

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2018-08-26 through 2018-09-01



China

Fr Lu Danhua (taken away by Religious Affairs Bureau agents on [December 29, 2017](#), reportedly taken to Wenzhou to study the new regulations of religion; **UPDATE**: still missing)

Date: [August 31, 2018](#)

Location: [Qingtian, Zhejiang province](#)

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/call-for-prayers-for-missing-chinese-priest/83212>



Egypt

Malak Fayeze (witnessed a mob attack on a church that has attempted to legally register “The [crowd] pelted the church with stones and bricks resulting in breaking CCTV cameras on the church wall and gate. They then moved to the old house we [currently] pray in and continued throwing stones at it as well as at some Coptic-owned houses next to it, damaging some of the facades. All the while they were shouting ‘Allahu akbar’ [Allah is the greatest] and chanting hostile slogans against the church and Copts, such as: ‘We don’t want any church in our village’, and ‘We don’t allow you, oh Kaffir, to pray in any place in our village’. Meanwhile Copts were trapped in their homes”)

Date: [August 24, 2018](#)

Location: [Ezbet Sultan Pasha village, Minya province](#)

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/08/egypt-mob-attacks-prevent-coptic-churchs-recognition-for-security-reasons/>

Moheb Thabet (witnessed a mob attack on a church that has attempted to legally register “A great deal of Muslim young men, aged 16 – 26, from our and nearby villages gathered in front of our church building, shouting “Allahu Akbar” [Allah is the greatest] and chanting hostile slogans against Copts and the church, such as ‘We don’t a church in our Islamic village’. They tried to break the front door...but we locked...[it] from the inside. We immediately called the police who arrived and dispersed the demonstrators but they didn’t arrest anyone. They then closed the church building, sealed it and placed security guards with it, and security forces cordoned off the village streets”)

Date: August 22, 2018

Location: El-Zeniqa village, Luxor province

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/08/egypt-muslim-mobs-force-closure-of-8-coptic-churches-seeking-official-recognition/>



Ethiopia

Event: Fifteen priests were reported to have been killed in Muslim violence in the previous week, four were burned to death together

Fr Kidane Mariam Nibretu (**killed**)

Fr Yared Hibu (**killed**)

Fr Gebiremariam Asfaw (**killed**)

Fr Abreham Tigabu (**killed**)

Date reported: August 14, 2018

Location: Somali State

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/08/ethiopian-pm-sends-condolences-to-orthodox-church-after-15-priests-killed/>



India

Pastor Jidan Herenz (aged 55, husband, father, member of the indigenous Adivasis people, charged in **March 2018** with sedition and other crimes, fled into the jungle; **UPDATE:** granted bail, said “It worries me, it is difficult to gather as a church, and several false cases have been booked against me. There is severe opposition, threats, but the ministry must continue...It’s a miracle that I have been granted bail by the High Court. Everybody I met after moving back to Khunti told me the allegations are very serious, and they never thought that I can be free...The six months spent in the forest sharing the gospel, and in prayer and worship, were fruitful and joyous, and the bail is a result of the Lord hearing our prayers. The Lord raised a church there”)

Pastor Zacharias Purthi (reported that RSS paramilitaries have been behind the charges against Pastor Jidan Herenz: “He was never involved in those matters [Adivasis tribal politics]. As pastors, we are busy in the ministry and pastoral duties, and he or me, we never showed any interest in the local politics”)

Date: August 8, 2018

Location: Khunti, Jharkhand state

Reeta Devi (convert along with her family, land seized by local villagers after their conversion, said "The villagers pick fights over basic necessities – even access to drinking water is challenging. They decide whether to supply water to us or not after every fight. They don't like to be around us or even cross paths... We have been very patient and never abused or fought back when they attacked us physically... We filed a complaint with police, but they told us to solve the matter internally with the village heads")

Date reported: August 30, 2018

Location: Sidhwatola village, Palamu district, Jharkhand state

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/08/hindu-extremists-suspected-in-false-charges-against-pastor-in-india-sources-say/>

Fr Stan Swamy SJ (aged 82, home raided by anti-terrorism police from Maharashtra state without a court order, electronics and books seized, questioned and released, homes of eight other activists raided and five arrested on charges including plotting to kill the Prime Minister, later said "All the activists targeted in this multi-city operation have been tirelessly involved in fighting for the rights of the poorest marginalized sections of society against serious state violations and unscrupulous corporates... If the police are trying to implicate me in an incident [regarding caste conflict] that happened in Pune, I was not present in Pune... Why should I plot to kill the prime minister? Let the prime minister be hale and hearty and this is my prayer")

