

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2019-07-14 through 2019-07-20



China

Rev Song Yongsheng (husband, chairman of the local government sanctioned church, **committed suicide by jumping from a building**, left a note stating he hoped his 'martyrdom' would draw attention to government persecution)

Date: July 17, 2019

Location: Shangqui, Henan province

Source: <https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/07/christian-leader-commits-suicide-over.html>
and <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Exhausted-by-Party-control,-official-Christian-pastor-commits-suicide-47572.html>

Ms Yin (detained along with another Christian after attending a women's fellowship in a restaurant, later fled to the United States after her detention ended, the other Christian has been missing)

Date: April 2, 2019

Location: Beijing

Source: <https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/07/chinese-officials-crack-down-on.html>

Event: Two Christian leaders signed a letter calling for the withdrawal of the extradition bill and an end to violence

Cardinal John Tong Hon (**UPDATE**)

Rev Eric So Shing-yit (Christian Council president)

Date: July 19, 2019

Location: Hong Kong

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-leaders-call-for-an-end-to-violence-and-a-return-to-dialogue-47564.html>



India

Fr Nibert D'Souza (secondary school principal, school invaded by Congress Party agents protesting the denial of admission to some prospective students, said "The group

organized a morcha [protest] without a police permit. For unknown reasons, the police allowed the crowd to enter my office...I want to point out that some students were excluded for lack of places. We have considered the proportion of the student-teacher in accordance with government regulations”)

Date: July 12, 2019

Location: Kurla, Mumbai

Source: <http://asianews.it/news-en/Catholic-school-in-Mumbai-receives-threats,-told-to-enrol-more-students-47533.html>

Sajan K George (Global Council of Indian Christians president; **UPDATE:** applauded the government's new support programs for religious minorities but decried the continued exclusion of Dalit [untouchable] Christians: "The caste system is not just a religious system...If a crime is committed against Hindu, Sikh or Buddhist Dalits, they can turn to the law. The same does not happen for Christian Dalits, who are not considered among the disadvantaged castes. Therefore, they are exposed to forms of oppression, exploitation and atrocities")

Date: July 19, 2019

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/New-minority-programme-leaves-out-Dalit-Christians,-says-Sajan-K-George-47566.html>



Iran

Yonathan Betkolia (Member of Parliament, wrote a letter to President Rouhani after Revolutionary Guards removed a cross from an historic church in Tabriz and changed the locks on May 9, 2019: “Is this action befitting the dignity of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to treat the sacred places of Christians in such a way?”, the cross was later restored on July 9, 2019 but the locks remained)

Date: May 25, 2019

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/us/news/cross-put-back-on-assyrian-church-in-iran-but-christians-remain-barred>



Iraq

Archbishop Habib Hormouz al-Naufali (**UPDATE:** stated "[We Christians] must be equal in dignity and rights with other Iraqi citizens. Too often we have seen how Christians are treated and considered second-class citizens. Sometimes even as infidels. For this reason it is necessary to prevent the formation of a second class citizenship, especially for Christians and other minorities that are affected and relegated to the margins by the

Constitution and a sectarian culture...[the nation] is in pieces [due to] widespread and visible corruption")

Date: July 17, 2019

Location: Basra

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/-Archbishop-of-Basra:-the-Pope's-visit,-an-opportunity-for-rebirth-for-Christians-and-Iraq-47544.html>

Archbishop Habib Hormouz al-Naufali (**UPDATE**: expressed hope that a church closed in 1981 during the war with Iran would be completely reopened, it has been reopened "only as a sanctuary")

Date: July 19, 2019

Location: Basra

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Archbishop-of-Basra:-the-reopening-of-the-Church-of-the-Virgin-Mary-a-sign-of-hope-47569.html>



Pakistan

Aleeza Ashraf (aged 3, daughter of Ashraf Masih and Shamim Bibi, injured with shrapnel in her abdomen and left foot at age 18 months during the [December 17, 2017 Quetta, Balochistan](#) church attack; as of [January 7, 2018](#) had developed multiple gangrene infections, left foot amputated, transferred to a hospital in [Karachi](#), in danger of death; as of [January 13, 2018](#) had received several surgeries to remove infected tissue including a colostomy, condition stable; **UPDATE**: examined to be fitted with a new prosthetic leg)

Date: June 25, 2019

Location: Karachi

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/quetta-bomb-attacks-youngest-survivor-has-new-limb-fitted>

Saima Sardar (aged 30, nurse, fiancée, **shot dead** in her hospital by an 'ex-boyfriend' because she would not convert to Islam)

