

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*

## Weekly Report – 2017-12-24 through 2017-12-30



### Bangladesh

Peter Hasan (alias, convert, husband, disowned and disinherited by his family, believes he would be killed if he visits them, said "I think the birth of Jesus Christ is important because he came to earth as a man to save mankind. I welcomed Jesus Christ in my heart. During this period of Christmas, I receive peace and blessings")

Date: December 27, 2017

Location: Dhaka

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/For-a-Christian-convert,-Christmas-is-a-time-of-blessings-42682.html>



### China

Pastor Li (reported that the government has closed three churches)

Date: December 21, 2017

Location: Shunyi district, Beijing

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/12/investigation-opens-in-schools-churches.html>

Fr Joseph (teacher, said that the current anti-Christmas campaign at universities has been circulated privately among administrators to avoid legal challenges)

Date: December 21, 2017

Shou Chenxiao (PhD candidate, received a 'serious warning' for evangelizing on campus)

Date reported: December 21, 2017

Location: Xiamen University, Fujian province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/12/uca-news-chinese-university-told-to-ban.html>

**Event: A married couple was detained by police during morning prayer, refused to sign a promise to not attend church for two months, released**

Zhou Guanjun (spouse of Li Jionjun)

Li Jionjun (spouse of Zhou Guanjun)

Date: December 8, 2017

Location: Guangzhou, Guangdong province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/12/christian-couple-taken-into-custody-for.html>

Li Aijie (wife of imprisoned activist Zhang Haitao, mother of Li Mutian, beaten by her family in Urumqi, Xinjiang on October 9, 2017 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; **UPDATE**: has fled the country with her son, arrived in the United States)

Date reported: December 23, 2017

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/12/wife-of-imprisoned-writer-and-rights.html>

Senior Pastor Joseph Gu Yuese (husband of Zhou Lian Mei, removed on January 22, 2016 from his position as leader of the government sanctioned Three Self Patriotic Movement church; reported on February 3, 2016 to have been arrested on embezzlement and corruption charges, sent to a black jail, had written that his church had been experiencing “unprecedented, chilling trials. Everyone must equally rely on the Lord’s grace to confront [this trial] and triumph over it”; released on March 31, 2016, placed under travel and meeting restrictions; re-apprehended before Christmas 2017; **UPDATE**: released from jail, charges dropped)

Date reported: December 25, 2017

Location: Hangzhou, Zhejiang province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/12/pastor-of-largest-official-church.html>

Zheng (commented on the reaction to the government installation of security cameras to monitor Christmas celebrations at government sponsored churches “For many years, Three-Self Churches were never monitored for celebrating Christmas, but this time the cameras were installed, and many believers were shocked”)

Date reported: December 26, 2017

Location: Heshan, Guangdong province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2017/12/authorities-across-china-ban-christmas.html>



### **Congo, Democratic Republic**

Fr Vincent Tshomba (forced to appear in court after he called for church bells to be rung in protest of the president's refusal to allow elections or to leave after the expiration of his term a year ago)

Date: December 27, 2017

Location: Kinshasa

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/63468-AFRICA\\_DR\\_CONGO\\_Protest\\_of\\_bells\\_justice\\_calls\\_its\\_initiator\\_Fr\\_Tshomba](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63468-AFRICA_DR_CONGO_Protest_of_bells_justice_calls_its_initiator_Fr_Tshomba)



## Egypt

Rev Yehnes Youssef (diocesan spokesman, said three Copts were injured in an attack on a church by a mob)

Eid Attiya (owner of building used as a church that was attacked and contents destroyed by a mob)

Bishop Zusima (said that the attacked church has been in use by up to 500 people each week since 2001, and addressed Muslim complaints that the location of the church was unacceptable “The nearest church is a kilometer away and the people of the village of Waslin would have to walk this distance to be able to pray. There is no transportation available for them except the toktok, which means people would have to pay LE10 to get there, plus another LE10 to come back. This is quite a sum for them to pay, and it would amount to about LE100 [US\$6] for a family to go and pray”)

Eid Abdel Shahid (said “Members of State Security, the police and the mayor’s guards were posted in front of the church. However, five minutes before the end of the Friday prayer, they all withdrew, leaving the church to the crowd, and the church cameras have recorded all this”)

