

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2018-04-01 through 2018-04-07



Central African Republic

Event UPDATE: Approximately a dozen Christians were killed by anti-balanga militants

Fr Joseph Desire Angbabata (aged 49, **killed**, **UPDATE**: had refused to move to a UN protected camp because he would have abandoned people who had taken shelter at his parish)

Archbishop Richard Appora (said “We lost a young priest. Fr Joseph Desire Angbabata died as a martyr in his field of mission, the Church”)

Date: March 20, 2018

Location: Seko

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/03/dozens-killed-in-car-including-priest-who-planned-to-move/>



China

Bishop Vincent Guo Xijin (aged 59, underground bishop, abducted by police on March 26, 2018 after refusing to concelebrate Easter Mass with an excommunicated bishop; **UPDATE**: returned to his residence, prohibited from public Mass)

Date: March 27, 2018

Location: Mindong, Fujian province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mindong,-Msgr.-Guo-is-back,-but-banned-from-celebrating-Christm-Mass-as-bishop-43480.html>



India

Event: Twenty Hindu radicals attacked a church service

Pastor Jose Prakash (said “Just five minutes in, we were making some arrangements [for the baptisms] and all of a sudden the 20 people in saffron clothes appeared with wooden sticks. I went to talk, and find what they are up to, but they held me by my collar and alleged: ‘You are carrying out conversions here!’ I tried to calm them down and make them understand that I only baptize those who come forward willingly, and there is no force. But they were not convinced. They started punching me, and rushed inside the kitchen in the church building and picked some knives. I did not want them to cause harm to anyone, so I quietly took the beatings”, after prayer decided to not file a police report)

Dinesh Kumar (aged 25, attempted to protect Pastor Jose Prakash, "badly" beaten, detained by police, hospitalized with head, eye, and ear injuries and headaches, nausea, and vomiting, "condition is worsening")

Prem (aged 45, new convert, baptismal candidate, beaten, detained by police, hospitalized)

Date: March 28, 2018

Location: Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/03/india-baptism-service-halted-by-hindu-mob-claiming-forced-conversions/>

P B M Basaiawmoit (National Council of Churches; **UPDATE**: had sent a letter to the state government opposing the cancellation of Good Friday as a holiday, the cancellation was rescinded following widespread protests, said “This episode shows that the BJP [the Hindu nationalist political party] will do anything wherever they are in power. We have to be on the alert...I cannot understand why national organizations should issue orders to offend a community in a particular state. This cannot be seen in isolation from the BJP becoming a part of the ruling coalition after the February election”)

Date: March 27, 2018

Location: Meghalaya state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/03/good-friday-holiday-reinstated-in-christian-majority-indian-state-after-protests/>

Sajan K George (president of the Global Council of Indian Christians; **UPDATE**: reported on the police questioning of eight Christians accused of illegal conversions: "[It was] at the behest of local citizens, who had reported them for activities related to the Christian faith. The policemen, however, neither detained nor held the accused in custody. They were held and interrogated in the police station and then released after an hour...we thank the police of the town who released the faithful who were accused without proof")

Date: March 26, 2018

Location: Ishanagar, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Uttar-Pradesh,-police-release-8-Pentecostal-Christians-accused-of-'forced-conversions'-43473.html>

Bismarque Dias (activist, former priest, **body found with injuries in a river**, police did not question the people he was last seen with)

Date: November 7, 2015

Location: Goa

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/goan-activists-death-dismissed-as-drowning-again/81955>

Bishop Kishor Kumar Kujur (denounced the arson attack against one church and the vandalism of another on Easter "It was a premeditated and planned attack. Both incidents occurred during the night, at about the same time. The parishes are 7-8 km away from each other. This is the work of the same group, which is against the Christian community")

Archbishop John Barwa (**UPDATE**: said "We did not expect such an attack in a secular country. These episodes of desecration that offend our religious sentiment must end...this year marks the tenth anniversary of the violence of Kandhamal" in which dozens of Christians were killed and hundreds displaced)

Date: April 1, 2018

Locations: Bihabandh and Salangabahal villages, Orissa state

Father Bipin Kishore Majhi (vestments destroyed in the arson attack)