Date: July 10, 2019

Location: Faisalabad

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Nurse-killed-by-ex-boyfriend-in-Faisalabad-because-she-refused-to-convert-to-Islam-47543.html>

Event: Twenty-four Christian families have continued a legal battle to evict a Muslim land mafia from their property

Mehak ('mocked' by a Muslim on her way to school, family filed a complaint, Muslims in retaliation destroyed two Christian homes)

Date reported: July 18, 2019

Location: Dostpur village, Punjab province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christian-owned-lands-in-Punjab-held-by-Muslim-mafia-for-30-years-47560.html>



Philippines

Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Soncuaco Pabillo (**UPDATE**: welcomed the UN vote to begin a human rights investigation of the government's war on drugs)

Date reported: July 16, 2019

Location: Manila

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Filipino-Church-supports-the-UN-investigation-into-the-deaths-in-the-war-on-drugs-47537.html>



Syria

Suzan Der Kirkour (aged 60, retired gardener and Arabic teacher, church volunteer, abducted by jihadists, tortured and repeatedly raped for nine hours, **stoned to death**)

Date: July 8, 2019

Location: al-Yaqoubiyeh village, Idlib province

Source: <https://www.persecution.org/2019/07/17/christian-woman-stoned-death-syria/>



United Kingdom

Dr David Mackereth (aged 56, reported on [July 8, 2018](#) to have been fired from the National Health Service for claiming that gender has a biological basis; **UPDATE**: attended a court hearing, told that his Christian beliefs were not legitimate because other Christians did not hold them)

Andrea Minichiello Williams (Chief Executive of Christian Concerns, **UPDATE**: said “I have been in court with Dr David Mackereth this week...What really upset me though, as a member of the Church of England’s General Synod, was that the people who sacked Dr Mackereth for his Christian beliefs relied on the Church of England’s position to justify their actions. I have spent a lot of time trying to tell Christians, of all denominations, that our public witness to the Truth – all aspects of it – is vital. When we are on TV, radio, or even in court we are often told that our brand of Christianity is not what lots of other Christians think. But, this week, for the first time, what the Church of England says was

used as evidence against a Christian in court. For me it was another stark reminder of the damage caused by the Church of England's abandonment of truth...The evidence deployed against Dr Mackereth included reference to the House of Bishops Guidance for welcoming transgender people, and the Pastoral Guidance for use in conjunction with the Affirmation of Baptismal Faith in the context of gender transition. I criticized these moves towards acceptance of transgenderism at the time...What is important for Dr Mackereth's case is that the Pastoral Guidance says that transgender people should be referred to using their chosen name and pronoun. The guidance is therefore that Christians should not tell the truth about the biological sex of a transgender person. I think that, at the very least, in a civilized and fair society all people should accept this is, at least, a freedom of conscience issue...A member of the tribunal, asking for a clarification on the Christian view of gender, asked Dr Mackereth about the position of the Church of England as shown in the evidence presented. Dr Mackereth had to explain that he does not agree with the position of the Church of England and that he is not a member of it. He said that the position of the Church of England was evidence that cultural Marxism had entered the Church...If he had been a member of the Church of England this would have seriously weakened his position. The muddled position of the established Church on this issue fundamentally weakens the witness of Christians who want to speak and witness to the foundations of Christian truth")

Date reported: July 12, 2019

Source: <https://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/church-and-state/cofe-teaching-used-as-evidence-against-christian-in-court>

Lord David Alton (**UPDATE:** criticized Parliament for voting to legalize abortion and same sex marriage in Northern Ireland: "We know that the last vote to be held in the United Kingdom in any of the jurisdictions was in Northern Ireland, where they said they didn't want these laws...But they have been imposed by the metropolitan classes at Westminster, over and above the beliefs of the people of Northern Ireland...To me, it feels more like ideology-driven colonialism of the worst kind. I have been contacted by people in Northern Ireland who are resolutely appalled by the way they feel they have been treated. 100% of those voting to change its laws represented constituencies from outside Northern Ireland and 100% of Northern Ireland Members of Parliament who were present voted against it. How can the British Parliament treat part of the United Kingdom with such utter contempt?...Regardless of what one thinks about abortion, there is no human right to abortion. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has 30 articles, none of which suggests that there is a human right to abortion", added that the effort to legalize abortion in Northern Ireland is "[part of a broad] liberal intolerance [to impose secular values that] gets pretty close to being a form of persecution")

Date: July 18, 2019

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/lord-alton-abortion-law-imposed-on-n-ireland-by-uk-parliament-39096>

Today's Martyrs

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

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