Ramy Kamel (Maspero Youth Association for Development, **UPDATE**: said “MP Abdel Wahab Khalil proposed holding an informal reconciliation session where Christians give up their legal claims, but the church refused. So the MP turned up the pressure, and even said that the Muslims will have a more violent reaction if one of their own is detained”)

Date: December 22, 2017

Location: Waslin village, Atfieh, Giza

Eid Attiya (owner of building used as a church that was attacked and contents destroyed by a mob on [December 22, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: detained for four days)

Date: December 24, 2017

Location: Waslin village, Atfieh, Giza

Source: <https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2017/12/27/behind-the-attack-on-prince-tadros-church-the-sound-of-a-bell-or-the-absence-of-law/>  
and <http://www.aina.org/news/20171223181138.htm>

Ishak Nashaat Birwan (aged 14, cousin of Samir Fekry, disappeared on [December 9, 2017](#), police took no action; **UPDATE**: **found dead** in a canal, had been tortured)

Samir Fekry (cousin of Ishak Nashaat Birwan, said “Ishak’s body had facial deformities, it had no eyes and there were signs of torture on different parts of his body...After kidnapping him, none of the kidnappers contacted us demanding any ransom for his return. So why he was killed? Was it because he is a Christian? We demand the government find the killer and the cause of the killing and how he disappeared for 10 days until he was found dead”)

Rev Adel Rafaat (said “Ishak was a very good young man, he was one of our church members. He was loved by all of us and he loved everybody. He always had a smile...Ishak was targeted and killed because of his faith, because he is Christian. They wanted to spoil the joy of our coming Christmas. Extremists chose a young man from our village specifically because our village is a big Christian village and their aim was to turn Christmas joy of the villagers to sadness”)

Date: December 20, 2017

Location: Izziyah, Assyut province

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/12/26796/>

Moheb Qadri (refugee from the Sinai, said: “We don’t feel any joy this Christmas because of what happened to us. We left everything. I lost my work there: I was working as scrap dealer and the ISIL group took my truck. We can’t return, my brother in-law Nabil Saber Ayoub Mansour went back in May and was shot dead by masked men four days later. All the displaced Christians lost hope of returning after that – what will our future be? I haven’t found work here and we can’t afford presents or new clothes for our children”)

Emad Adel (attorney, said “[President] Sisi has failed to honor the promises of equality he made four years ago to the Copts...He could not take away their constant fear, because of the failure of his administration in the war on terror. Copts fear for their future in Egypt”)

Date: December 25, 2017

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/12/christmas-in-saudi-arabia-and-egypt/>

Fr Rafik Greich (Church spokesman; **UPDATE**: spoke against a new bill in parliament that would criminalize atheism)

Date: December 28, 2017

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Islamic-parliamentarian-wants-to-criminalize-atheism.-Fr.-Rafic:-Political-liberticide-42687.html>

**Event: A suicide bomber and gunmen attacked a church but failed to gain entry, 10 were killed including 2 Muslim police and 8 Christians [2 of which were killed at their appliance store just before the church attack] and 7 wounded**

Fr Andraos Azmi (said the gunmen killed the 2 Muslim police officer outside the church "but we quickly shut the doors. However, they were able to kill some worshippers at the entrance")

Fr Antonio Daniel (said that the imam at the mosque across the street announced on the mosque loudspeakers that the church was under attack and called upon Muslims to rescue their 'Coptic brothers')

Ihab (Sunday school teacher, said "Following the end of the [Liturgy], as the congregation of the church began to leave and I began to collect the children to start Sunday School, we heard shooting outside the church. There was a situation of terror among all the people inside the yard: they all were screaming and running. The situation was terrible, the sound of the shooting was very dense and lasted more than 20 minutes. Many of the congregation who were in the church yard preparing to leave hurried inside when they heard the shooting. They hid inside the church and closed its inside door...The situation

was very terrible, it was like war against the church, the sound of the shooting was very terrifying. Those terrorists used automatic weapons")

Abanoub (said "These terrorists arranged the attack of the church with precision. They knew everything about the church and the time of the ending the mass...One of them was wearing suicide vest under his clothes and tried to enter the church while the worshippers were leaving the church to explode himself and kill many of them...First, the terrorists attacked the security men who were assigned to guard the church and they exchanged fire with them. The terrorist wearing the suicide vest tried to storm the church during the exchange of fire to explode himself inside, but the police managed to shoot him and prevent him from storming the church")

