

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2017-12-31 through 2018-01-06



Bosnia-Herzegovina

Cardinal Vinko Puljic (**UPDATE:** said "During the [1992-95] war and in the immediate aftermath of the war most of the Catholics were expelled from their homes and there was a great deal of destruction and looting. After the war there was neither political nor financial support provided for an ongoing return of the refugees and expelled. The Dayton Accords were not implemented in practice, and those who suffered most were the Catholic Croat minority. It is harder for them to defend their basic rights...The resulting insecurity is evident today among the people, and some people are leaving the country for this reason. They are concerned for the future of their children. The situation has been exacerbated by various negative reports in the media, which have been exploited in order to poison the atmosphere...There are no equal rights for them in those areas where the Catholic minority finds itself in the midst of a majority of the other ethnic groups. This discrimination is expressed in political and administrative terms and above all where employment is concerned...")

Date reported: December 31, 2017

Source: <http://members4.boardhost.com/acnaus/msg/1514682604.html>



China

Pastor Wang Zhongliang (husband of Li; **UPDATE:** banned from holding services by the RAB - Religious Affairs Bureau - and told to 'go to a legitimate religious venue to participate in religious activities')

Date: December 20, 2017

Location: Huludao, Suizhong county, Liaoning province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/01/officials-close-church-for-holding.html>

Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin (underground bishop in Wenzhou; detained on May 18, 2017; **UPDATE:** released)

Date: January 3, 2018

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Msgr.-Peter-Shao-Zhumin-of-Wenzhou-freed-after-7-months-42737.html>



Congo, Democratic Republic

Fr Hugues Ndongisila (reported that anti-government protestors were shot, beaten, and robbed by police after they sought refuge in his church and that police shot out the stained glass windows)

Date: December 31, 2017

Location: Kinshasa

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2018/01/03/police-fire-tear-gas-and-arrest-altar-boys-during-mass-in-congo/>



Egypt

Event UPDATE: 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

Nermin Sadik (aged 32, mother of Nesma and Karin, nurse, pushed her daughters to the ground and covered them with her body, **shot dead**)

Nesma (aged 11, daughter of Nermin Sadik, shot at by one of the attackers, survived, said: "After [our] falling, the terrorist looked angrily at a necklace on my mother's neck and then took out a weapon and fired several bullets at us. One of them hit my mother")

Karin (aged 7, daughter of Nermin Sadik, shot at by one of the attackers, survived)

Magdy Adel (aged 65, hid five worshippers in his store during the attack, said "The terrorist was very agitated when they closed the church's iron gate and he could not go inside. He had a lot of ammunition and kept shooting at the gate, killing some people inside")

Date: December 29, 2017

Location: Helwan City

Source: <http://www.persecution.org/2018/01/01/mother-dies-sheltering-children-from-terrorists-who-attacked-a-church/>

and <https://www.premier.org.uk/News/World/IS-church-attack-death-toll-may-have-been-higher-if-not-for-residents-and-worshippers>

Fr Rafik Greich (Church spokesman; **UPDATE:** said "We can be attacked and this can happen at any time" after two Coptic brothers were shot dead in a liquor store while celebrating New Year's)

Date: January 1, 2018

Location: al-Omraneya, Giza

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/A-bloody-New-Year-in-Egypt-as-two-Coptic-brothers-killed-42724.html>

Imad Gad (former Member of Parliament and political analyst, **UPDATE**: opinion column dropped from Al-Watan newspaper after he wrote "...In our country, where poverty, ignorance, disease and superstition are rampant, it is quite different [than Europe]. We have a vague constitution, confused about the relationship of religion to the state. At the same time, we have laws with ambiguous clauses that intentionally enter the subject in a maze and do not resolve the situation on specific issues. The church building law, which was issued a year ago to arrange the process of building and reforming churches, finds that the approval of the building or the reform 'after reference to the authorities concerned' and it is no secret that the concerned parties concerned the security authorities, The National Security Apparatus, which continues to work according to the principles laid down by the President of the Faithful and within which the Agency works with all its might to deepen the wounds of the Christians in the country and prevent the march towards building a state of citizenship")

