

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2019-09-08 through 2019-09-14



Azerbaijan

Safiya Ahmed Abdul Razzaq Wahed (aged 41, convert, wife of Wahed Abdul, mother of Warda and Saif, Pakistani citizen, fled the United Arab Emirates with her family after her conversion was discovered and her husband's business license was revoked when he refused to divorce her, applied for asylum in Canada, husband remained Muslim but came to support her conversion, said “I know that Christianity is not easy life but still my faith is much stronger than these problems. My parents are dead, and my brothers and sisters are not with me but still I trust In Jesus”)

Warda (aged 16, convert, daughter of Safiya Ahmed Abdul Razzaq Wahed and Wahed Abdul, tweeted “Now we also have problems in our life but we will not leave our faith because we never felt what we feel now and whenever we pray calling his name 'Jesus Christ' we feel that he will do for us because he knows what's better for us because he saved us till now together”)

Date reported: September 6, 2019

Location: Baku

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/wife-converts-to-christianity-family-face-death-threats-deportation>



China

Tang Jingling (civil rights attorney, husband of Wang Yanfang, law license revoked in 2006; detained in 2012, held for 5 days; arrested in 2014; sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment on January 29, 2016; released on April 29, 2019; reported on August 30, 2019 to have disappeared, may have been arrested; **UPDATE**: released after 10 days' detention, escorted back to his home)

Date reported: September 10, 2019

Source: <https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/09/human-rights-lawyer-tang-jingling.html>

Mr Huang (said that the government had begun to close Christian orphanages out of fear that the children would be taught religion)

Date reported: September 6, 2019

Source: <https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/09/shanxi-authorities-remove-children-from.html>

Pastor Wang Tianmin (ordered by authorities to stop all religious activities at his church building, has appealed, said “We are following legal protocol, and our only purpose is to show our stance and testify to the Gospel, regardless of whether we win or lose the case. Please pray for us”)

Date: June 25, 2019

Location: Xiamen, Fujian province

Source: <https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/08/officials-break-into-fujian-churches.html>

Event: A telecommunications agency held a seminar for employees who are Communist Party members entitled "The Great Harm of Christianity to the Security of the Chinese Nation"

Ning Keren (said the seminar was based on a 2012 state media publication which regurgitated Cultural Revolution ideas)

Paul (said the Communist Party "fears that the number of Chinese Christians exceeds the number of party members and poses a threat to its one-party dictatorship")

Ying Fuk-tsang (Hong Kong divinity school director; **UPDATE:** said the seminar showed the Communist Party "[has tended to adopt an approach of comprehensive social management] through non-religious ways to deal with religious issues and therefore it is no longer a single religious department to manage religion, but the joint effort of different departments to manage all around")

Date: on or before April 24, 2019

Location: Henan province

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/chinese-province-tightens-grip-on-christianity/85103>

Bishop James Su Zhimin (aged 87, disappeared while in police custody in 1997; family told on or before August 29, 2015 that he was being held as a bargaining chip with the Vatican; **UPDATE:** whereabouts still unknown)

Date: May 8, 2019

Location: Baoding, Hebei province

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/plea-over-missing-underground-chinese-bishop/85130>



Eritrea

Patriarch Abune Antonios (aged 90, disappeared in 2007, reportedly detained by the government in a darkened room, diabetic condition requires medical attention; allowed to attend a July 16, 2017 public Divine Liturgy at the Asmara cathedral, returned to house arrest; **UPDATE:** 'excommunicated' by a group of bishops who are loyal to the government)

Date: July 18, 2019 [the day after Christian former prisoner Helen Berhane met U.S. President Donald Trump]

Source: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/coe/eritrea-orthodox-patriarch-antonios-expelled-for-heresy/>

Bishop Fikremariam Hagos (protested the June 12, 2019 seizure of church-owned health care facilities by the government)

Date: June 16, 2019

Location: Segeneyti

Event: Five priests were arrested for refusing to bury a government loyal bishop in their monastery

Fr Kebreab Tekie

Fr Markos Ghebrekidan

Fr Ghebretensae Teweldemedhin

Fr Kidanemaryam Tekeste

Fr Ghebretensai Zemichael

Date: June 13, 2019

Location: Debre-Bizen Monastery

Source: <https://www.csw.org.uk/2019/06/19/press/4371/article.htm>



Ethiopia

Patriarch Mathias (aged 77, **UPDATE**: met with government officials to discuss the recent burnings of 18 churches and assaults and murders of clergy)

Date: August 28, 2019

Source: <http://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/ethiopian-orthodox-patriarchate-slams-relentless-attack-on-churches-and-the-faithful/>



Guatemala

Diana Isabel Hernandez Juarez (aged 35, teacher, pastoral worker, **shot dead**)

Date: September 7, 2019

Location: Suchitepequez

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/66594->

[AMERICA GUATEMALA Pastoral worker committed to defending creation killed](http://www.fides.org/en/news/66594-AMERICA_GUATEMALA_Pastoral_worker_committed_to_defending_creation_killed)



India

Event: Three Christians were arrested on forced conversion and illegal occupation of land charges