Date: April 1, 2018

Location: Bihabandh village, Orissa state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Orissa,-statues-of-the-Virgin-and-Child-Jesus-destroyed-at-Easter-43511.html>

and <https://www.ucanews.com/news/churches-attacked-in-indias-sensitive-odisha-state/81968>



Indonesia

Trinita Hutahayan (aged then 3, church in Samarinda, East Kalimantan attacked with Molotov cocktails by an ISIL sympathizer on November 13, 2016, hospitalized in serious condition; **UPDATE**: now aged 5, has continued to undergo medical treatments)

Date: March 29, 2018

Source [warning - graphic]: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/03/indonesia-church-bomb-attack-victim-trinita-5-healing-well-father-says/>

Archbishop Ignatius Suharyo Hardjoatmodjo (**UPDATE**: spoke out against corruption after six politicians including one Christian were arrested)

Yohanes Handoyo Budhisedjati (**UPDATE**: said Catholics "need to uphold the spirit of a good governance which can unite all social elements")

Hargo Mandirahardjo (chairman of the Association of Catholic Graduates and Intellectuals in Indonesia, said he approved of the Archbishop's comments on corruption and added "We must continue to promote our national unity. If we don't, then who will?")

Date: April 1, 2018

Location: Jakarta, West Java

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/jakarta-archbishops-easter-message-focusses-on-threats-to-unity/81949>

Events: Church leaders thanked Muslims for attending Holy Week services in a demonstration against intolerance

Bishop Petrus Canisius Mandagi (thanked dozens of young Muslims for attending a Good Friday procession "This is an example of where religion becomes a unifying tool and this religious celebration becomes a bridge to strengthening relations")

Date: April 1, 2018

Location: Ambon, Maluku province

Fr Antonius Benny Susetyo (**UPDATE**: said the attendance of the governor at Easter celebrations "gives us hope that the commitment to preserve unity remains strong in society")

Bonar Tigor Naipospos (**UPDATE**: said of the attendance of the governor at Easter celebrations "We need such examples to educate the public, that differences of beliefs should not make us hate and demean each other")

Date: April 1, 2018

Location: Jakarta, West Java

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indonesian-muslims-defy-extremism-by-marking-holy-week/81948>



Iran

Naser Navar Gol-Tapeh (aged 47, convert, arrested on [June 24, 2016](#); sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment on [June 22, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: has been suffering from a severe and untreated gum infection, may be at risk of losing all of his teeth)

Date: March 30, 2018

Location: Evin Prison, Tehran

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3951>

Hadi Askary (aged 40, arrested without warrant by MOIS agents while fishing and picnicking with his wife in [Firuzkuh](#) on [August 26, 2016](#); sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment on [June 11, 2017](#); **UPDATE**: request for release on bail while pending appeal denied)

Date reported: April 2, 2018

Location: Tehran

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3953>



Iraq

Sr Ban Madleen (denied a visa to visit her ill sister in the UK)

Fr Benedict Kiely (founder of Nasarean.org, commented on the UK government's refusal to issue a visa to Sr Ban Madleen for her lack of recent travel there “Do they not know what happened [in Iraq] between 2014 and now?”)

Date: April 2, 2018

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2018/04/02/iraqi-nun-displaced-by-islamic-state-denied-uk-visa/>



Kazakhstan

Pastor Serik Bisembayev (aged 47, worship service in his wife's home raided by police without warrant, 30 worshippers were all questioned and video recorded, religious items seized, detained for fingerprinting and alcohol testing, asked why he had become a Christian and not a Muslim, told he would be investigated for 'inciting discord' which carried a 10 year maximum sentence)

Date: February 25, 2018

Location: Kyzylorda

Source: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2364



Nigeria

Audu (husband of Hanatu Soloman, father of five, injured in a bombing of his village by the Air Force, hospitalized, **died three days later**)

