

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2017-10-29 through 2017-11-04



### Cameroon

Adamu Nguda (**killed** by Boko Haram militants, six children aged 3 to 15 abducted and taken to Nigeria, the children later escaped and were recovered by the Nigerian military)

Date: August 17, 2017

Location: Moskota village

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/10/cameroon-6-siblings-kidnapped-boko-haram-escape-safety/>



### Central African Republic

#### Event: Christians fled after Muslim rebels attacked their town

Madeleine (aged 9, sister of Cesare, carried her sister on her back, separated from her family)

Cesare (aged 15 months, sister of Madeleine)

Brigitte (aged 40, wife, mother of ten, said "Why is this happening to us? We used to have a decent life. I used to run a small business, while my husband was a nurse. We earned enough to look after our children...We have no bed or mattress...We sleep on a piece of tent. At night, it's difficult to sleep. It's cold and mosquitos are flying all around and biting us")

Christiane (aged 29, mother of three, abandoned by her husband before the fighting, concerned that her twin babies will get sick)

Deacon Valentin (husband, father of eight aged 2 to 16, said "By the grace of God, we got the strength and energy to walk all the way" to a refugee camp, said that not all who fled the town have been accounted for)

Date: September 24, 2017

Location: Bocaranga

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/10/central-african-republic-idps-angry-at-un-failure-to-protect-them/>



## Egypt

Andrew Nassif (blogger, convicted on terrorism charges for his internet postings, sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment)

Date reported: October 30, 2017

Location: Cairo

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63159->

[AFRICA EGYPT A Christian condemned to prison under the new anti terrorism laws](#)

Bishop Makarios (**UPDATE:** issued a statement after police closed three churches and appear about to close a fourth due to Islamic threats “It is as though worship is a crime that Copts have to be penalized for...[the additional travel now required for church attendance] places an added burden on their shoulders for the mere reason that they wish to worship...When Copts are attacked, the response of the officials concerned is invariably disillusioning: churches are closed and Copts are pressured’ into accepting the injustice...Despite the bitterness that fills Copts on account of the recurrence of incidents such as the above, we cite our confidence that Minya Governor and Minya security officials and apparatuses concerned would during the coming days work to lift the agony of Copts”)

Date: October 30, 2017

Locations: Sheikh Alaa’, al-Qesheri, al-Karm, and Ezbet Zakariya villages, Minya province

Source: <https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/10/30/anba-macarius-of-minya-is-prayer-a-crime/>

Fr Rafik Greich (**UPDATE:** described his reaction to the U.S. announcement that it would bypass the UN and directly fund Christian refugees “There is a danger that some will speak of the West, of Crusades, and try to make trouble. It depends on what is funded. If it is a real project — like education — it should work”)

Date reported: November 3, 2017

Source: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2017/november/usaaid-un-funding-persecuted-iraq-christians-arab-leaders.html>



## India

Sajan K George (**UPDATE:** described a police raid on a meeting of 1,500 Christians which had been approved by local authorities “Hindu radicals put pressure on the police to stop organizers. Christians were not doing anything illegal, they were not breaking the law, or creating problems for public order. By contrast, the extremists caused confusion with their fabricated allegations. Nighttime arrests and detention are a serious violation of religious freedom”, seven were charged and released the next day)

Date: October 28, 2017

Location: Dudhi, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Pentecostal-missionaries,-seven-Christian-children-arrested-then-released-42203.html>

Dennis Micheal (severely beaten by the Hindu radicals when he went to the police station following the arrest of Anita Joseph and Amrit Kumar and the detention of the Christian children in their care, the children's parents were also beaten when they attempted to recover their children, later filed a habeas corpus petition for their release but the court took a week to hear and grant the petition)

Date: October 23, 2017

Location: Indore, Madhya Pradesh state

Source: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/madhya-pradesh-forcible-conversion-high-court-hands-over-children-to-parents-4914578/>

Rev Johnson Sathyanathan (described how Hindu extremists have shut down 10 churches and are threatening to shut down 20 more by claiming they require permits from the local tax collectors, said "[This] is a well-planned conspiracy against the Christian community, as the Hindu extremists know that it is not easy to approach the Collector's Office for permits. The time to get such approvals can stretch from a year and a half to many years. We wanted to organize a day of silent protest on 21 October, but we were denied permission")