Fr Davis Solomon SJ (said "Father Swamy researches the problems of marginalized people aiming to find practical solutions")

Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX (**UPDATE:** said "These raids appear to have been conducted to terrorize activists. But this will shake the faith of communities such as Dalits, indigenous people and others for whom these activists are speaking... It has become a fashion on some television channels to call all those who do not agree with them anti-nationals. Fighting for the constitutional rights of Dalit and other backwards people does not constitute anti-national activity")

Archbishop Felix Toppo SJ (**UPDATE:** said that Fr Stan Swamy had been targeted by authorities for his "firm stand" against injustice)

Date: August 28, 2018

Location: Ranchi, Jharkhand state

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-police-raid-anti-national-jesuit-priests-home/83197>
and <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-jesuit-sees-state-attempt-to-silence-activists/83205>



Indonesia

Event UPDATE: A family of suicide bombers attacked three churches, killing 12 and wounding over 50

Fr Aloysius Widyawan (later said “That day was very terrible for us, because Surabaya was a safe city, with many moderate Muslims”)

Date: May 13, 2018

Location: Surabaya

Source: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2018/08/27/their-churches-were-attacked-but-indonesias-christians-showed-the-power-of-forgiveness/>

Prasetyo Nurhardjanto (Association of Catholic Graduates and Intellectuals of Indonesia, called for the release of Meliana [a Buddhist woman sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment for complaining that a mosque's loudspeakers were too loud], said her trial "was grossly unfair and influenced by mass pressure")

Date: August 21, 2018

Location: Medan, Sumatra

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indonesian-activists-issue-call-to-free-blasphemy-victim/83217>



Mexico

Fr Miguel Gerardo Flores Hernandez (disappeared on [August 18, 2018](#) while in a truck; **UPDATE: body reportedly found**, police identification disputed due to decomposition and a different set of clothes)

Auxiliary Bishop Herculano Medina Gargias (said “The motive we could define as this: It was to steal his truck and we know nothing else in the sense of how they killed him. These are isolated cases because if there was a war declared against the Catholic Church more of us would have been deprived of our lives and the cases are not that high in number...Sometimes the police have ties with criminals and other people and the priests can be taken somewhere else, and they're not necessarily taking care of them and protecting them. My safety wouldn't be guaranteed because I was in their custody...We know that everyone is exposed at this moment, as any other person, to an assault, a robbery, threats and extortions. The position of the Church continues to be a call for reconciliation and forgiveness”)

Date: August 25, 2018

Location: Tierra Caliente region, Michoacan state

Source: <https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-americas/2018/08/27/priest-murdered-in-mexico-in-what-archdiocese-labels-isolated-case/>



Nepal

Pastor Govinda Prasad Dhakal (aged 63, husband of Saraswoti Dhakal, father of Prabhushanta Dhakal, arrested on [December 12, 2017](#) for raping his adopted daughter; **UPDATE:** sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment and fined US\$18, the girl's mother had recanted the accusation but the court found him and his wife guilty anyway, reported to be 'joyful' in prison and respected by the other prisoners)

Saraswoti Dhakal (aged 57, wife of Pastor Govinda Prasad Dhakal, said they were "facing injustice for doing good")

Prabhushanta Dhakal (son of Pastor Govinda Prasad Dhakal, said: "For about six years my father has been sheltering children in our house, helping to educate them and providing for their needs", described how extortion attempts began after the girl was returned to her family after showing behavioral issues: "First they demanded 20,000 [rupees] for enrolling her in a school. Then they made this fabricated story of rape and demanded 70 lakh rupees [US\$62,050] from my father. They thought that my father is a very rich man, and he can give whatever they demand. 'You people should come with a big bag of 70 lakh rupees, then we will free your father'" also described how she found out later that the girl's mother received cash settlements after accusing two others of raping the daughter: "At the age of 9, she was raped by a boy who was rich and influential. The case was dismissed after an out-of-court settlement was done between the two families. Subsequently they gave money to the mother and the case was dismissed...Neither did her mother reveal it to us until they used the same tactics on my father, accusing him of raping her")

Pastor Tanka Subedi (**UPDATE:** said "We are not happy to see the verdict, because everything was pre-decided...We are forced to believe that the judge passed an unfair judgment because Govinda is a Christian, otherwise there was no other reason for such a verdict, especially when the accusers themselves had confessed before the court that they were hoping to make a huge amount of money by putting a false charge against Govinda. Secondly, we are led to believe that he was not given a clean chit due to our stand of 'no bribing.'")

