

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2019-04-07 through 2019-04-13



China

Pastor Michael Yu (dual U.S.-Taiwanese citizen, arrested along with more than 20 Christians, released, prevented from leaving the country)

Date: April 4, 2019

Location: Shanghai

Source: <https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/04/shanghai-seizes-more-than-20-christians.html>

Ying Fuk-tsang (Hong Kong divinity school director; **UPDATE:** said after a municipal government announced financial rewards for residents who informed on illegal worship services “This will compress the survival space of house churches. Not only will they have to deal with the official crackdown but now also the threat from their neighbors”)

Li (reported “[The government’s] suppression of churches is getting stronger and stronger. Now, we do not dare to hold public activities. Some people were taken to the police station for questioning simply because they were distributing Gospel leaflets in public, so we have stopped distributing the Gospel leaflets. The community officials are also very alert about gatherings. They ask the residents to keep their eyes on Christians and to report any Christian gathering as soon as possible, and they will be rewarded”)

Date: March 29, 2019

Location: Guangzhou

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/us/news/chinese-city-offers-cash-prizes-to-people-who-betray-their-christian-neighbours>
and <https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/03/chinese-city-offers-cash-incentive-for.html>

Bishop Vincent Guo Xijin (aged 60, underground bishop, abducted by police on [March 26, 2018](#) after refusing to concelebrate Easter Mass with an excommunicated bishop; returned to his residence on [March 27, 2018](#), prohibited from public Mass; demoted on [December 12, 2018](#) to auxiliary bishop as part of an concordant between the Chinese government and the Vatican, will serve under a government sponsored bishop; **UPDATE:** told by the government that he could not engage in public ministry until he joins the Patriotic Association, [the government controlled church])

John (reported on the prohibition on public ministry by Bishop Vincent Guo Xijin "In practice it is blackmail. If the bishop does not register with the PA [the government controlled church], he cannot concelebrate with Bishop Zhan Silu [the PA bishop] at the Chrism Mass and risks not exercising any ministry. After the China-Vatican agreement,

everything turned upside down: the bishop who was previously unlawful [excommunicated] can now celebrate, what used to be the ordinary has now become even illegal! It's something to laugh about, if it weren't serious and painful!")

Date reported: April 3, 2019

Location: Mindong, Fujian province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Msg.-Guo-Xijin-and-blackmail-in-the-diocese-of-Mindong-after-the-China---Holy-See-agreement-46681.html>

Bishop Peter Li Huiyuan (local parish church and health clinic demolished by Maoists in control of the local government)

Date: April 4, 2019

Location: Qianyang, Shaanxi province

Source: [http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Shaanxi-government-razes-Qianyang-parish-to-ground-\(video\)-46686.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Shaanxi-government-razes-Qianyang-parish-to-ground-(video)-46686.html)

Bishop Peter Li Huiyuan (**UPDATE:** a shrine to Mary the mother of Jesus was the object of an attempt to be demolished by Maoists in control of the local government, 200 Christians blocked the attempt)

Date: April 4, 2019

Location: Mujiaping, Taibai district, Shaanxi province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Fengxiang,-200-faithful-in-standoff-with-600-policemen-who-want-to-destroy-the-Marian-shrine-of-Mujiaping-46733.html>

Rev Chu Yiu-ming (aged 74, convicted of conspiracy and public nuisance in connection with a series of public demonstrations, in his mitigation statement said “Today, old and grey, I find myself in the defendant’s dock, making a final plea as a convict. It looks so absurd, if not outright shameful for a person holding any office. Yet...my heart tells me that with this defendant’s dock, I have found the most honorable pulpit of my ministerial career...I am just a bell toller. I ring the bell. So doing, I hope that consciences may wake up, and together we work to save the day”)

Date: April 9, 2019

Location: Hong Kong

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Convicted-Protestant-clergyman,-found-most-honourable-pulpit-of-my-ministerial-career-in-Occupy-Central-46741.html>



India

Siddappa (student, home invaded during a worship service by about 15 members of the Hindu Munani, driven out into the street and forced to burn Bibles)

Chandrakant (present at the worship service in the home of Siddappa that was interrupted by about 15 members of the Hindu Munani, driven out into the street along with an ill 16 year old relative and forced to burn Bibles)

P S Nehemiah Christie (**UPDATE:** said ""Any Christian gatherings are now at risk of being interrupted by Hindutva forces. It is worrying to see that such groups freely intrude homes, question one's belief and seize articles of worship, including Bibles, and desecrate them. The Hindutva ideology of intolerance and impunity is spreading in this state, inciting people to harass and attack religious minorities..."")

