

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2017-10-08 through 2017-10-14



### Afghanistan

Farid (aged 32, convert, deported from Norway after spending 9 years seeking asylum, had left the country as a child with his parents, said “I feel like I’ve fallen from the sky. I don’t believe I’m here...I am scared. I don’t know anything about Afghanistan. Where will I go? I don’t have funds to live alone and I can’t live with relatives because they will see that I don’t pray [to Allah]”)

Sadi (aged 24, convert, deported from Sweden, said “I am very scared that someone will recognize me and kill me”, added that he will try to return to Europe)

Date: October 6, 2017

Location: Kabul

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/10/eu-wilfully-blind-risks-deporting-christian-converts-back-afghanistan/>



### Algeria

Slimane Bouhafis (aged 49, 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; reported on [November 11, 2016](#) to have been threatened with assault after prison inmates saw a video of a Muslim preacher calling for non-Muslims to be "punished"; reported on [May 26, 2017](#) to have been transferred to another prison near [Jijel](#) where there are fewer Christians, family fearful for his safety; **UPDATE**: began a hunger strike after having been denied conditional release, has demanded a transfer back to prison in [Bejia](#))

Date: October 11, 2017

Location: Constantine prison

Source: <https://www.premier.org.uk/News/World/Christian-on-hunger-strike-after-rejection-of-conditional-release-request>



## China

Pastor Wang Yi (husband of Jiang Rong, **UPDATE**: detained, charged with “picking quarrels and provoking troubles”, released)

Jiang Rong (wife of Pastor Wang Yi, **UPDATE**: missing, apparently detained)

Date: September 26, 2017

Location: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/10/pastor-detained-wife-missing.html>

### **Event: Christian missionaries were sentenced to 4 to 6 years' imprisonment, or released**

Ju Dianhong (sentence unknown)

Liu Wei (sentence unknown)

Zhang Congying (sentence unknown)

Li Yunxiu (sentence unknown)

Li Min (sentence unknown)

Li Shudong (sentence unknown)

Pastor Peng Huifen (released)

Tu Yan (detained on [October 22, 2015](#) for 'cult activity', released, arrested a month later on the same charge; **UPDATE**: case returned to prosecutors for further investigation)

Date: October 6, 2017

Location: Yunnan province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/10/yunnan-christians-sentenced-4-to-6.html>



## Egypt

Marilyn Medhat (aged 16, daughter of Medhat Saad Edward and Hanaa Aziz Shukralla Farag, abducted in [Balansora village, Minya province](#) on [June 28, 2017](#), forced into an Islamic marriage; **UPDATE**: recovered by police, returned home)

Fr Boutros Khalaf (**UPDATE**: said “Recently we found out that Marilyn was held in a place in 10th of Ramadan city...We went to the local police station and they really did their best to reach her and managed to arrest her kidnapper...[she had] not been treated well [but was] very happy to be back with her family...We thank God for answering our prayers and the prayers of many other people. And we thank all the policemen in the police station that helped us so much in releasing our daughter”)

Date: September 30, 2017

Location: outside Cairo

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/10/coptic-teenage-girl-rescued-92-days-islamists-kidnapped/>

Fr Saman Shehata (**stabbed to death** by a pedestrian while driving to a conference)

Fr Beimen Moftah (witnessed the attack on Fr Saman Shehata)

Gerges Kamel (driver of Fr Saman Shehata, witnessed the attack)

Date: October 12, 2017

Location: El-Marg district, Cairo

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Coptic-priest-killed-in-stabbing-incident-in-Cairo-outskirts,-executed-by-an-extremist-42044.html>

and <https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/10/12/breaking-coptic-priest-killed-in-stabbing-incident-in-cairo-outskirts/>

and <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/10/coptic-orthodox-bishop-killed-outside-cairo-egypt/>



## India

Dilip Ekka (school headmaster, accused by Hindu nationalists of organizing boycotts of Hindu shops, has denied the charges)

Date: October 6, 2017

Location: Latehar, Jharkhand state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/In-Jharkhand,-Hindu-extremists-accuse-a-Catholic-headmaster-of-boycotting-their-shops-41979.html>

Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX (**UPDATE**: wrote "It is with great sadness and sorrow that we have learnt from sections of the National Press of an unfortunate incident in which members of a sect calling themselves Christians, have burnt images of Hindu deities and our Indian National Flag in Lunglie District of Mizoram. We have been in touch with the local Catholic Bishop of Aizawl, Bishop Stephen Rotluanga, who is upset about the happenings...We are shocked that anyone could show disrespect to members of another religion in the name of Christ. We remind these misguided youth about the episode in the Bible when Jesus wanted to visit a Samaritan village, the people of the village refused to accept him and two of his close disciples asked him 'Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' And the Gospel says – 'But Jesus turned and rebuked them. And they went to another village'...We exhort the miscreants to give up their wrong ways and pray that they may see the light. God bless India")

