

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2017-10-15 through 2017-10-21



Australia

Event: Two churches were vandalized by same sex marriage advocates

Pastor Drew Mellor (church vandalized with cross=swastika and 'vote Yes, bash bigots' graffiti despite having no position on the referendum, said "To see Christians in that light, that somehow we hold a view that if people don't agree with us then we're going to do something to diminish them, that's not what people of the Gospel think")

Pastor David O'Brien (church vandalized with 'crucify No voters' graffiti, said "It was a shock. I really couldn't take it seriously. Some people blame religion and wish to have some measure of payback for what is perceived to have been slights in the past. It also shows we live in an era where tolerance is lessening, which is a sadness and a great tragedy of our age")

Date: October 15, 2017

Location: Melbourne

Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4981608/Anglican-church-sprayed-Vote-Yes-bash-bigots.html>



Azerbaijan

Hamid Shabanov (husband of Hinayat Shabanova, home raided by police during a [November 26, 2016](#) worship service, 26 people detained for 5 hours; found guilty in [Zakatala](#) on [December 5, 2016](#), fined US\$993, no written decision issued, fine not assessed; appeal denied in [Sheki](#) on [June 21, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: has filed an appeal with the Constitutional Court, as a native Georgian he was legally required to have translations from Azeri in his appeal proceedings but was denied them)

Date: October 19, 2017

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/10/azerbaijan-no-fair-trial-house-church-leader-appealing-constitutional-court/>



China

Li Aijie (wife of Zhang Haitao, beaten by her family after she refused their demands that she divorce her husband, suffered a black eye and possible brain damage with headaches and nausea, family had been under pressure from the government)

Zhang Haitao (husband of Li Aijie, human rights attorney, detained on [June 26, 2015](#); charged with 'inciting subversion of state power' on [November 18, 2016](#), later sentenced to 19 years' imprisonment and fined US\$18,000)

Date: October 9, 2017

Location: Urumqi, Xinjiang

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/10/christian-woman-beat-by-family-for.html><http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/10/christian-woman-beat-by-family-for.html>

Dr Li Baiguang (human rights attorney; **UPDATE**: abducted by 10 Communist Party agents, taken to a forest, beaten 'severely', threatened with death by dismemberment)

Date: October 17, 2017

Location: Wenling, Zhejiang province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/10/christian-attorney-threatened-with.html>



Greece

Metropolitan Ambrose Lenis (aged 79; **UPDATE**: issued a statement signed by his priests against a new law that will allow 15 year olds to change their official gender without psychological evaluation "It is an outrageous inspiration for someone to change his gender in a few minutes, with a simple declaration, so contrary to what God has gifted people with", ordered all churches to ring their bells each day at noon for a week in protest)

Date: October 15, 2017

Location: Kalavryta and Aigialeia

Source: <http://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/10/19/greek-orthodox-clergy-ring-church-bells-to-protest-transgender-law/>



India

Sandeep Kumar aka Karan Anthony (aged 18, agricultural science college student, son of Shrinivas Gautam, brother of Kuldeep Kumar, arrested on [August 23, 2017](#) for posting

anti-Hindu comments on Facebook, denied food in jail, said “I was not at all aware about the fake Facebook account. I was only focusing on my studies, and we have worship services on the campus also every morning and evening, so I was spending most of my time with Christian friends here and never felt the need to open a social media account...Before this Facebook row, they got me into trouble twice. They beat me severely, alleging, ‘You are Christian, you are from low caste’. It was my good friend who falsely framed me by joining hands with Rudra Sena activists”; **UPDATE:** released on bail, ill with malaria and typhus, said “When I was in jail, every day I was spending time in prayer: the other prisoners did not understand what was going on, they asked me many questions like, ‘What is this you are doing, why are you knelt, what are you murmuring?’ It was an opportunity the Lord had given me to share the gospel with them”)