Pastor B P Khanal (**UPDATE:** said "Despite the mother's recorded confession, the court did not take cognizance of her statement, nor did the court take action against her for her initial fabricated statements that she had given in the presence of the judges. How could the honorable judge allow this and still go ahead and pronounce 10 years of imprisonment on an innocent person?")

Date: [June 7, 2018](#)

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2018/08/court-in-nepal-sentences-pastor-to-10-years-in-prison-on-rape-conviction/>



Nigeria

Rev Adamu Gyang Wurim (**killed along with his wife and three children** when suspected Fulani Muslim gunmen surrounded and set fire to their home and church)

Isaac Choji (witnessed the attack)

Date reported: August 30, 2018

Location: Abonong village, Foron district, Barkin Ladi local government area, Plateau state

Source: <http://thenationonlineng.net/family-of-4-killed-in-fresh-plateau-attack/>
and <https://www.christianpost.com/news/pastor-wife-3-kids-burned-death-islamic-fulani-herdsmen-raze-nigerian-village-227105/>



Pakistan

John Elvin (nurse, husband, father of three including Vikram John and Sunil John, home attacked by Muslims who threatened them with death if they did not leave, beaten along with his sons after he attempted to file a police report, hospitalized, released, no police report filed)

Vikram John (beaten, 'lost eye sight', hospitalized)

Sunil John ('severely' beaten, hospitalized, released)

Anthony Naveed (**UPDATE**: Provincial Parliament Member, visited Vikram John in the hospital, helped file a police report)

Date: August 18, 2018

Location: D C Society, Mehmoodabad 2, Karachi

Source: <https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/karachi-vandals-beat-christian-family-threaten-them-to-leave-their-house/>
and <https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/christian-lawmaker-calls-on-christian-youth-attacked-by-extremists/>

Event: A mob attacked several Christians in a land dispute, an 18 year old girl required stitches to her lips and a 10 year old boy had a fractured arm

Bashir Masih (said "A charged mob of over 50 Muslim men, led by Mukhtar Ahmad, a local Muslim, attacked the Christians")

Barkat Masih (said: "Ahmad tried to cultivate a piece of land with a tractor which belongs to the church. The local Christians requested him not to violate court orders, however, Ahmad abused the Christians and passed derogatory remarks against the church, stating, 'Building a church is nonsense.' Within no time, Ahmad's armed companions attacked the Christian men, women, and children with arms and sticks. They left two seriously injured and other with minor injuries. The mob stoned the under-construction church as well.")

Date: August 2, 2018

Location: Waran Chak Balyana village, Kasur district

Source: <https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/kasur-charged-mob-attacks-christians-over-church-property-dispute/>

Vicky Saleem Masih (aged 35, High Court employee, husband of Hina, father of three, brother of Salman and Robin Masih, **shot dead** in a private dispute on his 9th wedding anniversary while out buying a cake, no arrests made)

Hina (aged 28, widow of Vicky Saleem Masih, mother of three)

Salman Masih (aged 23, brother of Vicky Saleem Masih, attempted to bring his brother to a hospital on a motorcycle)

Robin Masih (aged 24, brother of Vicky Saleem Masih, attempted to bring his brother to a hospital on a motorcycle)

Date: August 16, 2018

Location: Lahore

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christian-man-shot-by-neighbour-on-his-wedding-anniversary-was-on-his-way-to-buy-a-cake>
and <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/griefstricken-family-blocks-road-with-murdered-envoys-body-after-police-delay-the-culprits-arrests>

Amara Bibi (wife of Boota Masih, mother of five, **shot** in her home on **August 7, 2018** for refusing a relationship with a Muslim man, hospitalized in critical condition; **UPDATE: died**)

Boota Masih (widower of Amara Bibi)

