blasphemy charges, had been burning trash and someone alleged that the trash contained Quranic verses)

Date: September 27, 2017

Location: Behawalnagar, Punjab province

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63000->

[ASIA\\_PAKISTAN\\_Religious\\_minorities\\_under\\_attack\\_it\\_is\\_urgent\\_to\\_repeal\\_the\\_blasphemy\\_law#.WdOI21tSyM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63000-ASIA_PAKISTAN_Religious_minorities_under_attack_it_is_urgent_to_repeal_the_blasphemy_law#.WdOI21tSyM8)

and <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6636>



## Philippines

Fr Antonio Moreno SJ (signed a statement by the Society of Jesus that read "We agree on the fact that the threat of illegal drugs is real and destructive. The imperative to overcome this evil does not belong only to the president, the Police, and the government. It belongs to all of us...the menace of drugs is not just a political or criminal issue. It is evil that attacks humanity, turns human beings into zombies, policemen into murderers, criminals into lords, and the poor into victims...This evil we must fight with insight, cooperation, cunning, the enlightened use of political and economic power, self-sacrifice, prayer and God's grace")

Date: October 2, 2017

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/62995->

[ASIA\\_PHILIPPINES\\_Jesuits\\_One\\_cannot\\_build\\_a\\_nation\\_on\\_the\\_dead\\_bodies\\_of\\_the\\_Filipino\\_people#.WdJaSVtSyM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/62995-ASIA_PHILIPPINES_Jesuits_One_cannot_build_a_nation_on_the_dead_bodies_of_the_Filipino_people#.WdJaSVtSyM8)

Archbishop Socrates Villegas (**UPDATE:** issued a statement regarding police officers who have requested church sanctuary" ...their consciences are troubling them. They have expressed their desire to come out in the open about their participation in extrajudicial killings and summary executions...If their preference is to stay with us in the church, will not be turned over to the state. Let us be guardian angels for one another")

Date: October 2, 2017

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/filipino-police-seek-church-protection-over-drug-killings/80401>



## Turkey

Sait Susin (denied government permission to open a primary school for Assyrians)

Date: September 30, 2017

Location: Istanbul

Source: <https://philosproject.org/assyrians-primary-school-istanbul/>



## Turkmenistan

Bahram Hemdemov (aged 54, father of Serdar Hemdemov, detained on [March 14, 2015](#) in [Turkmenabad](#), sentenced to 4 years' imprisonment on [May 19, 2015](#), tortured during pretrial detention; **UPDATE**: still imprisoned)

Date: [October 3, 2017](#)

Location: [Seydi Labor Camp](#)

Source: [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2320](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2320)



## United States - Georgia

Chike Uzuegbunam (college student, denied permission to hand out Gospel literature in campus free speech zones in [Lawrenceville](#) in [2016](#); **UPDATE**: the U.S. Justice Department has joined his civil rights suit against the college: “GGC [the college] applied a ‘heckler’s veto’ that allowed every listener to become a regulator unto himself and to shut down expression simply because the listener found it ‘uncomfortable’. For this reason alone, GGC’s content-based restriction fails strict scrutiny”)

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

Source: <http://christiannews.net/2017/09/30/u-s-department-of-justice-backs-christian-college-student-told-preaching-disturbing-the-peace/>



## Venezuela

Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino (**UPDATE**: said "In general, the situation continues to be really bad, because the government stubbornly continues to insist, in an absurd way, to enforce a failed political and economic project that is the socialist, communist, Marxist, totalitarian and militaristic system. It’s led to nothing but ruin, pain, and death in the countries where it has been imposed")

Date: [September 29, 2017](#)

Location: [Rome, Italy](#)

Source: <https://cruxnow.com/interviews/2017/10/03/cardinal-venezuela-stubbornly-clings-marxist-totalitarian-system/>



## **Vietnam**

Y-Man Eban (aged 30, Montagnard tribal, fled to Cambodia on [July 7, 2015](#); forced to return in [October 2015](#); **UPDATE**: under constant harassment and interrogation, said "Since I came back to Vietnam, the authorities have viewed me as a criminal. They despise us, they hate us so much. I can see it in their eyes whenever they come to my house")

Date: October 4, 2017

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/the-betrayal-of-vietnams-forgotten-christians/80364>

## **Today's Martyrs**

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

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