

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2017-12-03 through 2017-12-09



Bangladesh

Fr Walter William Rozario (aged 41, assistant pastor, secondary school headmaster, brother of Premol Rozario, disappeared in [Bonpara](#) on [November 27, 2017](#), ransom demanded; **UPDATE**: recovered by police, has suffered psychological trauma and has difficulty speaking, held in custody, accused by police of being mentally ill and of having staged his disappearance, later released from custody)

Fr Subroto Purification (**UPDATE**: criticized the "absurd conference held by the police" and added "We are literally without words. What the police say does not stand up. Why would William have to do this? We were organizing the pilgrimage of the faithful to Dhaka, and he too could not wait to meet the Pope. The staging is an unfounded hypothesis, as well as the mental illness. We do not know what it is based on and we hope everything can be clarified in court")

Date: [December 2, 2017](#)

Location: [Syleth](#)

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63337->

[ASIA BANGLADESH The police no seizure Fr Rozario is mentally unstable](#)

and <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63342->

[ASIA BANGLADESH Fr Rozario released after the seizure he will remain for a period in the Bishop s residence](#)



Central African Republic

Pastor Jean-Eric Vogbia (convert, church and home in the [PK5 neighborhood of Bangui](#) destroyed by Seleka rebels on [December 5, 2013](#), eldest son [a medical student] killed, later said "We tried to contact him on the phone, but he was not reachable. At about 12 noon, my phone rang again and a voice said: 'The boy was killed. We didn't plan it, but as we missed you, we had to kill him'"; **UPDATE**: wife has suffered from PTSD, said "What happened was a punitive act because of my Muslim background. They wanted to silence the preacher who converts Muslims to Christianity...Each time I pass by the ruins

of our family compound, now invaded by wild plants, I feel bad. But I need to overcome my anger and act with love towards my Muslim brothers and friends”)

Pastor Gilbert Bogolo (husband, father of ten, petroleum company employee, church and home in Bangui destroyed by Seleka rebels on December 5, 2013; **UPDATE**: said “Maybe one day we will understand why [God] allowed us to go through this painful experience”, said his parishioners now meet in a tent “It’s not the big attendance of the old days, but the remaining members are more committed than ever. The donations we receive on Sundays are greater than ever”)

Date: December 5, 2017

Location: Bangui

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/12/car-they-wanted-to-silence-the-preacher-who-converts-muslims-to-christians/>



Egypt

Event: Police prevented Christians from visiting a monastery for security reasons

Abba Pasilious (St Stephen monastery leader)

Bishop Tadrus

Date reported: December 8, 2017

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=2043&A=33286>



India

Event: Seven Christians were arrested on illegal conversion charges, ordered held for 14 days

Stanley Jacob (arrested)

David Jacob (arrested)

Vijay Kumar (arrested)

Amit Kumar (arrested)

Sumit Varghese (arrested)

Anita (convert, sister of Mamta Singh, arrested)

Dinesh (arrested)

Mamta Singh (sister of Anita)

Mamta Singh (convert, wife of Pradeep Singh, sister of Anita, home invaded by Hindu radicals during a worship service)

Pradeep Singh (convert, husband of Mamta Singh, home invaded by Hindu radicals during a worship service)

Date: December 4, 2017

Location: Mathura district, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Seven-Pentecostal-Christians-arrested-for-%E2%80%9Cforced-conversions%E2%80%9D-in-Uttar-Pradesh-42516.html>

and <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/Seven-pastors-arrested-in-india-for-forced-conversion>

and <https://morningstarnews.org/2017/12/christians-beaten-falsely-charged-jailed-mob-attack-india-sources-say/>

Bishop Vincent Barwa (**UPDATE**: criticized a call by Hindu radicals to enact the death penalty for cow slaughter)

Date: December 6, 2017

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/bishop-criticizes-death-penalty-call-for-cow-slaughter/80995>