John Abdel-Messih (said "Muslims are not all terrorists. Security agents lost their lives defending the church. The sheikh of the mosque called on the residents of the neighborhood to rescue their Coptic brothers. Muslims actually detained one of the perpetrators, and many of them donated blood to hospitals that treated the wounded. There is still hope in this country")

Date: December 29, 2017

Location: Helwan City, Cairo

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2017/12/29/extremists-attack-egyptian-church-as-worshippers-leave-mass/>

and <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Copts-mourn,-bury-their-dead-after-the-attack-in-Mar-Mina-42710.html>



## **Greece**

Metropolitan Nikiforos Archagelidis (issued a statement unanimously signed by the clergy of his diocese "Our villages are dying out and schools are closing from lack of students. Unfortunately, the authorities are showing their indifference to people who want to give birth and raise their children. We demand that the government render support to underprivileged and large families instead of wasting huge budget funds on financing 300,000 annual abortions...stop the catastrophic decline of Greece, which is hanging on the edge of the abyss")

Date: December 27, 2017

Location: Orestiada

Source: <http://orthochristian.com/109577.html>



## **India**

**Event: Christians expressed unease leading up to Christmas**

Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX (**UPDATE:** said “There are open letters being written to schools in Uttar Pradesh asking them not to celebrate Christmas. What is going on in this country? This is not about Hindus, Christians, Muslims or Sikhs. It is about our beloved India...They are injecting poison in society; they are spreading rumors like those of ‘forced conversion’...In Satna, instead of arresting those who attacked and manhandled the priests, they have filed cases against the priests. This is unheard of. But people in the villages have fear, not only because these mobs and gangs are going around threatening people, but because the police simply seem to be standing by. This is what is worrying, not for Christians alone. This is a worrying sign for the country...We will continue living our faith. Christians have grown most when they have been persecuted”)

Dr John Dayal (**UPDATE:** said “In many such cases and attacks against Christians, the police has been either an idle bystander or has been complicit in the violence. How can one citizen of India threaten another citizen of India and get away with it? It is for the police and the government to act – when will they act?...This accusation of forced conversions is a criminal conspiracy to paint a picture of Christians as the way they have already painted a terrible picture of the Muslims. This is a conspiracy to try and frame Christians”)

Date reported: December 25, 2017

Source: <http://mattersindia.com/2017/12/christmas-in-india-tarnished-by-climate-of-hate/>

**Event UPDATE: RSS paramilitary members attacked a prayer meeting attended by 600 Christians, men were beaten, women molested, automobiles and bicycles vandalized**

Rev Lakhchan Sahu (aged 34, husband, father of two; **UPDATE:** said the Hindu extremists set up a sound system outside the prayer hall “They shouted from the mike, name-calling me a butcher, low-caste and much more, using all kinds of vulgar language. They said that they will carry their flag in one hand and a sword in the other and kill all those who dared to enter the prayer hall...While breaking the chairs, they threw the chairs on some worshippers who tried to stop them, causing them minor injuries. But before they could reach the main hall and attack the worshippers sitting inside, the police arrived”)

Arun Pannalal (president of Chhattisgarh Christian Forum; **UPDATE:** said “There are no second- or third-generation Christians found in the area. As soon as a new church is established, they are intensely persecuted, and the church gradually dies down”)

Date: December 6, 2017

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

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2017/12/hindu-extremists-block-disrupt-large-scale-prayer-service-india/>

**Event: A Hindu extremist invaded a home while people inside were singing Christmas carols**

Rahul Chauhan (drummer, attacked, unharmed)

Jitesh Chauhan (brother of Rahul Chauhan, said of the attacker “He kicked the musical instruments before trying to attack my brother with a knife”)

Date: December 21, 2017

Location: Aligarh

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/24/christmas-violence-and-arrests-shake-indian-christians>

Sapna Tracy (aged 43, wife of Chittilappilly Joju, mother of James, Teresa, Jose, Sebastian, Francis, Mary, Antony, and Philomena, specialist nurse, **died of breast cancer**, had deferred treatment to save Philomena before her birth)

Chittilappilly Joju (widower of Sapna Tracy)

Archbishop Kuriakose Bharanikulangara (said "Sapna was a powerful witness for the pro-life movement. This Catholic couple was inspired by the testimony of the message of the Gospel...She told the doctors that if her life was worthy of value, then the same was true for that of her unborn daughter")