Pastor Shrinivas Gautam (father of Sandeep Kumar aka Karan Anthony and Kuldeep Kumar, object of false media reports that alleged he performed forced conversions)

Kuldeep Kumar (son of Pastor Shrinivas Gautam, brother of Sandeep Kumar aka Karan Anthony, said of his brother "He shares with his friends about Jesus and His second coming. He boldly shares his testimony. He will never abuse or pass any hurtful statements, neither on social media nor directly. He is a very good friend and brother”)

Date: September 4, 2017

Location: Kasganj district, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: <http://morningstarnews.org/2017/10/christian-teenager-india-arrested-comments-fake-facebook-sources-say/>

Event UPDATE: Seven Christians falsely accused of the 2008 murder of Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati, which led to the Kandhamal pogrom in which nearly 100 Christians were killed, are still imprisoned

Bijay Kumar Sanseth

Gornath Chalanseth

Durjo Sunamajhi

Bhaskar Sunamajhi

Budhadeb Nayak

Munda Badamaji

Sanatan Badamajhi

Date: October 17, 2017

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/63075-ASIA_INDIA_Prayer_for_seven_innocent_Christians_of_Orissa_who_are_imprisoned#.WeX9IVtSyM8

Pastor Seviya (beaten by five Hindu extremists, hospitalized in critical condition with cerebral blot clots and bleeding from the ears)

Date: October 5, 2017

Location: Telangana state

Pastor Khel Prasad Kurre (beaten by three or four Hindu extremists, hospitalized, required twelve stiches in his head, cell phone stolen, later found that the attackers had filed a forced conversion charge against him with the police)

Date: October 13, 2017

Location: Chhattisgarh state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/10/indian-christians-beaten-with-rods-and-sticks/>

Event: Three hundred Hindu radicals attacked a church, all including women and children were beaten, nine were injured, some of the women were stripped, furnishings were set afire, police initially refused to file a report

Raju Sodi (hospitalized in critical condition)

Sangetha Kartami (hospitalized in critical condition)

Date: October 15, 2017

Location: Jarpara, Chhattisgarh state

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2017/10/19/christians-hospitalized-in-india-following-mob-attack-on-church/>

and <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/300-Hindu-radicals-attack-Chhattisgarh-Protestant-church:-two-seriously-injured-42094.html>



Iran

Mohammad Ali Torabi (convert, detained by security agents while in his office, whereabouts unknown)

Date: October 10, 2017

Location: Qal'a Sayyed district, Dezful, Khuzestan province

Source: <https://en.radiofarda.com/a/iran-arrests-christian-torabi/28795432.html>



Iraq

Fr Salar Kajo (said "We hope very much that - in spite of the violence we have just seen - a peaceful path will be pursued between the Kurds and the Iraqi federal authorities. We must pray that, whatever happens, war does not break out. If full-scale war were to return to Iraq, we are afraid that Christians would not survive it")

Date: October 16, 2017

Source: <http://members4.boardhost.com/acnaus/msg/1508219431.html>

Stephen Rasche (diocesan aid coordinator in Erbil, Kurdistan, U.S. citizen, **UPDATE**: said “If real fighting were to break out in Nineveh, that would be the end of Christians in Nineveh; they would not wait this out. They would leave, and be unlikely to return...[Nineveh is] split down the middle: on one side is the [Kurdish] Peshmerga, on the other are Iraqi forces including the [Shia] Hashd [militias]. Christians are on both sides of the divide”)

Date: October 17, 2017

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/10/iraqi-kurdish-violence-push-christians-survived-flee-good/>



Nigeria

Fr Maurizio Pallu (aged 63, Italian citizen, abducted with four others; **UPDATE**: released)

Cardinal John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan (**UPDATE**: said "Authorities are doing everything to locate him. The kidnappers should let him go soon, because it is not easy to bring an Italian around in the forest without being seen")

