

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2019-03-10 through 2019-03-16



Australia

Cardinal George Pell (aged 77, charged with multiple child sex abuse crimes in [June 2017](#), the police had opened a case against him a year before a complainant was found, most charges were then dismissed for "fundamental defects in evidence"; reported on [December 11, 2018](#) to have been convicted on five counts despite the trial having been held in secret, a previously unreported trial had ended in mistrial after 10 jurors voted to acquit, trial witnesses anonymously reported extensive prosecutorial misconduct; verdict announced on [February 27, 2019](#) after prosecutors decided to drop the remaining charges, taken into custody; **UPDATE**: sentenced to 6 years' imprisonment, appeal underway)

Date: [March 13, 2019](#)

Location: [Melbourne, Victoria state](#)

Source: <https://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2019/03/13/cardinal-pell-sentenced-to-six-years-in-prison/>



China

Jiang Tianyong (aged 47, husband of Jin Bianling, son of Jiang Lianghou, human rights attorney, abducted by police in [Changsha, Hunan province](#) on [November 22, 2016](#); charged with 'subversion of state power' on [May 31, 2017](#); sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment on [November 20, 2017](#); as of [June 27, 2018](#) has been forced to take an unidentified medication in prison and has shown a memory deficit as a possible result, legs appear to have been injured due to torture or shackles, has been denied access to clothing and money sent by his family; **UPDATE**: released from prison, disappeared, father and sister disappeared)

Date: [February 28, 2019](#)

Location: [Henan province](#)

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/chinese-rights-lawyer-missing-after-prison-release/84629>

Tang Chunliang (husband, arrested along with his wife and 42 others at a home worship service, released the next day)

Date: February 24, 2019

Location: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Xing (wife of Liu, arrested, beaten, told they would be evicted from their home)

Liu (husband of Xing, same account)

Date: March 2, 2019

Location: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Eleven-children,-including-a-two-month-baby,-from-the-Early-Rain-Covenant-Church-arrested-in-Chengdu-46438.html>

Jiang Tianyong (aged 47, husband of Jin Bianling, son of Jiang Lianghou, human rights attorney, abducted by police in [Changsha, Hunan province](#) on [November 22, 2016](#); charged with 'subversion of state power' on [May 31, 2017](#); sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment on [November 20, 2017](#); as of [June 27, 2018](#) had been forced to take an unidentified medication in prison and has shown a memory deficit as a possible result, legs appear to have been injured due to torture or shackles, has been denied access to clothing and money sent by his family; released from prison on [February 28, 2019](#), disappeared, father and sister disappeared; **UPDATE**: allowed to returned home with his father and sister, wife has begun a petition for him to travel to the U.S. for medical treatment)

Date: March 1, 2019

Location: Henan province

Source: <https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/03/lawyers-wife-begs-china-to-let-him-come.html>

Pastor Li Guozhi aka Yang Hua (husband of Wang Hongwu, detained on [December 9, 2015](#) for 'illegally holding state secrets'; formally charged on [January 22, 2016](#) with 'obstructing justice' and 'gathering a crowd to disturb social order'; sentenced on [January 5, 2017](#) to two and a half years imprisonment; released on [June 19, 2018](#), sang worship songs as he left prison; **UPDATE**: escorted by police to Hainan province for medical treatment)

Date: March 5, 2019

Location: Guiyang, Guizhou province

Source: <https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/03/officials-escort-guizhou-pastor-on.html>

Pan Fei (disappeared the day after starting a new job, had lost his previous job due to police pressure)

Date: March 5, 2019

Location: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Zhang Ying (apartment invaded by police with her landlord, threatened with rape in front of her three daughters, ordered her eviction by the end of the month for unspecified lease violations)

Date: March 14, 2019

Location: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2019/03/couple-beaten-congregation-member-missing-in-persecution-of-church-in-china/>



Colombia

Fr Carlos Ernesto Jaramillo (aged 65, **stabbed to death** in an apparent robbery attempt)

Date: February 18, 2019

Location: Tierra Buena neighborhood, Kennedy

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/65589->

[AMERICA_COLOMBIA_A_priest_who_helped_Venezuelan_refugees_has_been_killed](http://www.fides.org/en/news/65589-AMERICA_COLOMBIA_A_priest_who_helped_Venezuelan_refugees_has_been_killed)



Egypt

Paul Najib (aged 32, **shot dead**)