Shibu Thomas (founder of Persecution Relief; **UPDATE**: reported on an attack by RSS paramilitary members on a prayer meeting attended by 600 Christians, men were beaten, women molested, automobiles and bicycles vandalized, said “Christians had completed 200 days of prayer under the leadership of Rev Lakhchan Sahu. At around noon, more than a thousand people from the RSS and Bajrang Dal [youth organization] stormed the prayer venue”)

Rev Lakhchan Sahu (leader of the disrupted meeting)

Date: December 6, 2017

Location: Tarra village, Ranjim, Gariaband district, Chhattisgarh state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Hindu-nationalists-attack-a-Christian-prayer-meeting-in-Chhattisgarh-42527.html>



Iran

Abdol-Ali Pourmand (aged 38, convert, arrested in [Dezful](#), [Khuzestan province](#) on [October 19, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: released on bail of US\$60,000)

Date: November 25, 2017

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3805>



Iraq

Fr Afram al-Khoury Benyamen (said "The reality is we cannot stay without the U.S. or the UN helping to protect Nineveh directly. With international protection maybe we can remain, but if it doesn't come soon...we go...ISIL is not finished in Mosul and still they can come straight here. We expect more attacks. It is like staring into the darkness...Before ISIL, everything was green. Now everything is finished, nobody gave the olive trees water. And when I see the village like this I feel there is no life here. We used to have 150 doves come to our church, too. But after ISIL, even they have not come back")

Mariam Ishaq (aged 58, said "There is no stability. Our homes are destroyed. I don't want to leave," Ishaq said. "But what else can we do?")

Faiza Yaaqoub (aged 68)

Deacon Benian Abdullah (said "We are always worried about who will be our future government? Who will be the next to control us?")

Rimon (aged 33, son of Silvia, **died of untreated cancer** in [February 2017](#))

Silvia (mother of Rimon, said "Because of this crisis we could not find him medicine. We could not get help for him to leave. And so he lost his life")

Date reported: December 6, 2017

Location: Bahzani

Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/12/05/life-after-isis-christians-say-cant-go-home-without-international-protection.html>



Nigeria

Jonathan Luka (aged 28, farmer, attacked by armed Fulani Muslim herdsmen while harvesting, hospitalized)

Date: November 26, 2017

Location: Bangai village, Bachi district, Riyom local government area, Plateau state

John Danladi (farmer, attacked by armed Fulani Muslim herdsmen while harvesting, beaten into a coma, hospitalized, regained consciousness)

Date: November 29, 2017

Location: Rakung village, Ropp district, Riyom local government area, Plateau state

Rev Yakubu Pam (**UPDATE**: spoke in response to a Fulani Muslim attack on a mining site where the miners were predominantly Christian, four were killed)

Date: November 30, 2017

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

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/12/nigeria-northern-christian-leaders-claim-government-lacks-political-will-to-stop-fulani-herdsmens-impunity/>



Pakistan

Lucky Saleem (aged 7, **killed along with 2 others by a grenade** that had been thrown at the main gate of a Christian colony [ghetto])

Date: December 2, 2017

Location: Charman, Baluchistan

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/christian-colony-attack-in-pakistan-kills-young-boy/80980>

Event UPDATE: Additional report on the murder of 6 year old Sicilia Myra

Reena Masih (aged 26, wife of Waris Masih, mother of Sicilia Myra, Reena, Saira and Naira, said “I wish I had died, not my daughter. I was with Reena, who asked me to take her to the toilet when the shooting suddenly began...My lovely, bright intelligent daughter was taken away from me by a cruel and brutal man. She was the eldest sibling for my younger children and such a good example to them. She was so excited by the birth of Naira, my youngest daughter, and loved to dress her up. She said Naira was her living doll, but now she will not see her sister grow up...Her sister Saira keeps asking me where Myra is. I have told her that Myra is playing with the angels in heaven—this gave her some solace. She has been traumatized by the murder of her sister...I cannot express the pain I feel. I am deeply depressed and find it hard to carry on. I feel as if I have failed my daughter. It is my responsibility to my remaining children and my husband that keeps me going and the knowledge that God is now caring for my daughter in heaven, where one day I will see her again and ask her to forgive me. I will cry and mourn my daughter every day till the day I am reunited - she will never be forgotten”)