Date: October 12 and 17, 2017

Location: Benin City, Edo state

Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/reports-italian-priest-kidnapped-southern-nigeria-50466404>

and <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/italian-catholic-priest-kidnapped-in-nigeria-71613>

and <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/kidnapped-priest-in-nigeria-released-doing-well-59371>

Moses Gwom (**killed** in his home)

Corporal Chimezie Goodluck (soldier, **killed**)

Rhoda Dauda (businesswoman, **killed**)

Rev Soja Bewarang (**UPDATE**: said “The Miango killings in Bassa Local Government is becoming a very serious matter of concern that if nothing is done urgently, it may reverse the history of peace that is currently enjoyed in Plateau. I call upon the security to increase their networking until the perpetrators of the wicked and inhuman acts are caught and brought to book”)

Rev Yakubu Pam (wrote “Plateau is home to millions of Nigerians from all walks of life and I call on all warring groups to lay down their arms”)

Date reported: October 18, 2017

Location: Dorowa village, Werh district, Barkin Ladi local government area, Plateau state

Sunday Abdu (National President of the Irigwe Development Association, spoke after a massacre that killed over 27 who had been taken to a primary school for protection by the military “How then did the attackers come and killed the women and children without the

soldiers knowing? It is either that the soldiers are conniving with the attackers to annihilate our people or they ran away and left our people to their fate")

Date: October 16, 2017

Location: Nkiedonwhro, Plateau state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/10/northern-christians-condemn-killings-plateau-urge-nigeria-government-intervene/>



Philippines

Bishop Carlo Morales (husband of Maria Teofifina Morales, arrested with others at a police checkpoint in Gango on May 11, 2017 while travelling with an alleged member of a rebel group; **UPDATE**: still jailed, has been charged with illegal possession of explosives)

Bishop Joel Porlares (said "We found the allegation against our good bishop [Carlo Morales] malicious and ridiculous")

Date: October 16, 2017

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/german-churches-seek-release-of-filipino-bishop/80502>

Fr Jerome Secillano (**UPDATE**: criticized the government for not renewing the licenses of Catholic radio stations, said "It's the voice of the people and our search for truth that's being undermined by Congress")

Date: October 20, 2017

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-catholics-fear-silencing-of-54-radio-stations/80584>

Fr Jose Ramon Villarin SJ (president of Ateneo de Manila University, issued a statement which read "We call on everyone in the community to defend our democratic institutions...Let us urge our leaders in government to allow full independence for these constitutional bodies to implement their crucial mandates by desisting from any form of intimidation in the guise of legal action...[this is] not even a matter of political partisanship or persuasion. It is a call that is borne out of our conviction about what is right and just and truly democratic")

Date: October 13, 2017

Location: Manila

Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Soncuaco Pabillo (**UPDATE**: spoke on government rumors of a 'destabilization plot': "I do not know if there is or there is none...If they [in government] do not do their work well. then they should fear the dissatisfaction of the people...Why don't they solve the killings when they have the police and the intelligence fund? Or are they conditioning the minds of the people for an eventual martial law?")

Fr Jerome Secillano (**UPDATE**: said "The Church is not one to take steps to destabilize the institution or to undermine the president. I hope the public will not think that the Church is doing this to undermine the president or the government")

Date: October 16, 2017

Location: Manila

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/students-of-jesuit-university-called-on-to-guard-democracy/80546>



South Africa

Pastor Martin Beneke (aged 45, **found dead** in his truck with his hands tied behind his back, burned beyond recognition)

Date: October 16, 2017

Location: Magaliesburg

Source: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/south-african-pastor-burned-beyond-recognition-hands-tied-behind-back-203446/>



Thailand

Khurram Ashig (aged 36, husband of Saira Khurram, father of Mariyam and Musa Khurram, Pakistani refugee, **died of a heart attack**)