Emad Ghattas (aged 54, **shot dead**)

Mosi Najah Hanna (aged 29, **shot dead**)

Date reported: March 15, 2019

Location: Beni Suef

Source: <http://www.copts-united.com/English/Details.php?I=2360&A=37868>



Ethiopia

Event: Several missionaries and church officials were killed in a commercial airliner crash

Fr George Kageche Mukua CMM (Kenyan citizen, **killed**)

Sr Florence Wangari (Kenyan citizen, aged early 30s, **killed**)

Sara Chalachew (Catholic Relief Services staff, **killed**)

Getnet Alemayehu (Catholic Relief Services staff, **killed**)

Sintayehu Aymeku (Catholic Relief Services staff, **killed**)

Mulusew Alemu (Catholic Relief Services staff, **killed**)

Pastor Norman Tendis (Austrian citizen, World Council of Churches official, **killed**)

Date: March 10, 2019

Location: Addis Ababa

Source: <http://mattersindia.com/2019/03/world-council-of-churches-official-dies-in-ethiopian-plane-crash/>

and http://www.fides.org/en/news/65711-AFRICA_ETHIOPIA_Ethiopian_plane_crash_among_the_victims_also_a_missionary_a_nun_and_4_lay_operators_of_the_Catholic_Relief_Services



France

Fr Francois-Jerome Leroy (aged 71, accused of abuse of minors in [March 2018](#), suspended from active ministry; **UPDATE**: cleared of all charges, his accusers were convicted of filing a false report and given a fine and a suspended sentence)

Date: [March 6, 2019](#)

Location: [Chalons-en-Champagne](#)

Source: <https://international.la-croix.com/news/french-couple-convicted-over-false-report-of-catholic-priest/9571#>

and <https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/falsely-accused-french-priest-vindicated>

Pastor Joseph Miall (church vandalized, US\$12,400 in damages)

Date: [March 8, 2019](#)

Location: [Angouleme](#)

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/en/news/vandals-cause-thousands-of-euros-of-damage-in-latest-attack-on-a-french-church>



India

Fr Varghese Vallikkatt (Kerala Catholic Bishops Council; **UPDATE**: criticized as unnecessary and unconstitutional a draft law which would create state control of church assets, said "They [state officials] want to keep discussion on this alive to target Christians, especially the socially and politically strong Catholic community...It's all part of a very calculated, engineered move that has been going on for a decade")

Date reported: [March 4, 2019](#)

Location: [Kerala state](#)

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-state-retreats-over-church-assets/84644>

Dr Christo Thomas Philip (aged 36, U.S. citizen of Indian birth, deported on [April 26, 2016](#) for 'evangelical and subversive activities', had been forcibly separated from his wife and three children, spent 24 hours in detention in Turkey after deportation; High Court in Delhi ruled on [January 8, 2019](#) he has a right to practice his faith by providing pro bono medical services; **UPDATE**: returned to resume his medical and charitable work)

Date: [February 27, 2019](#)

Location: [New Delhi](#)

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-doctor-back-in-India-after-three-years,-has-the-right-to-engage-in-mission-46370.html>

Fr Alphonse Aind SJ (middle school principal, arrested on [June 22, 2018](#) on fabricated charges of organizing the abduction and rape of five social activists by six Pathagadi tribal gunmen after the gunmen had seized his automobile, denied bail; **UPDATE**: granted bail)

Date: March 13, 2019

Location: Ranchi, Jharkhand state

Source: <http://mattersindia.com/2019/03/jesuit-priest-gets-bail-in-alleged-gangrape-case/>

Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX (**UPDATE**: expressed regret over the government's decision to cancel Good Friday as a holiday in two of the former Portuguese colonies: "This is very very sad. A clear discrimination is being practiced by the Administrator. We appeal to all including the Administrator of these centrally administered territories to respect the sentiments of the people and to avoid their divisive methods", Christians will now have to request the day off from work)

A C Michael (**UPDATE**: said "These moves are part of a pattern to oppress Christians. At least 12 states in India are set to have elections on April 18, this year's Maundy Thursday. That itself is a big setback")

Date: March 14, 2019

Locations: Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Two-Indian-territories-scrap-Good-Friday-holiday.-Msg.-Mascarenhas:-Very-serious-46500.html>
and <https://www.ucanews.com/news/scrapping-good-friday-holiday-upsets-indian-catholics/84745>