Saira (aged 3, sister of Sicilia Myra)

Naira (baby sister of Sicilia Myra)

Date: November 28, 2017

Location: Faisalabad, Punjab province

Source: <https://www.charismanews.com/world/68521-6-year-old-christian-girl-shot-to-death-over-father-s-debts>

Khalid Shehzad (activist, called on the government to release statistics regarding minorities from the 2017 census "For the past 70 years, minorities have been demanding a combined distribution of country resources. Today they are downtrodden due to lack of access to opportunities. Even the five percent job quota for minorities is usually neglected")

Date: December 6, 2017

Location: Lahore, Punjab province

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistan-minorities-demand-to-know-census-results/80997>



Philippines

Pastor Perfecto Hoyle (**shot dead** by gunmen)

Date: November 16, 2017

Location: Jabonga, Agusan del Norte

Pastor Lovelito Quinones (**killed** by police allegedly in a gun battle with Communists, critics say a gun was planted on his body, forensic tests showed no powder residue on his body)

Date: December 3, 2017

Location: Mansalay town, Mindoro Oriental, Luzon

Fr Marcelito "Tito" Paez (aged 72, officially retired but still active in ministry, **shot** while driving in traffic by four gunmen on motorcycles, **died** in the hospital)

Bishop Roberto Mallari (called the shooting death of Fr Marcelito "Tito" Paez an execution)

Sr Elenita Belardo (said "The execution is a brutal act that aims to sow terror among those who oppose the militaristic and despotic nature of Duterte's government and to silence those who continue to denounce extrajudicial executions and violations of human rights")

Fr Oliver Castor CSSR (said that the government's extrajudicial killing of drug dealers and addicts has begun to expand to political dissidents "It is systematic killing directed towards a specific section of the population. The year past, the targets were drug users, this time, leftists...[It] is chillingly reminiscent of the years of Marcos martial rule")

Date: December 4, 2017

Location: San Leonardo town, Nueva Ecija province, Luzon

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63354->

[ASIA PHILIPPINES A priest killed a targeted execution alarm of rural missionaries](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63354-ASIA_PHILIPPINES_A_priest_killed_a_targeted_execution_alarm_of_rural_missionaries)

and <https://www.ucanews.com/news/rage-grief-sweep-philippines-after-murder-of-priest/80983>

Event: Churches have begun to prepare for government repression

Fr Oliver Castor CSSR (**UPDATE**: said "We laid down security measures, fallback positions. But we never thought it would hit us so close to home, so fast")

Fr Jonash Joyohoy (said of his church involvement in tribal areas "We are not pulling out, we are never pulling out. But we need to tighten safeguards because of the upsurge in security risks")

Date: December 5, 2017

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/clergy-religious-plan-measures-against-duterte-crackdown/81001>



Russia

Raufi (convert, Iranian citizen, monastery worker, detained on [October 18, 2017](#) after his asylum application had been rejected, deportation could result in his prosecution in Iran; **UPDATE:** released, deportation halted, asylum application resubmitted)

Date reported: December 8, 2017

Location: Sverdlovsk

Source: <http://orthochristian.com/109016.html>



Tajikistan

Daniil Islamov (aged 18, conscientious objector, forcibly conscripted in [April 2017](#) despite serious health issues; sentenced in [Qurghonteppa, Khatlon region](#) on [October 13, 2017](#) to six months' imprisonment; **UPDATE:** Supreme Court sent his case back to court due to 'mistakes in the decision' but did not cite those mistakes)

Date: November 28, 2017

Location: Dushanbe

Pastor Bakhrom Kholmatov (arrested in [Khujand](#) on [April 10, 2017](#) by the NSC secret police on charges of 'extremism', condition unknown; reported on [July 14, 2017](#) to have been sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment for 'singing extremist songs in church and so inciting religious hatred', friends and family threatened with arrest if they disclose details of the trial; **UPDATE:** has decided to not appeal)