Date: December 25, 2017

Location: Thrissur, Kerala state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Sapna-Tracy,-pro-life-mother-who-refused-abortion-to-save-herself,-dies-42685.html>

Pastor Christopher Bhonsle (went to the police station after Pastor Ajay Kumar and Assaryav were arrested on **March 17, 2017**; **UPDATE**: said "...a band of Hindu extremists came with the media, demanded I come downstairs to meet them, and badgered me with questions – ‘Pastor, why are you helping the arrested Christians? Why are you involving in this?’”, accused of illegal conversion and aiding foreigners, threatened with death)

Date: March 18, 2017

Location: Begusarai, Bihar state

Pastor Ajay Kumar (husband, father of a 3 year old daughter, beaten by a Bajrang Dal [the RSS paramilitary youth wing] mob on **March 17, 2017**, kicked in the face, ear, and abdomen, arrested on offending religious sensibilities charges, released, suffered pain from internal injuries including his ear, released; taken into custody on **November 2, 2017** despite police having no evidence to support the accusation, denied bail despite another judge previously ruling that bail was appropriate; **UPDATE**: released on bail, said “Tensions in jail were heated during the first 10 days as the inmates got to know we were charged with defiling worship places of Hindus. We suffered there, too. They tortured us. In the middle of the night at around 12 a.m., we woke up and prayed till 3:30 a.m., we meditated on the chapters in Revelation and Psalms. We devoted our time for prayer and worship...Amazingly, after 10 days of observing us pray and meditate, they understood that we are framed in a false case...God moved their hearts – when we bowed down to pray, the inmates would break down wailing and crying. They confessed they are sinners and came to Christ. God has done wonderful works inside the prison. We were 42 members in our ward, and over 30 of them came to Christ”)

Assaryav (Bible college student; **UPDATE**: aside from injuries same account as for Pastor Ajay Kumar)

Devesh Lal (coordinator of the Bihar Christian Leaders Fellowship, said “It has become a new trend of violence, where assailants approach the Christians unarmed but with a plan, frame them in false charges and put them behind the bars,” he said. “The apprehension and fear of threats and communal disturbances is very much there in the church and Christians”)

Senior Pastor Bob Raj (said of such attacks “They don’t appear as one of great physical injury, and there is not vandalizing or destruction of structures or material, and all the assailants are very young, aged below 25. In most of the cases, they are unarmed and their main motive is to create that psychosis of fear in the hearts of Christians. If we quantify the loss these false charges have led to in terms of money, it can be put as a huge sum, but the mental agony an accused Christian goes through cannot be quantified”)

Date: November 29, 2017

Location: Begusarai, Bihar state

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2017/12/christians-india-strive-overcome-typical-entrapment-scheme/>



## Iraq

Archbishop Habib Hormouz al-Naufali (**UPDATE:** said at a meeting at the European parliament "The daily practice of robberies, gang rapes, torture and murder of Christians is ongoing. Therefore, they are pondering what will be next. We are afraid of another wave of persecution that will be the end of Christians")

Date: early December 2017

Location: Basra

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20171221180543.htm>

Fr Martin Barni (aged 26; **UPDATE:** said "Celebrating Christmas here is a message, that despite all the threats, persecution, killing and what we faced in Iraq, we have hope that this country will change. The last Christmas liturgy here was in 2013. Now, the cross is lifted again over the Church of St. Paul")

Ghenwa Ghassan (aged 17, said "It might seem strange to hear that a female Santa Claus has appeared in this city. But I wanted to give the people here a simple gift - to bring Christmas to a place where it had been banished")

Date: December 23, 2017

Location: Karamlesh

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20171223181804.htm>

Patriarch Louis Raphael I Sako (**UPDATE:** presided over the first Christmas liturgy in the city in years, asked for prayers for "peace and stability in Mosul, Iraq and the world")

Farqad Malko (said the Christmas liturgy was "important to relaunch Christian life")

Date: December 24, 2017

Location: Mosul

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20171224124158.htm>

Wahida Yaqo Hurmiz (Member of Parliament; **UPDATE:** said only 100,000 Christians remained in the country, added "Baghdad was an important and historical city for the

Christians. But ISIL and Hashd al-Shaabi emerged, the situation of the Christians deteriorated...There is only one church in Baghdad the Christians are using to pray")