Date: October 9, 2017

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Catholic-bishops-denounce-burning-of-Hindu-deities-in-Mizoram:-it-is-fundamentalism-42000.html>

and <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-bishops-denounce-burning-of-national-flag-hindu-idol/80473>

Archbishop Thumma Bala (**UPDATE**: condemned a televised attack on Mother Teresa by Swami Parpoornanda Saraswathi, in which the Hindu leader accused her of the trafficking of 50,000 women)

Date reported October 11, 2017

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63045->

[ASIA INDIA Condemnation of the Bishops Hindu leader offends Mother Teresa#.Wd4VPltSyM8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63045-ASIA_INDIA_Condemnation_of_the_Bishops_Hindu_leader_offends_Mother_Teresa#.Wd4VPltSyM8)

Sajan K George (President of the Global Council of Indian Christians; **UPDATE**: described how 13 indigent Christian tribal families were denied food assistance after they refused to pay a tax to fund a Hindu festival)

Date: September 13, 2017

Location: Rehaladag village, Pasarar, Latehar district, Jharkhand state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Jharkhand,-poor-tribal-denied-food-rations-because-Christians-42040.html>



## Iraq

Muhammed (convert, husband of Sanar, customs official, **killed** by his family after refusing to renounce his conversion)

Sanar (convert, widow of Muhammed, has led neighboring women to Christ)

Jemima (widow [husband was martyred for Christ], mother of two daughters, emigrated to the U.S., converted)

Nabil Omiesh (Bible Society of Iraq program director, reported on the stories of Muhammed, Sanar, and Jemima)

Date reported: October 13, 2017

Source: <https://www.ternitynews.com.au/good-news/husbands-killed-for-faith-but-these-women-persevere/>



## Ireland

Katie Ascough (college student, student union president, removed information on obtaining illegal abortions from the student handbook, said "I must state that the call for my impeachment is without legitimate cause. We don't have to agree on the issue of abortion, but we should be able to respect each other...It was clear from the outset that some students didn't want to give me a chance as President because of my views on abortion...The main reason that a group of students are calling for my impeachment is

because of my decision to not break the law and illegally distribute abortion information. [We] sought legal advice regarding the abortion information from the Union’s long-standing lawyer [who] advised that it would be prudent to avoid proceeding with the current handbook”)

Date: October 14, 2017

Location: Dublin

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/attempt-to-oust-pro-life-student-union-president-denounced-as-bullying-tactic-65613>



### **Kazakhstan**

Ildus Khairullin (fined US\$339 for allowing a child to attend a religious service when one parent objected)

Date: August 23, 2017

Location: Balkhash

Pastor Oleg Bondarenko (cited for allowing a child to attend a religious service when one parent objected, did not know of any objection, case continuing)

Date: August 15, 2017

Location: Astana

Mikhail Amanov (fined 35 MFIs for allowing a child to attend a religious service when one parent objected)

Date: November 16, 2016

Location: Lisakovsk, Kostanai region

Sergei Roshchenya (fined 50 MFIs for allowing a child to attend a religious service when one parent objected)

Date: June 13, 2017

Location: Shakhtinsky, Karaganda region

Source: [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2324](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2324)



### **Malaysia**

Hannah Yeoh (state assembly Speaker, subject of a police complaint of “trying to preach Christianity” due to her 2014 autobiography in which she mentioned her faith)

Date: October 6, 2017

Location: Selangor

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/10/malaysia-muslim-only-laundrette-and-uproar-over-christian-book-show-growing-bias-against-minorities/>

Lim Lip Eng (member of parliament, filed criminal charges against an Islamic Development Department officer who called Christians infidels and unclean and who criticized a Muslim leader for opposing a Muslim only laundromat)

Date: October 12, 2017

Location: Kuala Lumpur

Source: <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/10/12/dap-reports-zamihan-for-labelling-christians-infidels-chinese-unclean/>



## Niger

Fr Mauro Armanino SMA (**UPDATE**: commented after 9 soldiers including 3 U.S. Army Green Berets were killed in an ambush "There have been several attacks in an area, about 120 miles from Niamey. For some time, that area, bordering Mali, is rather unstable. The other area of strong instability is located near Chad Lake, where Boko Haram raids continue. At the border with Libya, the Tubou are trying to arm themselves to try to contain human trafficking. This increases the risks of destabilization of the area where Tuaregs also live without having a good relationship with the Tubou, especially when there are reasons of interest such as controlling illegal or illicit traffic")

