

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2018-01-21 through 2018-01-27



Austria

Karl Schiefermaier (Protestant High Consistory member, criticized the government for asking Christian convert refugees difficult questions such as who was the first woman to be ordained in Austria and how many sacraments Austrian Free Churches observe [the five branches do not agree] in hearings for asylum, said “This has now reached a stage which is most worrying. The Church and not the State must decide whether or not a baptism is legitimate”)

Date: January 18, 2018

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/us/news/absurd-questions-to-prove-they-are-christian-in-austria-asylum-cases>



Bolivia

Pastor Miguel Machaca Monroy (criticized a new anti-organized crime law that would ban evangelization, said “Will they denounce us if we bring a group of people to a Christian camp? Will I no longer be able to preach the Gospel on the streets?”)

Date: January 18, 2018

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/us/news/new-law-in-bolivia-threatens-preaching-and-witnessing>



Cameroon

Cardinal Christian Wiyghan Tumi (aged 88, condemned military action in which a village was burned to the ground and several killed including a 96 year old woman)

Date: January 22, 2018

Source: <https://www.journalducameroun.com/en/cardinal-tumi-condemns-military-violence-anglophone-regions/>



Canada

Archbishop J Michael Miller (said “The government is exceeding its authority in trying to compel groups and individuals to endorse a position [on abortion and transgenderism] that they ethically oppose, and one which has no bearing whatsoever on the job for which they are seeking funding. The Trudeau government needs to rethink this overly politicized approach to the Summer Jobs Program and revise its application so that it judges the matter on its merits and not something on which there is widespread disagreement in the public”)

Date: January 22, 2018

Location: Vancouver, British Columbia

Source: <https://www.catholicregister.org/item/26693-dioceses-tell-catholics-not-to-sign-canada-summer-jobs-attestation>

Archbishop Terrence Prendergast (wrote “This attestation excludes any Catholic parish or charity from funding for hiring a summer student. We cannot affirm that we support a [non-existent] right to abortion, which is what the euphemism ‘reproductive rights’ means. Further upsetting many is the prime minister’s confused personal comments regarding the logically impossible co-existence of his identity as a Roman Catholic and his support of abortion...Apparently, Canadians have the freedom to hold only the beliefs and opinions approved by the current government”)

Deacon Gilles Ouellette (said his diocese would not sign the attestation supporting abortion and transgenderism)

Neil McCarthy (diocesan communications director, wrote “We have essentially indicated to our parishes that the attestation cannot be checked off. We are in the process of gathering data to determine just how many parishes/groups are impacted within the Archdiocese of Toronto. Some groups may follow the paper copy example but the government has clearly stated they will not consider these to be completed applications. It is, however, a way to track those who cannot sign the attestation”)

Date: January 21, 2018

Location: Toronto, Ontario

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/bishops-denounce-canadian-govt-ban-on-funding-to-faith-groups-remains-unacc>

and <https://www.catholicregister.org/item/26693-dioceses-tell-catholics-not-to-sign-canada-summer-jobs-attestation>



Central African Republic

Fr Alain Blaise Bissialo (stabbed by apparent robbers in his home, hospitalized)

Date: January 4, 2018

Location: Tokoyo

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63522->

[AFRICA CENTRAL AFRICA A priest engaged in peace attacked in Bangassou](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63522-)



China

Event: Several Christians were sentenced to lengthy prison terms for alleged involvement in the Three Grades of Servants cult

Ju Dianhong (sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment, had said to the court during the trial “I am a Protestant Christian believer, and I believe in Jesus. None of my evangelism has contravened any of the principles in the Bible, and my beliefs do not constitute an evil cult. I never preached about the Day of Judgement, and all of my books are available in the Three Self Patriotic Association [government-backed church bookstore]. All I ever wanted to do was resolve conflict and do good deeds”)

Liang Qin (sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment)

Yang Shunxiang (sentenced to between 4 and 8 years' imprisonment)

Zhang Hongyan (sentenced to between 4 and 8 years' imprisonment)

Zhang Shaocai (sentenced to between 4 and 8 years' imprisonment)

Zi Huimei (sentenced to between 4 and 8 years' imprisonment)

Tu Yan (sister of Tu Kui, **UPDATE**: still awaiting trial)

Su Min (still awaiting trial)

Date reported: January 16, 2018

Location: Lincang, Yunnan province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/01/yunnan-christians-receive-lengthy.html>

and <http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/01/radio-free-asia-china-jails-six.html>