Date: December 23, 2017

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20171225114041.htm>



## Nigeria

Emmanuel Adamu (**UPDATE**: described two attacks by Fulani Muslims: “21 people were killed in Fadan Kashi while 17 killed in Nandu”)

Date: December 25, 2017

Locations: Ankpon Village in Nandu and Kabamu Village in Fadan Karshi, Numana district, Sanga local government area, Kaduna state

Source: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/163588-gunmen-attack-kaduna-villages-kill-38.html>



## Pakistan

**Event UPDATE: Four suicide bombers attacked a church during a children’s Christmas Nativity pageant, police and parishioners shot two before they could gain entry to the church but one was able to detonate his vest, the other two fled, at least 13 were killed and 56 wounded, 9 critically**

George Masih (aged 58, father of five, church groundskeeper and security guard, locked the church gate to deny entry to the killers, **killed**)

Sultan Masih (aged 40, husband, father of five, son of Siraj Masih, railroad ticket collector, had helped George Masih close the gate to the church courtyard, **killed**)

Mrs Masih (widow of Sultan Masih, said "I lost my champion, Sultan was my protector and now I feel so vulnerable. I have five children all in education and now we cannot even afford to pay our daily living expenses")

Gulzar Masih (aged 49, father of seven including Ramesh, laboratory technician, **killed**, had bolted the church door during the attack)

Ramish (aged 18, son of Gulzar Masih, injured in the head and right hand, said "I heard gunfire just as I and my younger brother Ishaq were bringing out the youngest children in the church for their nativity drama. My brother and I quickly pulled the children back into the room where they had been changing into costumes. Then a loud explosion occurred I later woke up in hospital...While there I discovered my brother, mother and father were also in hospital. My brother and mother survived but my father lost his life which is a

brutal blow to our family. Our future is uncertain and we have lost a wonderful loving father who we all miss terribly...I will never be able to repay my father for everything he has done for me - it's heartbreaking")

Akash Masih (aged 19, college student, son of Naseem Masih and Parveen Bibi, **killed**)

Naveed Masih (aged 15, brother of Akash Masih, shot in the elbow, hospitalized)

Aster (aged 22, sister of Akash Masih, hospitalized due to shrapnel lodged in her intestines)

Parveen Bibi (wife of Naseem Masih, mother of six including Akash, Naveed, and Aster, hospitalized with head wounds, released)

Naseem Masih (husband of Parveen Bibi, father of six including Akash, Naveed, and Aster, said "My heart is broken, I have lost my handsome, intelligent wonderful son who was in command of his life and was heading towards a good future. His death has shattered our family, we all feel broken, we still cannot believe he is gone. It breaks my heart that I will never see him grow up...Our family is still going through great pain as we wait to see if Aster will survive, I pray on my knees night and day pleading with God to return her to me, it would be a cruel blow if we lose both children, we have done nothing to hurt these evil, twisted murderers, their attack makes no sense...God is our only hope in this country, I will never forsake Him, my family and I will all be back at church on Sunday. We are Christians it is what we do - despite the constant targeting")

Fazal Masih (aged 53, husband of Shenaz, father of five including Faraz, son of Malik Masih, welding shop owner, **killed**)

Shenaz (aged 42, widow of Fazal Masih)

Faraz (aged 22, son of Fazal Masih, said "It was the desire of my father that his all children obtain higher education but now we will all struggle without him. I was going to follow up my bachelors degree with a Master's Degree but now will have to find work to support my family...Our lives have been destroyed and filled with sorrow by some wicked men who are heartless. I hope the two men that are on the run are found and that their capture leads to the exposure of others who are planning similar attacks")

Madeeha Barkat (aged 29, daughter of Barkat Ali, sister of Danish Gill, partially disabled from polio, **killed**)

Danish Gill (aged 27, brother of Madeeha Barkat, said "Despite disabilities my sister was the most loving and caring sister I knew. She would make tea and would lay the table for me and my brothers when we came home from work and school. She was always the one who would open the door to me and I could talk to her about anything...She never complained about her disabilities and lived her life to the full. She survived such a debilitating illness and proved her worth ten times over, which is why her cruel death hurts so much. Our sister was a warrior - she conquered polio and life's difficulties but this heinous attack was too much for her. I will miss her every day of my life")

Arooba Maryam (aged 15, shot in the abdomen, unable to attend school due to a stoma, said "I thank God that he allowed me to survive my injuries, I feel upset that I have survived when so many have lost their lives. I pray that God takes care of those who have fallen, they did not deserve to lose their lives")