Date: October 9, 2017

Source: [The flag of Nigeria, featuring three vertical stripes of green, white, and green.](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63036-<u>AFRICA NIGER A surprise attack against US soldiers The presence of foreign soldiers is likely to destabilize the area says a missionary#.WdzCrVtSyM8</u></a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

## Nigeria

Archbishop Matthew Hassah Kukah (**UPDATE**: said "From my own experience, I find that the British high commissioner [ambassador], the ambassadors from European countries, the American ambassador — they are pandering more to Islam than to Christianity, because most of them have turned their backs on Christianity... We can't go to the Irish ambassador or the Spanish ambassador and say, 'This is for the Catholic Church'. People are not interested... In Ramadan, the ambassadors of Islamic countries are very keen to come to the Muslim celebrations in a way and manner that the Irish or any of these ambassadors are not likely to do for [Christmas] midnight Mass or the Easter celebrations... Before our election, John Kerry came to Nigeria. John Kerry, when he was secretary of state, left the U.S. and came straight to see the sultan of Sokoto. It was a visit that nobody could explain. John Kerry claims to be a Catholic. This is the perfect

example. He landed in Abuja. The American Embassy is in Abuja. There is a cardinal in Abuja, and a very visible cardinal for that matter, but it doesn't cross the mind of John Kerry to even see out of courtesy the cardinal. He takes another plane to Sokoto and goes to the palace of the sultan, the head of the Muslims...The reaction of the Nigerian Christian community was very interesting. They thought Kerry was pushing the Islamic agenda. This was ahead of the elections, and they thought he was giving the Muslim candidate a leg up...In a country like Nigeria, influence is peddled, and we are not there at the table. We have not trained our people for roles in public life...we are still very shy of the public space, and we are not aware of how much things have moved on")

Bishop Albert Ayinde Fasina (said "In the spirit of the new evangelization, you are required to put your creativity to work...by engaging the media tools for catechesis. The church needs to be concerned for, and be present in the world of communications, in order to dialogue with people today and help them encounter Christ")

Bishop Godfrey Igwebuike Onah (**UPDATE**: said "If we do not blow our trumpet, no one will blow it for us. We need a kind of media that can serve as a watchdog of the society as well as be the gadfly that can bring us to our toes when we go wrong")

Date: October 13, 2017

Location: Liverpool, United Kingdom

Source:

<http://catholicherald.co.uk/w008000007c4dww.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/10/13/bishop-western-politicians-damage-african-christianity-by-pandering-to-islam/>



## **Pakistan**

Prof Anjum James Paul (**UPDATE**: criticized another employment advertisement that specified sanitation positions as 'non-Muslim')

Date: October 7, 2017

Location: Sindh province

Source: <https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/minorities-troubled-by-for-non-muslims-only-affrontation/>

Washaal Masih (arrested on [September 27, 2017](#) along with a Hindu coworker on blasphemy charges, had been burning trash and someone alleged that the trash contained Quranic verses; **UPDATE**: charges dropped)

Adil Saleem Masih (arrested on [September 27, 2017](#) along with a Hindu coworker on blasphemy charges; **UPDATE**: charges dropped)

Date: October 4, 2017

Location: Behawalnagar, Punjab province

Source: <https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/dunga-bunga-blasphemy-charges-dropped-against-three-including-two-christians/>

Arslan Masih (aged 17, son of Mushtaq Masih, 8th grade student, **beaten to death** by at least 6 police officers in front of 60 students after he had refused to convert to Islam)

Date: October 9, 2017

Location: Jabhran village, Sheikhpura district, Punjab province

Source: <https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/sheikhpura-christian-student-perishes-of-gruesome-torture-by-police/>

and <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63044->

[ASIA\\_PAKISTAN\\_A\\_Christian\\_student\\_tortured\\_and\\_killed\\_by\\_the\\_police#.WdzB9FtSyM8](#)

and <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6646>

### **Event: Pastors of house churches were arrested, churches closed**

Rev Arslan-ul-Haq

Rev Munir Masih

Rev Arshd Baghicha

Rev Javad Veru

Rev Mubashir Maqsood

Rev Patress Nawab Gill

Rev Shoukat Masih

Rev Arshad Rehmat

Date reported: October 9, 2017

Location: Bahawalpur

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/city-bans-christian-prayer-in-homes>

and <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6648>

Sumaira (abducted, raped)

Date reported: October 9, 2017

Location: Rawalpindi

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6647>



### **Syria**

### **Event: Two Russian mercenaries [or covert soldiers] were executed by ISIL after refusing to convert to Islam**

Roman Zabolotny (aged 39, **executed**)