Indonesia

Agung Kurnia Ritonga (aged 22, student, arrested on [October 25, 2018](#) on a charge of insulting Islam for having applauded the burning of the flag of a banned Islamic organization; **UPDATE**: convicted, faces up 18 month's imprisonment and a \$715 fine)

Date reported: February 28, 2019

Location: Medan, Sumatra

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indonesian-student-faces-jail-for-islam-insult/84615>



Iran

Hossein Kadivar aka Elisha (arrested)

Khalil Dehghanpour (arrested)

Date: January 29, 2019

Location: Rasht

Pastor Matthias Haghnejad (husband of Anahita Khadeimi; **UPDATE:** arrested by Revolutionary Guards while leading a worship service)

Date: February 10, 2019

Location: Rasht

Babak Hosseinzadeh (arrested at a worship service)

Behnam Akhlagh (arrested at a worship service)

Mehdi Khatibi (summoned to a police station, arrested)

Date: February 23, 2019

Location: Rasht

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20190313234623.htm>



Ireland

Archdeacon David Pierpoint (reported on the vandalism of a church crypt in which human remains were desecrated)

Date: February 25, 2019

Location: Dublin

Source: <https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=2781>



Kenya

Pastor Abdul (aged 30, convert, father of three aged 8, 5, and 3, beaten with wooden clubs by Muslims for leading an underground church of 30 former Muslims, femur fractured, hospitalized)

Date: March 8, 2019

Location: near Garissa

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2019/03/pastor-of-underground-church-in-kenya-beaten-unconscious/>



Madagascar

Fr Nicolas Ratodisoa (shot twice in the back by robbers [on the road between Soanavela and Mahitsy](#) while returning home on [February 9, 2019](#) after a communion call, hospitalized; **UPDATE: died of his injuries**)

Date: February 14, 2019

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/65593->

[AFRICA MADAGASCAR Church s strong position for the death of Fr Nicolas victim of a road ambush after bringing the Eucharist to a sick person](#)



Netherlands

Event: Converts from Islam described continuing death threats

Faraïdoun Fouad (convert, said "I converted in 1999. In 2002 God called me to reach out to my own people. Directly after my conversion to Christianity I received the first threats. People who I thought were my friends, became my enemies. Even Muslims who are not very conservative told my wife that they would kill me...I receive threats every day. When I post something on Facebook, I often receive hateful reactions")

Esther Mulder (convert, said "After my conversion, the threats started. Especially on Facebook. Most of the time they're coming from other Somalis. They write to me in Somali, so no one else is able to understand what they're saying. We once posted a picture of a Somali conference where everyone was standing in front of a cross. People didn't like it and we received several threats")

Brother Jassim (convert, Facebook account blocked, said "In 2015 I became a Christian. I was baptized on April 24, 2016, on my birthday...My mother taught me to respect everyone and to be kind. That was in stark contrast to what Islam was teaching me. I had to hate and curse Jews and Christians. Muhammed was my big role model, but his life was bad. He killed Jews and married a girl of six. How could he be my role model?", printed 8 pages of threats for the police)

Date: March 14, 2019

Source: <https://cruxnow.com/church-in-europe/2019/03/14/muslim-turned-christian-refugees-in-the-netherlands-face-threats/>



Pakistan

Event: Four Christian women were arrested after accused of blasphemy, the accuser admitted to fabricating the charge in retaliation for her eviction, all four went in hiding, 200 Christian families were displaced

Sophia Amjad (aged 18)

Soneha Amjad (aged 14)

Sunaina Amjad (aged 22)

Sophia Qamar (aged 30)

Date: February 19, 2019

Location: Farooq-e-Azam district, Karachi

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/200-pakistani-christian-families-displace-after-4-falsely-accused-of-desecrating-the-quran-by-disgr>

Haroon Masih (aged 14, son of Irfan Masih, student, rag picker, beaten and stabbed by a Muslim classmate who was jealous of his academic achievements, hospitalized, lost a kidney in surgery)

Date: February 17, 2019

Location: Karachi

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/In-Karachi,-Christian-boy-stabbed-by-jealous-classmate-loses-a-kidney-46313.html>

and <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/muslims-classmates-viciously-stab-christian-boy-in-a-murder-attempt-that-left-his-kidney-severed>

Sadaf Amir aka Sadaf Masih (aged 13, abducted, forced into an Islamic marriage)