Date reported: November 1, 2017

Location: Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu state

Rev Solomon Raja (church closed by police following a complaint from the Hanuman Sena Hindu extremist group)

Date: September 1, 2017

Location: Myleripalaya, Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu state

Pastor Vinod Kumar (church service interrupted by 25 RSS paramilitary radicals)

Date: October 15, 2017

Location: Mathampalayam, Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu state

Pastor Charles (ordered by police and 20 RSS paramilitary members to stop religious services until he received a permit)

Date reported: November 1, 2017

Location: Kalampalayam, Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu state

Pastor Selva Singh (filed a court case against police and the tax collector for demanding he obtain a permit to continue religious services, granted one month's extension)

Date reported: November 1, 2017

Location: Sulur, Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Tamil-Nadu-authorities-stop-worship-in-ten-Protestant-churches-42215.html>

and <https://morningstarnews.org/2017/11/officials-police-tamil-nadu-state-india-halt-worship-10-churches/>

Cardinal Telesphore Toppo (**UPDATE**: criticized the state government after it voted to ban from voting people who had more than 2 children "It is a human rights violation. Restricting our people, who generally have more than two children, to contest the election is blocking our people from coming up in life. The government wants to demoralize and suppress tribal people and crush any emerging leadership")

Date: November 3, 2017

Location: Jharkhand state

Anabel Benjamin Bara (teacher, said "But the government knows that tribals have more than two children. Their concern is only taking over tribal leadership from local bodies. It is a conspiracy to stop the voices of the tribal people...First they tried to take over tribal lands, then they enacted the anti-conversion bill. It is all part of the game to make tribal people powerless and submissive")

Date: November 3, 2017

Location: Jamshedpur, Jharkhand state

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-cardinal-opposes-move-to-marginalize-tribalpeople/80700>

Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX (**UPDATE**: reacted to a newspaper editorial which called for India to become a Hindu state "India is a secular country and it will also remain so. It was not born out of religion and we do not want it to turn it into some religion-based country")

Date: October 30, 2017

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/bishop-dismisses-call-to-make-india-a-hindu-nation/80697>



## Iran

Abdol-Ali Pourmand (aged 38, convert, arrested on [October 19, 2017](#), called home a few days later to say he would be released soon; **UPDATE**: had been transferred to Ahwaz, still not charged, judge told family that they could not hire an attorney to represent him)

Mohammad Ali Torabi (convert, detained on [October 10, 2017](#) by security agents while in his office; **UPDATE**: had been transferred to Ahwaz)

Date reported: October 31, 2017

Location: Dezful, Khuzestan province

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3780>



## Iraq

**Event: Christian leaders described their reactions to the U.S. announcement that it would bypass the UN and directly fund Christian refugees**

Ashty Bahro (said "People are not happy with the UN, they are using money for administration. The help is coming from churches and Christian organizations. They are here in the area, they know what's happening, and they go immediately to help...the churches here are helping all, especially the evangelical churches. We have good relationships with everyone - pastors, priests, and mullahs. Here in our area, the Kurdish Muslims trust Christians. In Arab areas, I don't know")

Date reported: November 3, 2017

Location: Kurdistan

Pastor Farouk Hammo (said "The bottom line is that we do not recommend direct aid from the States to Christians. It will agitate our Muslim brothers negatively against the Christian community")

Date reported: November 3, 2017

Location: Bagdad

Source: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2017/november/usaaid-un-funding-persecuted-iraq-christians-arab-leaders.html>



**Ireland**

Katie Ascough (college student, student union president, removed information on obtaining illegal abortions from the student handbook; **UPDATE:** impeached and removed from office by 69% of the voting student body, said "This is a sad day for me, but it is also a sad day for our university")

Date: October 27, 2017

Location: Dublin

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/10/27/students-at-university-founded-by-john-henry-newman-vote-to-impeach-pro-life-union-president/>



**Israel**

Boutros Mansour (Baptist school director; **UPDATE:** described his reaction to the U.S. announcement that it would bypass the UN and directly fund Christian refugees "Having the US transfer funds directly to persecuted Christians could be a good thing, but American politics will surely mingle in. They will want to brag about the aid to show their success, and to prove to the Christian Right that [President Trump] delivers on his promises...The fuel [of future persecution] will be the high-profile appearance of US aid,

bringing opposition and resentment. American politics and the good of Christians do not necessarily overlap”)