Date: March 19, 2019

Location: Kurubatti, Hosur city, Tamil Nadu state

Source: <https://www.csw.org.uk/2019/04/01/press/4279/article.htm>

Fr. Thomas Mani (reported the theft of a statue of Mary the mother of Jesus from a shrine)

Date: March 31, 2019

Location: Tezu, Arunachal Pradesh state

Fr Felix Anthony (commented on the theft of a statue of Mary the mother of Jesus from a shrine)

Date: March 31, 2019

Location: Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh state

Source: [http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Arunachal-Pradesh:-two-statues-of-Mary-stolen-\(and-later-found\)-46655.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Arunachal-Pradesh:-two-statues-of-Mary-stolen-(and-later-found)-46655.html)

Sr Devaseer Mary FIH (described an attack by 200 RSS paramilitary members on a parochial school in which women attempted to strip the nuns and strangle them with their rosaries, the school incurred damages totaling US\$145,000 including the chapel)

Date: March 26, 2019

Location: Chinnasalem, Tamil Nadu state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Some-200-Hindu-radicals-beat-nuns,-devastate-Catholic-school-in-Tamil-Nadu-46667.html>

Sr Devaseer Mary FIH (**UPDATE:** reported more details on the [March 26, 2019](#) attack by 200 RSS paramilitary members on a parochial school: "four nuns wounded in the attack by Hindu radicals were discharged from hospital and are back in the convent. They were hospitalized for a few days, first in the Kallakurichi Government Hospital, later at the Krishna Hospital in Cuddalore. Thanks to Divine Providence and the good guidance of our Lord, the sisters have recovered from pain and are now feeling better...six people have been arrested and many others are under investigation is underway")

Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX (**UPDATE:** said "For us, this attack is a very sad thing. The whole school was mourning the death of the girl [who killed herself over bad grades]. We love our pupils as if they were our children...How is it possible for such a large crowd to act against a school? Why did no one stop them? Power, violence left in the hands of a mob is a danger to everyone in India, not only for minorities. This is what troubles us. The problem is that in the country different groups are spreading a climate of hatred...If it were just a question of money, they would not have desecrated the Crucifix. Even the attempt to strangle the sisters with their Cross, is a contempt of faith. Sisters strangled with the Crucifix? What is this country coming to?...In Indian culture sacred objects are sacred for everyone, regardless of religion. Such lack of respect, and the hatred caused by such lack of respect are the country's greatest danger")

Date: April 6, 2019

Location: Chinnasalem, Tamil Nadu state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Tamil-Nadu:-Nuns-beaten-by-Hindu-radicals-released-from-hospital-46707.html>

Rev Raju Abraham (church construction site demolished by local officials after they seized the building permit, said "The damage caused to the church, a symbol of religious tolerance, seems almost irreparable")

Date: April 5, 2019

Location: Atrauli, Aligarh district, Uttar Pradesh state

Source: [http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Church-under-construction-demolished-by-bulldozers-in-Uttar-Pradesh-\(video\)-46747.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Church-under-construction-demolished-by-bulldozers-in-Uttar-Pradesh-(video)-46747.html)

Dr John Dayal (**UPDATE:** summoned to appear in court as the defendant in a defamation lawsuit for stating on July 12,2018 on television "The RSS [paramilitary organization] spreads fear. The RSS kills remember. The RSS killed [Mohandas] Gandhi", said that he will not appear in court)

Date: April 8, 2019

Location: Mumbai

Source: <http://mattersindia.com/2019/04/court-summons-activist-dayal-in-defamation-case/>



Indonesia

Slamet Sumiarto (painter, evicted from his village along with his family because he was not Muslim, authorities allowed him to stay under their supervision but he decided to leave, posted an online protest video, said the ban "makes no sense and contradicts Pancasila [the official ideology of tolerance] as well as the Constitution of 1945")

Date: April 1, 2019

Location: Karet village, Pleret sub-district, Bantul regency, central Java

Source: [http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Yogyakarta-Catholic-family-expelled-because-non-Muslim-\(video\)-46670.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Yogyakarta-Catholic-family-expelled-because-non-Muslim-(video)-46670.html)



Laos

Event: Three U.S. citizens were arrested for distributing Bibles and Christian literature, detained in a hotel for six days

Autumn

Joseph

Wayne

Date reported: April 13, 2019

Location: Sing district, Luang Namtha province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Vientiane-arrests-three-US-citizens-over-distribution-of-material-on-Christianity-46766.html>



Pakistan

Cardinal Joseph Coutts (aged 73, **UPDATE**: thanked Christian and Muslim entertainers for organizing a music festival to raise funds to repair the cathedral's stained glass windows, which have been damaged by heat and by bombings in 1987 and 1998)

Date reported: April 1, 2019

Location: Karachi

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-and-Muslim-artists-to-perform-for-Karachi-cathedral-windows-46658.html>

Peter Jacob (Center for Social Justice director; **UPDATE**: issued a statement demanding that non-Muslim students be given religious studies of their own faith in schools as allowed under the Constitution, at present most non-Muslims are taught only Islam)

Date: March 29, 2019

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-children-have-the-right-to-study-the-Bible,-Lahore-activists-say-46689.html>