Pastor Su Tianfu (issued an administrative penalty on [May 19, 2017](#) for failure to pay a fine of over 7 million yuan [one million dollars]; reported on a [June 9, 2017](#) court hearing his church called to dispute a US\$1 million fine; administrative review application accepted on [August 24, 2017](#), said “The so-called illegal income is ridiculous. We don't have the so-called illegal income. The church was banned. The church's money was depleted [by the government]. How can we possibly take out 7 million yuan [US\$1m]? Why impose the church's expenses on us? We don't own the donation money. It is absurd. The accusations and excuses do not hold up. We all know that it is religious persecution”; **UPDATE**: appeal denied)

Pastor Li Guozhi aka Yang Hua (husband of Wang Hongwu, detained on [December 9, 2015](#) for ‘illegally holding state secrets’; sentenced on [January 5, 2017](#) to two and a half years imprisonment; **UPDATE**: still imprisoned, fine appeal denied)

Date reported: January 17, 2018

Location: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/01/pastors-fined-millions-for-collecting.html>

Lou Siping (church service interrupted by a raid by multiple government agencies, told the officials “The Constitution gives citizens religious freedom. Our behavior does not go against the Constitution”)

Date: January 14, 2018

Location: Ningxia region

Source: <http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/01/church-raided-ordered-to-relocate-by.html>



Congo, Democratic Republic

Fr Dieudonne Mukinayi (detained by police along with up to 11 other priests and 2 nuns during anti-government protests)

Date: January 21, 2018

Location: Kinshasa

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63609->

[AFRICA DR CONGO Violent repression of demonstrations at least 6 dead a dozen priests kidnapped](#)

Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya (**UPDATE**: spoke after demonstrations calling for the president to step down were attacked “We were dispersed by tear gas, stun grenades and live bullets. We have again seen deaths, injuries, priests being arrested, and the theft of citizens’ property...Christians were prevented from praying. Others were prevented from leaving by ... police and military who were armed as if they had been on a battlefield...How can you kill men, women, children, youths and old people all chanting religious songs, carrying bibles, rosaries and crucifixes? Are we now living in an open prison?”)

Date: January 23, 2018

Location: Kinshasa

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/congolese-cardinal-denounces-violent-crackdown-on-protesters-36113>

Fr Robert Masinda (abducted by soldiers in [Bingo](#) on [January 22, 2018](#); **UPDATE**: freed)

Msgr Laurent Sondirya (reported on the abduction and release of Fr Robert Masinda)

Date: January 25, 2017

Location: North Kivu

Source: [http://www.fides.org/en/news/63626-AFRICA DR CONGO Fr Robert Masinda is still a prisoner but we know he is a live](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63626-AFRICA_DR_CONGO_Fr_Robert_Masinda_is_still_a_prisoner_but_we_know_he_is_a_live)
and [http://www.fides.org/en/news/63632-AFRICA DR CONGO Fr Robert Masinda is free says the Vicar General of Bute mbo Beni to Fides](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63632-AFRICA_DR_CONGO_Fr_Robert_Masinda_is_free_says_the_Vicar_General_of_Bute_mbo_Beni_to_Fides)



Cuba

Misael Diaz Paseiro (husband of Ariana Lopez Roque, home raided on [October 22, 2017](#), Bibles, crucifixes, and rosaries seized; **UPDATE**: beaten by political police, arrested, denied access to a Bible or clergy, later sentenced to 3 and a half years' imprisonment)

Ariana Lopez Roque (wife of Misael Diaz Paseiro, underwent a hunger strike until she received assurances her husband would see his rights respected in prison)

Pastor Barbaro Guevara (twice prevented by police from visiting Ariana Lopez Roque after her husband's arrest)

Date: [November 4, 2017](#)

Source: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/cuban-christian-man-jailed-police-confiscate-bibles-told-our-god-is-fidel-castro-215136/>



Egypt

Karim Kamal (Copts for the Nation president, welcomed the government announcement that unlicensed churches would not be raided, said “The real problem lies in the ultra-conservative Islamists in some villages in rural and Upper Egyptian governorates, who fuel tensions over small unlicensed churches to pressure security officials into closing these churches to prevent sectarian strife”)

Date: [January 18, 2018](#)

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/us/news/egyptian-christians-to-be-officially-allowed-to-meet-in-unlicensed-buildings>



India

Pastor Gideon Periyaswamy (aged 43, **found dead in his church, had been hung from the rafters**, body showed signs of beating and torture, police ruled the death a suicide)

Indira (found the body of Pastor Gideon Periyaswamy)

Regina (found the body of Pastor Gideon Periyaswamy)