Saira Khurram (widow of Khurram Ashig, Pakistani refugee, said "My children and I have not even been able to see my dead husband's body because his corpse is being held by Thai Police - we cannot even mourn properly...Khurram was young and relatively healthy, we fled Pakistan because we were being persecuted but in Thailand we have been treated much the same. Khurram has now lost his life and I feel totally helpless")

Mariyam Khurram (daughter of Khurram Ashig and Saira Khurram)

Musa Khurram (son of Khurram Ashig and Saira Khurram)

Date: October 19, 2017

Location: Bangkok

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/36-year-old-pakistani-christian-father-of-two-dies-in-brutal-bangkok-incident>



United States - District of Columbia

Amelia Irvine (college student, president of the campus group Love Saxa which supports traditional marriage and which therefore is threatened with banishment from campus as a hate group)

Date: October 20, 2017

Location: Georgetown University

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/georgetown-pro-marriage-group-faces-sanctions-after-students-complain-70278>

United States - New Hampshire

Event: Nearly 2,000 Christian asylum seekers face deportation to Indonesia from the state

Meldy Lumangkun (husband of Eva Lumangkun)

Eva Lumangkun (wife of Meldy Lumangkun, said "We are afraid to go home. We fear for the safety of our children. Here our children can live safely")

Jacklyn Lele (aged 37, had fled Indonesia after her brother was killed, said "My son [who was born in the U.S.] does not really want to go over there, he keeps saying 'I'm American,'"")

Date: October 16, 2017

Source: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/indonesian-christians-in-nh-face-deportation-in-crackdown-we-are-afraid-to-go-home-203140/>

United States - New Mexico

Colonel Leland B H Bohannon (stripped of his command and promotion to Brigadier General reversed after he declined to sign a thank you certificate for a retiring airman and his husband, had obtained the signature of a superior officer in an approved religious accommodation)

Date reported: October 20, 2017

Location: Kirtland Air Force Base

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/air-force-punishes-colonel-who-wouldnt-affirm-gay-marriage>



Uzbekistan

Pastor Ahmadjon Nazarov (husband of Yelena Nazarov, home in [Urganch, Khorezm region](#) raided by police during a [July 23, 2017](#) worship service, a children's Bible, sheet music, and cell phones seized, 20 adults and 7 children detained and taken by bus to the police station, women were strip searched down to their underwear; **UPDATE:** followed by police as he travelled to a Christian's home with two Russian Christians, home raided by police without warrant, Bible, laptop and cell phones seized, detained and questioned for 5 hours, treated for an hypertension episode)

Gennadiy Chen (detained and questioned for 5 hours, treated for an hypertension episode)

Date: August 7, 2017

Location: Kungrad

Khamza Artikov (sentenced in absentia to 15 days' imprisonment and fined US\$998, was outside the country)

Elmurod Beyliyev (fined US\$2,217)

Yelena Nazarov (wife of Pastor Ahmadjon Nazarov, **UPDATE**: fined US\$44,333, Bible and literature ordered to be destroyed)

Nilufar Isakova (fined US\$44,333, cell phone and memory chip ordered seized)

Madina Yokubova (fined US\$44,333)

Date: September 4, 2017

Location: Urgench

Pastor Fathulla Ibrahimov (husband of Nargiza Ibrahimova, **UPDATE**: home raided by police without warrant, property seized, detained, refused to sign the police report)

Nargiza Ibrahimova (wife of Pastor Fathulla Ibrahimov, same account)

Date: August 23, 2017

Location: Tashkent

Kholiskhon Nishanova (home raided by police, property seized)

Date: August 23, 2017

Location: Gulbahor

Guzal Jumabayeva (home raided by police, book 'Love and Marriage' seized)

Date: October 11, 2017

Location: Yangiyul

Marifat Topilova (home raided by police, book 'Love and Marriage' seized)

Date: October 11, 2017

Location: Gulbahor

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2326

Today's Martyrs

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

or write to

2490 Black Rock Turnpike #455

Fairfield CT 06825-2400

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