Date reported: November 3, 2017

Location: Nazareth

Source: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2017/november/usaaid-un-funding-persecuted-iraq-christians-arab-leaders.html>



## Jordan

Anahed (mother, Iraqi refugee, husband abducted in [Bagdad](#) in 2006, paid a ransom but her husband never returned)

Date: October 31, 2017

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/10/jordan-charity-restoring-dignity-to-iraqs-refugees/>

Brother Khalaf (described his reaction to the U.S. announcement that it would bypass the UN and directly fund Christian refugees “It could backfire. People already say we are not Arabs, that we are aligned with the Americans against our own people. Maybe we will be targeted more. But in some countries, it can’t get worse”)

Date reported: November 3, 2017

Source: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2017/november/usaaid-un-funding-persecuted-iraq-christians-arab-leaders.html>



## Kazakhstan

Teymur Sultan ogly Akhmedov (aged 61, bus driver, husband, father of three sons, arrested on [January 18, 2017](#) for sharing his religious beliefs with KNB secret police informants, held in pre-trial detention, denied cancer treatment; sentenced on [May 2, 2017](#) to 5 years' imprisonment followed by 3 years' prohibition on preaching, said he will appeal; **UPDATE:** appeal filed)

Date: October 13, 2017

Location: Astana

Yuri Bekker (arrested in [Arkalyk, Kostanai region](#) on [September 10, 2015](#) for distributing religious literature, released after 5 hours of questioning, literature seized; charged by police on [September 11, 2015](#) after distributing more religious material; fined US\$252 on [March 24, 2016](#); **UPDATE:** convicted on a criminal charge for refusing to pay his fine, sentenced to one year imprisonment, sentence suspended, may be imprisoned or have his home seized if he continues to refuse to pay the fine)

Date: October 31, 2017

Location: Zhaksy, Akmola region

Source: [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2331](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2331)



## Lebanon

### **Event: Christian leaders described their reactions to the U.S. announcement that it would bypass the UN and directly fund Christian refugees**

Archbishop Issam Darwish (said “If the U.S. can help Christian organizations directly, it will be good - if it can be done without discrimination. They must serve Muslims and other minorities also. We live together, and want to remain together in our communities”)

Date reported: November 3, 2017

Location: Zahle

Martin Accad (Arab Baptist Theological Seminary chief academic officer, said “The questions are endless and the concerns are many. Depending on how this initiative is presented, churches and Christian groups may be wise to turn down this ‘kindness’”)

Date reported: November 3, 2017

Location: Beirut

Source: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2017/november/usaid-un-funding-persecuted-iraq-christians-arab-leaders.html>



## Nigeria

Rebecca Daniel Choji (mother of Joel Choji and Suzanna Daniel Choji, shot by Muslim gunmen, hospitalized)

Suzanna Daniel Choji (aged 16, son of Rebecca Daniel Choji, sister of Joel Choji, **shot dead** by Muslim gunmen)

Joel Choji (aged 29, son of Rebecca Daniel Choji, brother of Suzanna Daniel Choji, **shot dead** by Muslim gunmen)

Dachung Yakubu (shot by Muslim gunmen, hospitalized in critical condition)

Gyang Dahoro (aged 55, wrote “We have been under attack constantly from these Fulani herdsmen because we are Christians. Our villages have been ravaged, and our houses and churches destroyed, and in most cases these herdsmen have taken over the villages where Christians have been displaced”)

Dachalom Datiri (said “We are saddened by yet another attack on our defenseless members in Jol who were on their way to visit a health care center. All we can do is to keep praying for an end to these attacks and hope that Nigerian government can halt these senseless killings”)

Date: October 24, 2017

Location: Jol village, Riyom local government area, Plateau state

Rebecca Daniel Choji (mother of Joel Choji and Suzanna Daniel Choji, shot by Muslim gunmen on October 24, 2017, hospitalized; **UPDATE: died**)

Date: October 26, 2017

Location: Jos, Plateau state

Rev David Ayeola (aged 26, abducted, ransom of US\$275,368 demanded)