Pastor Immanuel Prabhakaran (said after the murder of Pastor Gideon Periyaswamy, said that "Not a single Sunday service in the past six months passed off peacefully without disturbance" from Hindu radicals)

Rev Joel Sekar (later said that Christians will continue public protests until the suspects are arrested)

Amos Paul (said police are reluctant to arrest the suspects because they fear a sectarian backlash "They say if the four are arrested, 10,000 will come out on the streets and there will be communal violence")

Rev Reuben (said "the local Hindus were not happy with the increase of the Christian faithful...I have no problems. If the Lord grants it to me, I will die a martyr for Christ, but his ministry will not end")

Date: January 20, 2018

Location: Adayachery, Kanchipuram district, Tamil Nadu state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Tamil-Nadu,-Pentecostal-pastor-found-hanged.-He-had-received-threats-42889.html>

and <http://www.persecution.in/node/4528>

and <http://www.persecution.in/node/4526>

and <https://www.ucanews.com/news/tamil-christians-suspect-foul-play-in-pastors-death/81331>

Seema Devi (convert, wife of Rinku Kumar, **died of natural causes**)

Rinku Kumar (convert, husband of Seema Devi, arrested on false allegations of murdering his wife)

Pastor Ankur Nirula (church destroyed by more than 300 RSS paramilitary members when the parents of Seema Devi discovered he had prayed over her for her recovery from her illness and alleged her death was the result of her conversion)

Date: January 16, 2018

Location: Sehal village, Jammu and Kashmir

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Hindu-radicals-burn-Christian-church-and-shops-in-Jammu-and-Kashmir--42900.htm>

and <http://www.persecution.in/node/4524>

and <https://www.ucanews.com/news/hindus-attack-christians-in-india-over-forced-conversion/81301>



Kenya

Fr Ibrahim Racho (reported on an attack on a cathedral after the arrest of a prominent Muslim "When they [the rioters] were dispersed from there [the first target] they went to the Catholic Church, forced their way in after beating up the watchman and completely destroying the gate. Once inside the compound they started breaking windows using stones. Fortunately, they did not gain entry into the Cathedral")

Date: January 13, 2018

Location: Marsabit

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63607->

[AFRICA KENYA The proto Cathedral of Marsabit attacked](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63607-)



Malawi

Fr Tony Mukomba (pulled from his automobile and **beaten by street bandits, died in the hospital**)

Date: January 17, 2018

Locations: Nguludi and Mwaiwathu

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/63597->

[AFRICA MALAWI A priest died due to his injuries in an assault by street bandits](http://www.fides.org/en/news/63597-)



Pakistan

Archbishop Joseph Coutts (**UPDATE:** sent a letter to the priests of his diocese asking for aid to be sent to the victims of the [December 17, 2017](#) church bombing in [Quetta](#) "The loss is beyond our imagination. Looking at the number of deaths and injured and the damage to the church's property, it is difficult to compensate, especially those who lost their loved ones...I came to know that many of the injured are still in trouble and in pain due to the lack of facilities in state-run hospitals. It is saddening and I know it is expensive to get treatment on your own in private hospitals", has already sent 300,000 rupees [US\$2,709] to the victims)

Date reported: January 24, 2018

Location: Karachi

Rev Saimon Bashir Masih (**UPDATE:** said "We are going through a tough time. The injured people are in much trouble and many have been moved to other private hospitals in Quetta, Karachi and Multan for better treatment...One of our choir members is still under treatment after her intestines were damaged. The bags they are using to help her digestion cost around 1,500 rupees [US\$14] and have to be changed daily. Another choir member's daily expenses are 4,000 rupees [US\$36] due to a leg fracture")

Date reported: January 24, 2018

Location: Quetta

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/archbishop-urges-help-for-pakistan-attack-victims/81326>

Event: A local government ended a two-week ban on church services due to alleged security risks

Pastor Christopher Shakar (wrote "All churches have got verbal permission to reopen and worship according to their religious faith and beliefs. We are expecting to get a written order soon...We are grateful to everyone for being with us when we were facing difficulties to worship our Lord. God has proven once again he is always with us")

Basharat Khokher (activist, **UPDATE:** said "On one hand, the government wants to pay billions of rupees to Muslim clerics, while on the other hand it is shutting down Christian worship places")

Fr Arshad Nayer (said that a government failure to reopen the churches "would give a bad message to minorities...Local mosques do not need a No Objection Certificate from provincial governments, and the same policy should be adopted for churches as well...Instead of providing security for the said churches, the administration has found it convenient to shut them down")

Rev Sadiq Masih (said "We received the closure notice after New Year's service. We shall soon legalize our status. God's work cannot stop")