Date: February 6, 2019

Location: Cholistan, Wichra Bangla, Bahawalpur

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/young-pakistani-christian-girl-aged-13-abducted-and-forced-into-islamic-marriage>

Saima Iqbal (aged 35, wife of Naveed Iqbal, mother of Mikael, Danish, and Qamar, abducted at gunpoint on February 25, 2019 and forced into an Islamic marriage, police refused to file a report for over a week; **UPDATE**: recovered by police, placed into an Islamic women's shelter due to documents falsely claiming she converted to Islam)

Naveed Iqbal (aged 37, husband of Saima Iqbal, father of Mikael, Danish, and Qamar, said after his wife's February 25, 2019 abduction "I was living here very happily for the past 18 years until on the night of 25 February 2019 when the mother of my children was kidnapped at the gun point by Pathan Khalid Satti who is part of criminal gang...As soon I came to know what happened to my wife, on the 26th February I reported the incident but the police refused to file my complaint and delayed the registration"; **UPDATE**: said "When I met her [Saima his wife] in the Dar ul Iman [women's shelter] I saw visible marks of torture on her face and body...Nobody is listening to us and every time we are only hear these lines from the people in authority that she has accepted Islam and now is she is in Muslim Nikkah [marriage]. Is this the way the minorities suffer in Pakistan?...This is my request please help me. I am now in hiding along with our children moving from place to place due to threats. They have forcibly taken falsified statements from Saima Iqbal, and she remains in great fear for us")

Mikael (aged 4, son of Saima Iqbal and Naveed Iqbal)

Danish (aged 8, child of Saima Iqbal and Naveed Iqbal)

Qamar (aged 13, child of Saima Iqbal and Naveed Iqbal)

Date: March 5, 2019

Location: Iqbal town, Islamabad

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/pak-christian-mother-of-three-kidnapped-at-gunpoint-and-forced-into-fake-islamic-marriage-husband-hi>
and <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/head-line-news-details/7064>



Philippines

Event UPDATE: Two suicide bombers attacked a cathedral and then first responders, killing 21 and wounding 114

leo C Herbolario (**killed**)

Reynaldo Pescadera (**killed**)

Oscar E Asares (wounded)

Arturo E Ablay (wounded)

Vincent C Unding (wounded)

Roderick S Hoe (wounded)

Date: January 27, 2019

Location: Jolo, Sulu province

Source: Columbia Magazine, March 2019, pg 6

Alex Yao (aged 54, husband of Maria Theresa, **shot dead** inside a religious shrine after leaving a prayer meeting)

Maria Theresa (widow of Alex Yao, survived the attack)

Date: February 19, 2019

Location: Bacolod

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-bishop-condemns-church-killing/84575>

Bishop Felixberto Calang (**UPDATE**: 'red-tagged' when his name was added to a public list of alleged communist sympathizers, said "We fear for our lives and liberty knowing that we are on this list...When the police and military can just plant evidence against innocent people they claim are 'enemies of the state,' that is lawlessness")

Date reported: February 27, 2019

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/more-philippine-church-leaders-rights-workers-on-red-list/84603>

Event: Church leaders announced the receipt of death threats

Fr Albert Alejo SJ (**UPDATE**)

Fr Flavie Villanueva SVD

Fr Robert Reyes

Archbishop Socrates Villegas (**UPDATE**)

Date: March 11, 2019

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-catholic-priests-make-death-threats-claim/84712>

Bishop Pablo Virgilio David (**UPDATE**: disclosed he had received death threats, said “No threat or intimidation can stop me from carrying on with my spiritual and pastoral duties as a bishop”)

Date: February 24, 2018

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Death-threats-against-Filipino-bishop-wont-stop-him-46364.html>



Ukraine

Archpriest Vladimir Koval (church seized by anti-Russian activists, threatened with death for not surrendering his home)

Date: March 1, 2019

Location: Kurozvany

Source: <http://orthochristian.com/119942.html>



United Kingdom

Oluwole Ilesanmi (street preacher, arrested by police after a Muslim complaint, told by police "No one wants to hear that", taken over 5 miles away, 'de-arrested', and left in an isolated location)

Date: February 23, 2019

Location: London

Source: <https://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/freedom/video-of-christian-street-preacher-arrest-goes-viral>

and <https://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/freedom-of-speech/police-caught-out-by-street-preacher-evidence>

Today's Martyrs

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

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