Aleeza (aged 18 months, daughter of Ashraf Masih, injured with shrapnel in her abdomen)

Ashraf Masih (father of Aleeza, railroad station janitor, said "Aleeza survived very serious wounds at such a tender age and I can only believe that God has a great purpose for her life...My wife and I could not stop weeping when we thought she was dead, but God brought her back from the brink of death...We rejoice in our Lord who chose to preserve our child's life and we will dedicate her very existence to the furtherance of His Kingdom. Our God truly is great")

Yousaf Khokhar (aged 58, widower, father of five, police constable, injured with glass shards, said "I have been praying for courage because the attack has left me feeling anxious and traumatized. I will never forget the loud sound of the explosion - it still fills me with dread")

Nadia Younas (aged 19, sister of Saima and Aqsa, injured, Nativity pageant performer, said "I was in a queue for Holy Communion nearly all the church was in a line as we prepared to receive the bread, whilst awaiting my turn I could hear gun shots, I was in a fit of panic and did not know what to do. Thankfully Pastor Simon quickly instructed the church to sit or lay down on the floor, he told us to get as low as we could in whatever place we could find...We could hear bullets being fired and I felt a pain sear through my abdominal region I just screamed and screamed, then a loud blast was heard and I fell unconscious, I woke up later in hospital")

Aqsa (aged 10, sister of Nadia Younas and Saima)

Saima (aged 18, sister of Nadia Younas and Aqsa)

Maheen Shezad (aged 14, daughter of Shezad Masih, injured in the abdomen and ankle with shrapnel, hospitalized)

Shezad Masih (father of Maheen Shezad, received a minor head injury, hospitalized, released, said "I was so frightened I thought I was going to die. I still can't believe it happened so many people have been killed - every time I remember what happened I just feel like crying. I will never forget this day it is a painful reminder that Christians are always in danger here in Pakistan")

Shamim Bibi (aged 39, wife, mother of two, injured with shrapnel in the knee, hospitalized)

Tina Qasim (aged 29, wife, mother of five, injured in the right shoulder with shrapnel, hospitalized, released)

Adil Daniel (aged 28, husband of Salva Adil, father of Nida and Mariam, unemployed, injured with shrapnel in the left foot)

Salva Adil (aged 26, wife of Adil Daniel, mother of Nida and Mariam, injured with shrapnel in the abdomen, discharged without completion of treatment)

Ashraf Masih (aged 35, husband of Shazia, driver, shot in the back, hospitalized, both arms paralyzed, said "I was happy and content with life, my wife and were praying for a child but other than that everything was perfect. The men who shot me have left me with two paralyzed arms and I am terrified that I will never have movement back in them...I want Christians everywhere to pray for me, this is so unfair I have done nothing wrong and now only God can help me. He has saved my life now with their help and prayers I want

to be able to hold my wife in my arms again and to be able to drive again that I might be able to support the two of us. Please pray for me")

Salamti Bibi (aged 42, wife of Younas Masih, mother of three including Anum, **killed**)

Anun (aged 19, daughter of Salamti Bibi and Younas Masih, teacher, injured in the foot, said "We were in church, we were celebrating the birth of Jesus. We meant no harm to anyone, we were completely innocent. The two men involved in this attack killed my mother as they killed us all. All they had was hate, a deep rooted twisted hate, that meant they were devoid of compassion...Evil men like this have destroyed our country, they have shattered so many lives and now my family have experienced the same deep sorrow that others who have lost loved ones to a brutal unexpected death. It has shocked me to the core and I am finding it so hard to cope, my emotions are a mixture of anger, frustration and sorrow...I know I will see my mother in heaven one day, but the wait is so long and for now it is small solace. She has been the most beautiful thing in my life and now she is no longer there. I cry myself to sleep and I pray for her, I ask God to let her know that I love her so much")

Sohail Yousaf (aged 44, father of four including Mehak and Wasiqa; **UPDATE**: said "Losing my daughter at such a young age is morale-sapping I have not yet come to terms with her death. She was a beautiful, friendly and intelligent child that did nothing to hurt anyone. Every memory I have of her will be cherished she will never be forgotten")

Sunila Nidat (aged 35, wife of Nidat Masih, mother of Elijah and Zarek, daughter of Arif Bhatti, **killed**)