Date reported: January 22, 2017

Location: Abbottabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/-Six-churches-reopen-in-Abbottabad,-Osama-bin-Laden%E2%80%99s-city-42893.html>
and <https://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistan-reopens-churches-after-outcry/81313>

Saira (aged 13, daughter of Shamim Bibi and Afzal Masih, cousin of Komal, farm laborer, submitted to rape after her attacker threatened to kill her cousin)

Komal (aged 12, cousin of Saira, farm laborer, tied up by a Muslim coworker, threatened with death and rape, managed to partly free herself and scream for help, assisted in rescuing her cousin from rape)

Afzal Masih (husband of Shamim Bibi, father of Saria, rescued his daughter from rape and her cousin Komal)

Shamim Bibi (wife of Afzal Masih, mother of Saria, said "I can't bear this disgusting attack on my daughter. This evil man Aamir has destroyed her life she is left broken and in despair and it will take a long time for her to recover. The audacity of this man to rape my daughter while she was at work even though he was identifiable is disturbing. Both Komal and Saira believe if he was not caught in the act he would have raped them both, killed them and buried them in the fields. The man is sheer evil and we wonder whether he did the same to any other girls. I hope he is punished with the full severity of the law and never released to hurt any other victims again")

Date: January 14, 2018

Location: Kotwaris

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-domestic-servant-of-13-raped-while-younger-cousin-was-tied-to-a-bed>

Shehzad Mansha Masih (sanitation worker, **overcome by gas while working in a sewer, died in the hospital**, had been denied safety equipment as had his rescuers)

Date: January 22, 2018

Location: Korangi, Karachi

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/63610-ASIA_PAKISTAN_Yet_another_Christian_victim_among_sewer_laborers



Philippines

Event: Church leaders criticized an effort in Congress to amend the Constitution to protect only 'responsible' freedom of speech

Archbishop Rolando Tria Tirona (said the proposal is from a "frightened and insecure government not worthy to lead the people to truth, justice, and to total good", added that the government's revocation of an online news site's license "smacks of a reign of terror, an arrogant, and high-handed warning to media practitioners that do not kowtow to the administration...Catholic media must always side with freedom, which is the sure way to human enrichment")

Date: January 23, 2018

Location: Caceres

Bishop Mylo Vergara (said "[Have] courage not to compromise the freedom of telling the truth despite pressure from those in power", also complained that the media is being paid "to frame news and even distort truth")

Date: January 23, 2018

Location: Pasig

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-plan-to-limit-press-freedom-draws-flak/81311>



Syria

Christine (aged 15, student, wounded in a mortar attack, leg amputated)

Rita (aged 15, student, **killed**)

Date: January 24, 2018

Location: Damascus

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Caritas-Syria:-Christian-blood-on-Damascus,-churches-attacked-and-faithful-killed-42924.html>



Thailand

Zahid Younis (Pakistani refugee, one of 9 adults and 13 children detained on immigration violations, said "We were caught unawares and our children are frightened. They have been asking me if we will be sent back to Pakistan and killed, the nature of the attack on my children and me in Pakistan is still affecting them. I have told them for now we will be kept safe in the IDC a place that frightens us all, we have heard of its insalubrious nature and brutality. Even then it seems like paradise when we think of the dangers in Pakistan a nation we once called home")

Date: January 23, 2018

Location: Bangkok

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/3-children-arrested-during-brutal-Thai-asylum-raids-despite-Thai-President-as>

Asloob George (aged 47, husband of Ulfat Rani, father of Shahid, Shawn, and Edward, Pakistani refugee, fled Pakistan on [April 17, 2014](#) following blasphemy allegations against one son; detained on immigration violations in [2015](#); sent to the hospital in [December 2017](#), illness not diagnosed, was not expected to survive but was returned to detention; **UPDATE:** returned to the hospital, bail again denied)

Ulfat Rani (aged 48, wife of Asloob George)

Shahid (aged 27, son of Asloob George)

Shawn (aged 12, son of Asloob George)

Edward (aged 14, son of Asloob George)

Date: January 25, 2018

Location: Bangkok

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/a-beleagured-christian-family-fleeing-persecution-are-calling-for-release-of-their-father-on-promise>



United Kingdom

Events: Two street preachers were questioned by police on [December 9, 2017](#); questioned by the police again on [December 30, 2017](#) with legal counsel present; **UPDATE: case closed**

David Barker

Stephen Wan

Date: January 16, 2018

Location: Camberley, Surrey

Source: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/freedom/two-street-preachers-questioned-over-hate-speech-have-all-charges-dropped>

Today's Martyrs

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

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