Hanatu Soloman (aged 46, widow of Audu, mother of five, said “A good man was just killed like that, without anything done to his killers...When will the killing stop? It is either Boko Haram insurgents or herdsmen killing our people, [who] are mostly Christians. Many Christian women have lost their husbands. Our children cannot go to school again when our husbands, the bread winners, have been massacred. Most Christian women are raped by herdsmen when they launch an attack on their villages. Some women feel they must hide out of disgrace; other women become pregnant from these murderers”)

Date: December 4, 2017

Location: Shaforon village, Numan local government Area, Adamawa state

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/03/nigerian-christian-who-lost-husband-in-fulani-attack-i-returned-to-encourage-other-women-to-do-the-same/>



Pakistan

Event UPDATE: Three Christian men were attacked by hospital security staff and by doctors wielding surgical instruments, a pane of glass, chairs and belts, the attack was triggered after the Christians had complained of inadequate medical care for a pregnant family member and were called insolent

Sunil Saleem (aged 28 or 34, husband of Asiya, father of four, brother of Kiran Saleem, attacked, **died from his injuries**)

Anil Saleem (aged 27, brother of Kiran Saleem, attacked, treated for injuries; **UPDATE:** said "About 20 security guards and 14 doctors punched and attacked my brothers and cousins with batons, chairs and belts. We received internal injuries and called the police. The ribs and legs of Sunil were fractured. He fainted and later died in the same hospital")

Fr Qaiser Feroz (**UPDATE:** later said "This is a first of its kind tragedy...People visit hospitals for treatment and doctors are supposed to save lives")

Date: March 26, 2018

Location: Lahore

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistani-catholic-beaten-to-death-by-hospital-staff/81939>

and <https://www.dawn.com/news/1397967/10-medics-15-guards-booked-after-attendant-dies-in-services-clash>

Event: A family celebrating Easter was shot dead while going for ice cream, a 10 year old girl was injured

Pervaiz Masih (rickshaw driver, **shot dead**)

Tariq Masih (**shot dead**)

Imran Masih (**shot dead**)

Firdous Bibi (**shot dead**)

Date: April 2, 2018

Location: Shah Zaman area, Quetta, Balochistan province

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/four-catholics-killed-in-pakistan-terrorist-attack/81957>



Philippines

Fr Quirico Pedregosa Jr OP (seminary rector, said that church organizations need to help protect tribal peoples and their schools during military operations against Communist rebels)

Date: April 3, 2018

Location: Pontifical University of Santo Tomas, Manila

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/catholic-university-steps-in-to-aid-persecuted-filipinos/81912>



Sudan

Event: A minister and his family were tied up and killed by six Muslims, and their church burned to the ground, all 130 Christian converts sleeping in the church escaped but some were hospitalized

Pastor Stephen (husband of Beatrice, father of Rachel and Priscilla, beaten, resisted forced sex with his daughters, **hacked to death**)

Beatrice (wife of Pastor Stephen, mother of Rachel and Priscilla, **hacked to death**)

Rachel (aged 21 or 24, daughter of Pastor Stephen and Beatrice, **hacked to death**)

Priscilla (aged 21 or 24, daughter of Pastor Stephen and Beatrice, **hacked to death**)

Date: March 2, 2018

Location: Dafur

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/us/appeals/good-friday-in-darfur-four-weeks-after-a-savage-martyrdom-there-is-spiritual-fruit-and-practical-need>



United States - New Mexico

Colonel Leland B H Bohannon (as of [October 20, 2017](#) had been stripped of his command at [Kirtland Air Force Base](#) and promotion to Brigadier General reversed after he declined to sign a thank you certificate for a retiring airman and his husband, had obtained the signature of a superior officer in a religious accommodation; **UPDATE:** subject of a letter for the Secretary of the Air Force to Congress which stated "[Col Leland Bohannon] had the right to exercise his sincerely held religious beliefs and did not unlawfully discriminate when he declined to sign the certificate...The Air Force has a duty to treat people fairly and without discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, or sexual orientation and [Bohannon] met that duty by having a more senior officer sign the certificate")

Date: April 2, 2018

Location: <https://www.stripes.com/news/air-force-colonel-had-religious-right-to-refuse-signing-same-sex-spouse-appreciation-letter-1.520156>

Today's Martyrs

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

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