Bishop Samuel Ojo (said of the abduction of the Rev David Ayeola “Our driver attempted to turn back, but he discovered that members of the gang were also coming from the back. He suddenly drove into the forest. Myself, my wife, the priest and the driver ran into the bush. I told them to run for their lives, and we fled in different directions. I crawled in the forest like a snake for hours...The kidnappers started calling me from the priest’s phone number,” he said. “From their accents, they sounded like Fulani. They were threatening to kill him if we didn’t pay the money. When I offered them 500,000 naira [US\$1,375], they insulted me and the church”)

Date: October 17, 2017

Location: on the road between Imojo and Oye Ekiti, Ekiti and Ondo states

Rev David Ayeola (aged 26, abducted on October 17, 2017, ransom of US\$275,368 demanded; **UPDATE: shot dead** by his captors during an attempted police rescue)

Bishop Samuel Ojo (**UPDATE:** said after the murder of the Rev David Ayeola “I ordained him in 2015. He was the best at the college of theology in his set. He was an excellent and vibrant preacher of the gospel. We are all saddened by his death. We want the police to get the suspects and bring them to book. This is a great loss to the church”)

Date: October 21, 2017

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2017/10/christian-woman-son-daughter-killed-plateau-state-nigeria/>



## Pakistan

Samina Iqbal (aged 17, daughter of Iqbal Barqat, sister of Venus Iqbal, has been stalked for 4 years by a Muslim who has demanded she marry him, stopped attending school, did not leave her home for any reason for an entire year, threatened with an acid attack after she took a job in a salon, quit her job, police did nothing after the stalker threatened a police officer with a knife)

Venus Iqbal (aged 19, daughter of Iqbal Barqat, sister of Samina Iqbal, attacked by her sister's stalker when he forced his way into their home, clothes torn)

Iqbal Barqat (father of Samina and Venus Iqbal, had made numerous complaints to the police regarding Samina's stalker with little result, was told to "resolve this matter in a peaceful manner")

Date reported: October 31, 2017

Location: Rawalpindi

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/depraved-stalker-who-raised-knife-at-police-officer-continues-to-threaten-life-of-17-year-old-chr>

Mukhtar Masih (aged 70, father of Shaima Masih and Anjum Mukhtar, grandfather of Romilla, Nehmeia, and Shaima, arrested on blasphemy charges in [Lambanwali village, near Gujranwala](#) on [January 28, 2017](#) after a note was found at a mosque, beaten; released on bail in [Gujranwala](#) on [May 16, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: hospitalized with a bleeding stomach ulcer, **died**, family still fears retribution for his arrest)

Date: November 2, 2017

Location: Mansehra

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/pakistani-christian-blasphemy-accused-has-died-before-he-could-clear-his-name>

**Event: A Muslim judge used derogatory anti-Christian slurs in court against a Christian attorney and his clients**

Kashif Alexander Rajpoot (attorney, challenged the judge's use of the anti-Christian slurs, the judge then repeated the slurs)

Rebecca Samuel

Aslam Samuel

Natasha Samuel

Zubi Samuel

Sania Samuel

Daniel Samuel

Date reported: November 3, 2017

Location: Lahore

Source: <https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/muslim-judge-insults-christian-lawyer-and-his-clients-on-their-faith-in-court/>



## Philippines

Rev Eddie Villanueva (criticized President Duterte for the police killing of drug addicts "No one has the right to take another person's life")

Date: October 27, 2017

Location: Manila

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/dutertes-evangelical-backers-join-outcry-against-killings/80652>



## Syria

Patriarch Youhanna X aka Youhanna Yazigi (aged 62, brother of abducted Bishop Boulos al-Yazigi; **UPDATE:** said in [Washington DC](#) "We cannot ignore the fact that, without the Christians in the Middle East, there is no Middle East. The church is the beacon of truth in this educated world. We will continue to witness to that truth even if we are hanged on the cross")

Date: October 24, 2017

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20171030191417.htm>

Pastor Maan Bitar (described his reaction to the U.S. announcement that it would bypass the UN and directly fund Christian refugees "Christians receive only a trickle of the aid and other programs set for IDPs [internally displaced persons] inside Syria. In the camps and on the Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan refugee lists, they are virtually non-existent...They [Western aid agencies] want to bring you a basket of food and a blanket to cover yourself. But not to help you live in dignity. It is the minimum to live, not to make a strong nation...Muslims will be happy [if aid is used for education]. They like to send their children to schools run by Christians")