Date: August 18, 2018

Location: Chak 460, Purani Maaki, Sheikhpura district

Beenish Paul (schoolgirl, abducted in an attempt to convert to Islam, thrown from a rooftop when she refused, suffered severe injuries)

Date reported: August 29, 2018

Location: Karachi

Source: <https://www.christiansinpakistan.com/sheikhpura-christian-woman-gunned-down-upon-refusing-to-enter-in-friendship/>



Philippines

Fr Amado Picardal (abandoned his hermitage after a likely six-man death squad on motorcycles with covered faces appeared at his monastery, apparently in retribution for his opposition to extrajudicial killings of drug suspects, said “That was usually the time I would go out to the supermarket and the coffee shop. I immediately concluded that they were the death squad and I was the target. Had I gone out, there would have been no escape for me...I am ready to accept martyrdom if they catch up with me, but I do not seek it nor do I make myself an easy target. Thus, I have decided to temporarily vacate my hermitage up in the mountain and continue to spend my life of silence, solitude, prayer and writing in a more secure location. I will continue to speak out against evil in society through my writings and will fast and pray that the Lord will deliver us for evil.”)

Date: August 11, 2018

Location: Cebu

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/filipino-priest-who-criticized-duterte-says-he-has-gone-into-hiding-33959>

Fr Euclid Duenas Balosbalos (aged 45, beaten and robbed while on his way to church, hospitalized in serious condition)

Date: August 29, 2018

Location: Basilan

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/catholic-priest-attacked-in-southern-philippines/83213>

Bishop Honesto Ongtioco (closed the cathedral for 2 days after a mentally ill man desecrated the tabernacle and the Eucharist, said "Because of this, the community of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral is to undertake acts of penance and reparation. I ask that these days be days of prayer and fasting")

Date: August 25, 2018

Location: Quezon City

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-church-closes-after-desecration/83202>



United States - Kentucky

Bennie Berry (aged 43, church leader, **shot** while leaving church, hospitalized, **died**)

Pastor Vincent James (made no comment)

David Snardon (church minister, said "It just brings up a lot of questions — concern for the pastor, concern for the church, and concern for the community that something can happen on the sacred day, in a sacred place — with someone coming out of the church in broad daylight with a total disregard for human life...Crimes are not just committed against individuals, they are committed against communities")

Date: August 26, 2018

Location: Louisville

Source: <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/crime/2018/08/27/louisville-man-killed-after-leaving-elim-baptist-church/1108761002/>

United States - Missouri

James S Diel III (vice president of a Christian retirement home, said that the home's board is "prayerfully and thoughtfully reviewing this issue" after it was sued by a same sex couple because it required married residents to follow the traditional Christian definition of marriage)

Date reported: August 23, 2018

Location: St Louis

Source: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/lesbians-sue-christian-senior-center-over-biblically-based-policy-banning-same-sex-cohabitation-226953/>

United States - New York

Dennis C Walczyk (Catholic Charities CEO, announced that the charity would cease providing foster care and adoption services due to state same-sex nondiscrimination law)

Date reported: August 24, 2018

Location: Buffalo

Source: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/catholic-charities-buffalo-ends-adoption-foster-services-avoid-placing-kids-gay-couples-226993/>

United States - North Carolina

Major Scott Squires (U.S. Army chaplain, recommended for disciplinary action on or before [April 19, 2018](#) after a same sex couple attempted to register for a marriage retreat and he attempted to find another chaplain to take his place; an Army investigator was reported on [August 7, 2018](#) to have recommended that he be charged with dereliction of duty, would face up to six months' imprisonment if convicted; **UPDATE**: charges dismissed)

Staff Sgt Kacie Griffin (chaplain assistant, charges dismissed)

Date: August 24, 2018

Location: Fort Bragg

Source: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/army-clears-chaplain-of-career-ending-charges-over-lesbian-marriage-retreat-controversy-227008/>

United States - Texas

Pastor Fritz Ritsch (church damaged in an arson attack, suffered \$800,000 in damages, later said of the perpetrator "He had written something to make it seem like the damage was done by Muslims, but he misspelled Muhammad. It was disturbing that he was trying to make it seem like it was a terrorist act. It was all very disturbing")

Date: January 8, 2017

Location: Fort Worth

Source: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/man-who-set-fire-historic-texas-presbyterian-church-gets-40-years-prison-227010/>

Today's Martyrs

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

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