Date: November 29, 2017

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2337



Uganda

Mulangira Ibrahim (aged 27, convert, former Islamic teacher, converted after being temporarily struck blind on [October 4, 2015](#) when he attempted to question a Christian pastor regarding a vision of his conversion, beaten that day by local Muslims; **UPDATE:** ambushed near a church and beaten, said “On my way to the church premise, four people stopped me and then got hold of me and started threatening me that if I do not recant Christianity and return to Islam, then they were going to kill me. I did not answer them, and one began slapping me, while another hit me with a blunt object. As I started screaming for help, I received more blows and from there I lost my consciousness”)

Pastor Charles Musana (brought Mulangira Ibrahim to a clinic, said "Ibrahim suffered backache, head and leg injuries, and we found him in a pool of blood. We rushed him to a Jaguzi dispensary, and the following day we recorded the incident with the police...The attack was so severe that it will take more than a month for Ibrahim to recover from the multiple injuries")

Date: November 16, 2017

Location: Jaguzi Island, Mayuge district

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2017/12/christian-uganda-lost-family-muslims-beaten-unconscious/>



United Kingdom

Daniel Courney (aged 33, U.S. citizen, convicted on [September 14, 2017](#) for use of 'threatening and discriminatory language' while street preaching; **UPDATE:** conviction overturned on appeal)

Date: December 7, 2017

Location: Lincoln

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/freedom/christian-street-preacher-cleared-of-hate-speech-conviction>

Jacob Rees-Mogg (aged 48, Member of Parliament; **UPDATE:** wrote "One of the Conservative Party's clearest manifesto commitments was to lift the cap on places for Catholics at new schools. It said 'we will replace the unfair and ineffective inclusivity rules that prevent the establishment of new Roman Catholic schools, instead requiring new faith schools to prove that parents of other faiths and none would be prepared to send their children to that school'. There is no wriggle room in that sentence – yet the Department for Education, instead of implementing the policy decision, has decided to have an enquiry to decide whether to do what was promised or not...The problem with the current rules is that they limit the number of places for Catholics in new schools to 50 per cent if other, non-Catholics, wish to attend. This policy was not introduced with Catholic schools particularly in mind, but has a greater impact on them because, unlike some religious schools which attract virtually no one from outside their own community, Catholic schools are popular with non-Catholics...However, under Canon law Catholic bishops have certain obligations which mean that places cannot be preferentially offered to non-Catholics at the exclusion of Catholics")

Date: December 7, 2017

Source: https://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2017/12/jacob-rees-mogg-why-wont-the-education-department-honour-the-conservative-manifesto-pledge-on-catholic-schools.html?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Thursday%207th%20December%202017&utm_content=Thursday%207th%20December%202017+CID_8c4f02a1eef9624f291be2a8be70bd46&utm_source=Daily%20Email&utm_term=Why%20wont%20the%20

[Education%20Department%20honour%20our%20manifesto%20pledge%20on%20Catholic%20schools](#)



United States - Ohio

Jared Plesec (aged 21, Salvation Army employee, **shot dead** by a criminal, had preached the Bible to his killer before he died)

Date: December 2, 2017

Location: Cleveland

Source: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/salvation-army-worker-shot-dead-with-bible-in-hand-preaching-the-gospel-to-his-killer-in-ohio-208823/>

United States - Virginia

Purity Thomas (aged 15, student, punched in the face by an abortion supporter, treated at a hospital for a concussion)

Date: December 2, 2017

Location: Roanoke

Source: <http://www.lifenews.com/2017/12/04/abortion-activist-punches-15-year-old-girl-in-the-face-who-was-praying-at-planned-parenthood/>



Vietnam

Fr John Luu Ngoc Quynh CSSR (aged 53, prevented from leaving the country to visit France for an ordination 'for the protection of national security, social order and safety')

Date: December 5, 2017

Location: Hanoi

Fr John Nguyen Ngoc Nam Phong CSSR (prevented from leaving the country to visit Australia to study)

Date: April 2017

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnam-bars-another-priest-from-leaving-country/81003>

Today's Martyrs

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

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