Shalet Javed (aged 15, daughter of Tasleem and Javed Masih, abducted on [March 25, 2019](#), beaten and tortured, forcibly converted and forced into an Islamic marriage; **UPDATE**: recovered in a police raid, returned home, later said "I never gave up hope entirely, I kept praying to God and beseeched Him to release me from my degrading captivity. God answered my prayers and now I am back with my mum and dad - I am so grateful to God. I was violated and abused by my captor but he has not broken my spirit, I spoke in court and will testify again and again till the monster is jailed - he should not be allowed to do this to anyone else ever again")

Javed Masih (husband of Tasleem, father of Shalet Javed)

Tasleem (wife of Javed Masih, mother of Shalet Javed)

Date: April 10, 2019

Location: Dhandra village, Faisalabad district

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/abducted-raped-and-forced-into-islamic-marriage-15-yo-shalet-has-now-been-rescued-and-has-given-test>
and <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-girl-kidnapped,-raped-and-forcibly-converted-is-freed-46763.html>



Russia

Yevgeny Kokory (home raided by police during a Lenten worship service, wrote on Facebook that the police perpetrated "vulgarity and screams" and "threatened women and warned people not to tape the raid with video cameras or mobile phones", appealed "to you, Vladimir Vladimirovich [Putin], to intervene to stop these abuses, especially in a heroic city like Novorossiysk [famous for its resistance to the Nazis], where freedom of conscience is violated in brutal way by the representatives of the State")

Date: April 7, 2019

Location: Verkhnebakanskiy, outside Novorossiysk

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Persecution-of-non-orthodox-groups-continues-as-police-interrupt-Baptist-service-46758.html>



Sri Lanka

Event: Christians have continued to worship outdoors since their church was forcibly closed by local Buddhists

Alocious (aged 94, said "My greatest wish before dying is to attend Mass inside the church again and resume catechism classes. I pray every day: Please Lord, bring back our church to us")

Anthony Perera (said "We do not want any conflict with Buddhists or the members of other religions. We only want our church, catechism and kindergarten. We are sure that we will get our church back and get back to worshipping")

Anthony Fernando (village official, said Buddhists organized protests against the Christians between 2011 and 2016, once burning the cross on the church facade)

Date reported: April 10, 2019

Location: Siyambalanduwa village, Monaragala district, Uva province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mass-under-the-tamarind-tree-in-Monaragala-46740.html>



United Kingdom

Avan Najmadiein (aged 32, convert, mother of four, **stabbed to death** by her estranged husband for having converted, for seeking another relationship, and for refusing to help him apply

for asylum, the husband had been deported for a sex crime against a minor and had illegally re-entered the country)

Date: October 1, 2018

Location: Stoke-on-Trent, England

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-stoke-staffordshire-47819363>



United States - Louisiana

Events: Three churches were destroyed in separate arson attacks, a neopagan / Satanist was later arrested

Rev Gerald Toussaint (church destroyed, said “We don’t know who did it so if you put race in it and it turns out to be something else, it makes it look like we’re pushing towards that. I just want to find who did it and then why they did it. And then we’ll go from there. They might have destroyed the building but they didn’t stop the church. So we have got to keep on going...There’s an atmosphere that says we need to support the flag, we need to respect the flag. And they don’t realize, I’m a veteran. I spent seven years for my country. And this is what people do to a person who has spent their time fighting for their country. It’s heartbreaking. Because I love this country. I wasn’t born in Africa. I was born in Opelousas, Louisiana. That’s all I know. My daddy pastored here for 21 years. After he left, I came. And so, that’s 30-something years of service to these people”)

Date: April 4, 2019

Location: Opelousas

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/05/us/louisiana-black-church-fires.html>
and <https://www.rawstory.com/2019/04/pastor-145-year-old-burned-black-church-love-country-wasnt-born-africa/>

Rev. Harry J. Richard (church destroyed, said “They burned down a building. They didn’t burn down our spirit”)

Monica Harris (aged 57, church destroyed, said “Seeing the church in the condition it is now, it’s almost like losing a family member”)

Date: April 2, 2019

Location: Opelousas

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/08/us/louisiana-black-churches-fires.html?module=inline>



Vatican City

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI aka Joseph Aloisius Ratzinger (**UPDATE:** wrote "Today God also has His witnesses [martyres] in the world. We just have to be vigilant in order to see and hear them. The word martyr is taken from procedural law. In the trial against the devil, Jesus Christ is the first and actual witness for God, the first martyr, who has since been followed by countless others. Today's Church is more than ever a 'Church of the Martyrs' and thus a witness to the living God...There are values which must never be abandoned for a greater value and even surpass the preservation of physical life. There is martyrdom. God is [about] more than mere physical survival. A life that would be bought by the denial of God, a life that is based on a final lie, is a non-life. Martyrdom is a basic category of Christian existence. The fact that martyrdom is no longer morally necessary in the [relativistic] theory advocated by [German theologian Franz] Bockle and many others shows that the very essence of Christianity is at stake here")

Date: April 10, 2019

Source: <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/the-church-and-the-scandal-of-sexual-abuse>

Today's Martyrs

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

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