Nidat Masih (aged 44, agricultural engineer, widower of Sunila Nidat, father of Elijah and Zarek, injured, hospitalized, released, temporarily disabled, said "I lost the love of my life, my wife of 11 years. We had a very happy home and were enjoying bringing up our wonderful children. The blast took Sunila away from me and has left my children terrified, they think that church is a place to be feared, but it is not. It is these killers in our midst that should be feared as they are everywhere and they will no doubt attack us again and again because Christians are anathema...These people have no emotions they are brainwashed and taught that we are demons, but it is obvious who are innocent and evil in this attack...I have to care for my two boys without my wife and I know it will be hard but I will raise them into fine men whatever happens, I owe this to my wife's memory. She is a martyr who is with God now and though I want to pray that I am united with her soon I know I must first see my two boys to adulthood. I just hope she forgives me for failing to protect her from the Islamists that took her life")

Elijah (aged 9, son of Sunila Nidat and Nidat Masih, escaped uninjured due to his parents' actions, psychologically traumatized)

Zarek (aged 5, son of Sunila Nidat and Nidat Masih, escaped uninjured due to his parents' actions, psychologically traumatized)

Arif Bhatti (father of Sunila Nidat)

Date: December 17, 2017

Location: Quetta, Balochistan

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/Bethel-memorial-methodist-church-plan-christmas-service-despite-traumatic-bomb-attack>



## Philippines

Fr Angel Calvo CMF (Spanish national; **UPDATE**: condemned the beheading of a Muslim government soldier, Staff Sergeant Anni Siraji, who had been active in peace efforts)

Date: April 22, 2017

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/christians-muslims-condemn-abu-sayyaf-beheading/79025>



## Syria

Rev Nadim Nassar (**UPDATE**: said that Christians would be celebrating a "wounded Christmas...This is like the thorn in every side: that the younger generation is not around any more. That does not mean that the Christians are not celebrating: they are celebrating to show that Christianity in Syria is not dead, and will never die...We are here to stay, and not only to stay, but to continue our role as a light in the community")

Date reported: December 21, 2017

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20171221123607.htm>

Metropolitan Boutros Marayati (**UPDATE**: commented on the removal of explosives from churches "There's absolutely nothing planned in Raqa. The church is in ruins. Christians are going to visit, but there is no one living there")

Date: December 22, 2017

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20171222122000.htm>

Fr Elias (said "The monastery is being restored, as well as all of Maaloula and the life that was going on there for centuries. We have restored the church, where our main relic is located. We have managed to return the stolen bells. Russia has helped us a lot. And even now, the Russians are restoring a number of icons important to us")

Butrus (aged 15, said "We are all waiting for the evening - we will meet again here, we will sing Christmas carols, light candles, and then go for a walk with friends. It is my favorite holiday")

Date: December 25, 2017

Location: Maaloula

Source: <https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201712251060315644-syria-christians-christmas-celebration/>



### **United States - Louisiana**

Dr Jennifer Roback Morse (Ruth Institute president, organization has repeatedly been dropped from online fundraising companies on discrimination grounds, said “[Our] primary focus is family breakdown and its impact on children: understanding it, healing it, ending it. If this makes us a ‘hate group,’ so be it”)

Date: December 22, 2017

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/financial-company-wont-do-business-with-pro-family-group-accuses-them-of-di>

### **United States - Michigan**

Christine Niles (reported that Christmas carolers at a city-approved nativity were disrupted by two-dozen atheists and Satanists with a bullhorn singing obscene parodies of carols and offering free donuts in exchange for worshipping Satan, said “What surprised me were the number of Satanists who showed up, wearing pentagrams and signs with the demon Baphomet, handing out satanic Christmas cards. There is a Satanic Temple in Detroit, and we’ve had run-ins with them before...All throughout our traditional Christmas carols, the protesters tried to drown out our caroling shouting blasphemies and anti-Catholic slurs, ‘Nazi punks,’ ‘Hail Contraception,’ ‘Hail Satan,’ and obscenities...Atheists also mocked us for our belief in Christ and mocked Christ Himself. They didn’t seem to care that there were little children present as they cursed. A ‘transgender’ couple stood in full view of our group, including of the children, and started kissing”)

Date: December 20, 2017

Location: Ferndale

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/satanists-disrupt-christmas-carolers-singing-in-front-of-city-hall>

## **Today’s Martyrs**

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

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