Grigory Tsurkanu (aged 38, **executed**)

Date reported: October 6, 2017

Location: near Deir Ezzor



Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4955614/Two-Russian-mercenaries-executed-ISIS.html>



## Turkey

Pastor Andrew Brunson (U.S. citizen, husband of Norine Brunson, detained as a 'national security risk' in Izmir on [October 7, 2016](#); confirmed to be a hostage at a [September 28, 2017](#) press conference by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President explicitly called for the U.S. government to exchange him for Sufi cleric and U.S. resident Fethullah Gulen; **UPDATE**: visited in prison by a United States Commission on International Religious Freedom [USCIRF] delegation, found that he is confined 24 hours a day in his cell and has lost 50 pounds, said "I wish to thank everyone who is advocating and praying for me. Knowing that I am not forgotten is important to me")

Kristina Arriaga (USCIRF Vice Chairman, visited Pastor Andrew Brunson in prison, said "The government of Turkey has fabricated charges against Pastor Brunson, largely based on a purported 'secret testimony'. He should be released immediately")

Sandra Jolley (USCIRF Vice Chairman, visited Pastor Andrew Brunson in prison, said "He lives in a world of psychic and physical dislocation. Despite a public veneer of a legal process, the truth is Pastor Brunson has had no due process, no true information about the charges against him, unreliable court dates, and no idea when he ever again will see his children or his country")

Date reported: [October 7, 2017](#)

Location: [Kiriklar Prison](#)

Source: <http://www.uscirf.gov/news-room/press-releases/turkey-uscirf-delegation-visits-imprisoned-us-citizen-pastor-andrew-brunson>

and <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/10/andrew-brunson-still-prison-one-year-thanks-people-praying/>



## Uganda

Magale Hamidu (aged 20, convert, beaten by his family for his conversion, threatened with death, hospitalized)

Pastor Joseph Kisense (sheltered Magale Hamidu after his hospitalization, has received threats)

Date: [September 20, 2017](#)

Location: [Nanoko village](#)

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/10/muslim-father-uganda-drives-son-home-becoming-christian/>



## **United States - Michigan**

Ghandi Shaba (aged 40, brother of Ghiyda Salman, facing deportation to Iraq, came to the U.S. in 1983 at age 5, said "I only know American life, I have always identified as American. I don't remember Iraq and never studied Arabic. All my family is here, and all but one of my family are U.S. citizens. I don't know how I would survive in Iraq - I couldn't even communicate there - and even if I did, it wouldn't be for long. I would be killed. Christians are a minority there")

Ghiyda Salman (sister of Ghandi Shaba, said "We live in fear for Ghandi. Yes, he was guilty of bad judgment as a young teen and he hung with the wrong crowd. But every day now he's scared about what will happen and when. He spends much of his time praying")

Date: October 11, 2017

Location: near Detroit

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20171011130027.htm>

## **United States - New Jersey**

### **Event: Indonesian asylum seekers face deportation**

Arthur Jemmy (aged 40, husband of Silfia Tobing, unable to work due to surgery following a workplace accident)

Silfia Tobing (wife of Arthur Jemmy)

Date: October 10, 2017

Location: Highland Park

Source: <http://www.app.com/story/news/politics/2017/10/10/indonesian-couple-sanctuary-highland-park/750300001/>

## **United States - Washington state**

### **Event: A homosexual coffee store owner ejected a group of Christians from his store**

Jonathan Sutherland (said to the store owner "So you're not willing to tolerate our presence?", was told in reply "If I go get my boyfriend and [expletive] him in the [expletive] right here you're going to tolerate that?")

Caleb Head (said to the store owner after he said the Christians had to tolerate a public sex act "Well, we don't want to watch that", was told in reply "Well then I don't have to [expletive] tolerate this! Leave! All of you. Tell all your [expletive] friends, don't [expletive] come here")

Caytie Davis (said to the store owner "Just know that Christ can save you from that lifestyle", was told in reply "I'm not going to be saved by anything. I'd [expletive] Christ in the [expletive]. OK? He's hot")

Date reported: October 8, 2017

Location: Seattle

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/gay-coffee-shop-owner-kicks-christians-out-goes-on-vulgar-rant-about-things-hed-do-to-jesus-202059/>



## **Vietnam**

Mary Magdelene Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh (aged 38, mother of two, arrested while visiting a prisoner on **October 10, 2016**; sentenced on **June 29, 2017** to 10 years' imprisonment for anti-government internet postings; **UPDATE**: still imprisoned)

Date: **October 10, 2017**

Location: Khanh Hoa province

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/rights-group-demands-release-of-catholic-activist/80521>

## **Today's Martyrs**

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

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