Date: January 1, 2018

Source:

<https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2018/01/01/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%89/> - with translation



India

Bishop Vincent Samuel (visited eight women including one nun who were hospitalized after being beaten by police during a protest over a cross demolition)

Date: January 2, 2018

Location: Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Kerala,-protests-against-a-demolished-cross:-eight-wounded,-including-a-nun-42728.html>

Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX (**UPDATE**: commented after 900 radical Hindu ABVP students attempted to invade a Catholic college and consecrate it to a Hindu deity: "The Madhya Pradesh police assured church authorities full police protection. The priests who manage the College, however feel that the situation is potentially very dangerous as over 900 activists were expected to gather in violation of police orders. There was already an aggression earlier on 30 December [2017] despite the presence of 20 policemen. We need to pray more...Calm has returned to the place now as only policemen on watch have remained in the area. We thank once again the Union Home Minister Rajnath Singhji and the Madhya Pradesh police force. And a big thank you for your

prayers. The Fathers and Sisters and other personnel are in a state of shock. Do continue to pray for them”)

Date: January 4, 2018

Location: St Mary's Post Graduate College, Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh state

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63506->

[ASIA INDIA Hindu radicals attack a Catholic college](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63506-)

and <http://www.persecution.in/node/4514>



Laos

Event: Two sisters were dragged from a worship service in the [autumn of 2016](#) by their family, beaten, tied up for four days, refused to renounce Jesus; **UPDATE: both were arrested with seven other Christians in May 2017, later relocated to their Christian cousin's village**

Nani (aged 17, convert, sister of Nha Phong, said "Our mother never hit us, but our father did. He did this after the head of the village told him to. Dad listened to the authorities who did not want us to go to church. He didn't want my Bible in the house, so he took my Bible and hid it somewhere I couldn't find it. I found it later, so now I can read my Bible again...It has been really hard to not obey our father, who is the head of the family. But we want to obey Jesus more than anyone. We know that Jesus died for us, and we do not want to go back to our old religion. Even if it is difficult, we want to follow Jesus")

Nha Phong (aged 16, convert, sister of Nani, said "The head of the village told our mum that if we, her daughters, continue to go to church, they will throw us in jail. They said that we should get out of the village")

Date reported: December 28, 2017

Source: <http://www.gospelherald.com/articles/71771/20171228/teen-sisters-laos-beaten-tied-up-family-converting-christianity-god.htm>



Myanmar

Event: Christians were allowed to publicly celebrate Christmas for the first time in 50 years

Naw Nilar San (said "in 50 years I have never experienced this kind of Christmas feast, many Christian singers sang Christmas hymns, and Christians offered food and drink to the people of Yangon, without any discrimination, bringing everyone a greeting and a wish for peace")

Fr Thet Tin (said "This year is very significant in the history of Burma because Christians were allowed to celebrate Christmas publicly with the people of the city. This Christmas Festival in the city was intended to promote social cohesion, interreligious understanding and friendship among citizens")

Toe Toe (said "Christmas means showing and giving the love of Christ for humanity")

Date: December 25, 2017

Location: Yangon

Source: <http://mattersindia.com/2018/01/after-50-years-the-first-public-christmas-festival-in-yangon/>



Nigeria

Event: Six nuns were abducted

Sr Roseline Isiocha (abducted)

Sr Aloysius Ajayi (abducted)

Sr Frances Udi (abducted)

Date: November 13, 2017

Location: Igouriakhi, Edo state

Archbishop Alfred Martin (said at a press conference "Today is the 48th day that the sisters have been in the hands of the kidnappers. It has been a big source of worry and concern knowing that they are women...It is disheartening that the security agencies have not been able to get the sisters out. We still do hope that the security agencies would do much more than is being done now to ensure that the sisters are released")

Date: January 2, 2018

Location: Lagos

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/archbishop-is-the-nigerian-government-looking-for-missing-nuns-98615>