Date reported: November 3, 2017

Location: Hama

Source: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2017/november/usaaid-un-funding-persecuted-iraq-christians-arab-leaders.html>



## United Kingdom

Dr Martin Parsons (Barnabas Aid researcher, accused the government of "shocking behavior" in allowing only 70 Christian and 22 Yazadi refugees into the country in 2015-2016 from Syria out of a total of 10,801)

Date: October 31, 2017

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20171031122834.htm>

Breda O'Brien (Irish citizen, newspaper columnist, presentation on the upcoming Irish abortion referendum shouted down by pro-abortion activists, the event continued after moving to another room)

Georgia Clarke (member Oxford Students for Life, said “The irony was that the actions of Oxford SU’s WomCam, which ought to represent women of the university, resulted in the harassment of many women present for the event, some of whom were driven to tears. As committee members we have a duty of care to those who attend our events and it was distressing not being able to provide the supportive and open environment we had promised. We invited students to hear speakers, not to be shouted at. The shouting essentially amounted to an attempt to no-platform our speakers. In being party to this protest, the Oxford SU is making us feel like neither we, nor our views, are welcome to even be heard in this university”)

Anna Branford (member Oxford Students for Life, said “We had attempted to create an atmosphere in which all views were welcome and everyone would have a chance to speak, but were instead met with shouting, middle fingers and vitriol”)

Date: November 2, 2017

Location: Oxford University

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/11/02/oxford-student-officials-disrupt-pro-life-event/>



### **United States - District of Columbia**

Amy Coney Barrett (law school professor, mother of 7, federal appellate court nominee, told by Senator Dianne Feinstein on [September 6, 2017](#) "When you read your speeches, the conclusion one draws is that the dogma lives loudly within you" [pundits replied that the Senator sounded like Star Wars’ Yoda], also questioned by Senator Dick Durban as to whether she was an "Orthodox Catholic"; **UPDATE**: nomination confirmed by the full Senate on a 55-43 vote)

Date: October 31, 2017

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pro-lifers-laud-us-senates-confirmation-of-judicial-nominee-45944>



### **Uzbekistan**

Liliya Sitdikova (mother of Vildan Sitdikov, fined US\$779 on [June 2, 2017](#) for possession of religious literature; **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

Vildan Sitdikov (son of Liliya Sitdikova, fined US\$779 on [June 2, 2017](#) for possession of religious literature; **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

Date: September 27, 2017

Location: Tashkent

Sharofat Allamova (aged 48; **UPDATE:** detained in a police raid on a worship service in a private home, taken by bus to the police station, strip searched down to her underwear)

Date: July 23, 2017

Location: Urganch, Khorezm region

Zamira Kurbangaliyeva (aged 50, widow, mother of three, home raided by secret police during a [September 14, 2014](#) worship service, New Testaments and songbooks seized, threatened with the seizure of her children, loss of her home, and prison; fined US\$226 on [October 17, 2014](#); **UPDATE:** ordered to pay the fine again, the court said it had no record of payment)

Date: August 23, 2017

Location: Andijan

Source: [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2329](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2329)



## Vietnam

### **Event: Several Christian leaders were verbally attacked by government-sponsored motorcycle-riding Red Flag militants**

Fr John Baptist Nguyen Dinh Thuc (**UPDATE:** said "We reiterate that this is a plot to carry out violent provocations and suppress parishioners in the Catholic community of Van Thai. As a result, we protest all the dangerous plans that are intended to divide Catholics from non-Catholics...[We call] on the government to respect and enforce Vietnam's laws, as well as protect the lives and properties of its citizens...Every protest by the faithful against the [Red Flag] group's provocations, even if it is in self-defense, is very dangerous. Therefore, the government must be held fully accountable for all the situations that cause damage and disturbance in the area")

Fr Anthony Dang Huu Nam (**UPDATE**)

Bishop Paul Nguyen Thai Hop (**UPDATE**)

Date: October 29, 2017

Location: Son Hai, Quynh Luu district, Nghe An province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Catholics-in-Ngh%E1%BB%87-An-still-targeted-by-Red-Flag-militants-42204.html>

## 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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