Amina Isa (aged 40, mother of five, separated from her husband after he converted to Islam in 2012 to gain employment, arrested in May 2017 along with her 21 year old daughter after they were accused by her husband of abduction after she enrolled her younger children in a Christian school, released on bail; **UPDATE:** daughters aged 6 and 15 have been abducted and pressured to convert, said "Because of their refusal to convert too, we have been threatened, beaten, and subjected to all forms of indignities by my husband and his Muslim collaborators...They've constantly been threatened, beaten, and harassed. In fact, at one time, [the oldest daughter, whose name is being withheld for security reasons,] had to take her younger siblings and go into hiding, but both have been traced and captured by the officials and are currently being held against their will in a location undisclosed to me...Right now, my daughters are in the custody of these Muslim officials and are being forced into Islam, while at the same time, we are being tried on false charges. All this is

to force us to recant. We can never stop being Christians, and we are confident that the God we serve can never abandon us in our trying moments")

Rev Ayuba Hassan (Christian Association of Nigeria, **UPDATE**: said “We’ve been able to accompany her [Amina Isa] to the court a number of times. We pray that she’ll be able to get justice from the court”)

Date reported: January 2, 2018

Location: Gidan Kuran village, Kano state

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/01/mother-daughter-in-nigeria-pressued-to-convert-to-islam-accused-of-kidnapping/>

and <https://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-mother-daughters-abused-for-refusing-to-convert-to-islam-after-father-becomes-muslim-for-job-212387/>



Pakistan

Nadeem Samson (aged 44, brother of Michael Javed, mentally ill, arrested on blasphemy charges, tortured)

Michael Javed (brother of Nadeem Samson, in hiding with his family)

Date: November 24, 2017

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/detail.php?hnewsid=6735>



Turkey

Pastor Andrew Brunson (U.S. citizen, husband of Norine Brunson, detained as a 'national security risk' in Izmir on [October 7, 2016](#), denied access to U.S. diplomats, attorneys, and fellow parishioners; ordered held on [December 9, 2016](#) on 'terrorism' allegations from a 'secret informant', attorney denied access to the allegations; as of [August 25, 2017](#) four new charges have been added by prosecutors including ‘gathering state secrets for espionage, attempting to overthrow the Turkish parliament and government, and to change the constitutional order’; confirmed to be a hostage at a [September 28, 2017](#) press conference by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President explicitly called for the U.S. government to exchange him for Sufi cleric and U.S. resident Fethullah Gulen; **UPDATE**: sent a letter to his wife and supporters: "I am deeply grateful to all who have prayed for me. This trial – time in prison – has stretched me far more than I ever would have imagined. I have been very weak, had many doubts, felt very alone. I know that God’s grace is sustaining me, even when I do not feel that grace, and I know that the prayers of God’s people are surrounding me and giving strength. One of my big fears has been that I will be forgotten in prison. Thank you for not forgetting! It is a great

encouragement to know there are people praying for me – it reminds me that I am not alone, and that I need to stand firm, with my face pointed in God’s direction always. Thank you for standing with me in this most difficult time. Many blessings to you. Andrew")

Date: January 2, 2018

Source: <http://meconcern.org/2018/01/02/turkey-imprisoned-us-pastor-grateful-for-prayers/>

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I aka Dimitrios Arhondonis (falsely accused by Turkish media on [September 7, 2016](#) of having supported the July 15, 2016 attempted coup; **UPDATE:** media accusations of coup complicity and of collaboration with U.S.-based Islamic cleric Fethullah Gulen and the CIA have been 'expanding dangerously' against him, reportedly government surveillance against him has increased but his security detail has been reduced)

Date reported: December 29, 2017

Location: Istanbul

Source: <http://orthochristian.com/109686.html>

and <https://ria.ru/religion/20171229/1511987034.html> - with translation



United States – Oregon

Event: Christian couple found guilty on [February 4, 2015](#) of discrimination for refusing to bake a cake for a same sex wedding despite serving same sex couples in other ways, had already closed their business due to harassment; ordered on [July 2, 2015](#) to pay \$135,000 in punitive damages, ordered to cease discussing their religious motivations for their actions; **UPDATE: appeal denied**

Aaron Klein

Melissa Klein

Date: December 28, 2017

Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/court-rules-against-oregon-bakers-who-refused-make-gay-wedding-n833321>

Today's Martyrs

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

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