Fr Arun Vincent (later released)

Fr Benoy John

Munna Hansda (catechist)

Date: September 6, 2019

Location: Jharkhand state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Jharkhand,-two-Catholic-priests-and-a-catechist-arrested-for-forced-conversions-47950.html>

Fr Thomas Kuzhively SJ (denounced government inaction that allowed a mob of 500 to destroy his college "Everything is destroyed. We can't reopen college. The attackers shattered the windows, bent the fan blades on the ceiling, damaged the exhaust pipes, the furniture, the electrical panels and the stereo system. After devastating the school, they went on to the hostel, destroying CCTVs, bulletin boards, chairs, benches, pictures hanging on the wall and everything they encountered on their way. Not satisfied they tried to harass the sisters and the girls. Finally they broke into the veranda where some motorcycles were parked, smashing them into pieces, then they stole three used phones from the hostel's kids and the money stored in the principal's office. The estimated damage of the entire devastation amounts to 1.5 million rupees [US\$20,850]...Why was no one arrested after eight days? Is this not letting these antisocial elements take over, being passive [to their] cynical activities? It is obvious that someone from outside fomented them")

Fr Nobor Bilung SJ (college principal, beaten by the mob)

Date: September 3, 2019

Location: Mundli, Jharkhand state

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Jharkhand,-Hindu-radicals-devastate-a-Jesuit-college.-'Completley-destroyed'-47981.html>

and <http://www.fides.org/en/news/66609->

[ASIA INDIA Acts of vandalism by militant Hindu extremists on a Jesuit College](http://www.fides.org/en/news/66609-ASIA_INDIA_Acts_of_vandalism_by_militant_Hindu_extremists_on_a_Jesuit_College)

and <https://www.ucanews.com/news/attacked-jesuit-mission-seeks-action-in-eastern-india/86088>

Parvati Devi (aged 23, wife of Rohit Oraon, mother of Roshini, **killed with an axe** by her brother-in-law in revenge for the conversion of her husband, her Sarna [not Hindu] father-in-law was also an attacker but was accidentally killed)

Rohit Oraon (aged 25, convert, chef, witnessed his wife's murder at the hands of his brother "But I still cannot fathom how can his jealousy lead him to murder. After they killed my wife, they called for all the Christians to come out, saying, 'We will get rid of all of you, once and for all' ...I am very sure that my brother, my father and my uncles [father's brothers] and their families had planned to kill all three of us, including my daughter")

Roshini (aged 3, daughter of Parvati Devi and Rohit Oraon, witnessed her mother's murder, was manhandled in an apparent murder attempt but then released)

Date: August 27, 2019

Location: Lukujhariya, Jharkhand state

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2019/09/young-father-in-india-shocked-at-why-relatives-attacked-him-daughter-and-killed-his-wife/>

A J Philip (responded to the arrest of an Islamic State sympathizer who had reportedly planned suicide attacks on local churches: “We simply cannot shut our churches. We cannot stop a person who comes with a bomb to blow us all up. The government must prioritize to nip these evils in the bud”)

Joseph Dias (**UPDATE:** said “The real threat to Christians in India doesn’t come from IS [Islamic State] but from Islamic fundamentalism. Radicalization of local Muslim youth could prove calamitous for all, including Muslims”)

Date: May 2, 2019

Location: Kerala state

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-christians-seek-better-security-at-churches/85091>

Event: Christians commented on the upcoming state elections

Albert Dua (state minority commissioner, **UPDATE:** said “None of the political parties has campaigned among Christians for votes”)

Sunny Bawa (aged 30, candidate for the state legislature, had resigned from the Congress Party after Christians were denied representation, said the government census deliberately undercounts Christians by more than 90%, added “We are residents of Punjab but we have no graveyards. The benefits of scholarship schemes are not given to Christian children. Even the funds received for the welfare of Christian minorities remain unutilized. Every community in Punjab is having congregation halls but there is no such facility for Christians”)

Munawar Masih (state minority commissioner and chairman, said many Christians have stopped using Christian names to obtain benefits, added “We have been pressing for a survey of Christians in Punjab so that their poverty can come to the fore and due benefits can be given to them. But it's yet to be done”)

Date reported: May 7, 2019

Location: Punjab state

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/christians-seek-political-voice-in-indias-punjab-state/85125>

Event: Catholic and Muslim leaders published a joint statement condemning religious violence

A J Philip (**UPDATE:** supported the statement)

A C Michael (**UPDATE:** supported the statement as an open message to the Islamic State)

Date: May 8, 2019

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-catholics-and-muslims-condemn-violence/85135>



Iran

Fatimeh Bakherti (aged 37, convert, home raided by police during a [May 25, 2017](#) worship service, several Christians arrested; sentenced in [Tehran](#) on [September 22, 2018](#) to 12 months' imprisonment for 'spreading propaganda against the regime'; ordered by a [Tehran](#) court on [January 15, 2019](#) to renounce her faith to avoid prison, refused; **UPDATE:** began her prison sentence)

Date: [August 31, 2019](#)

Location: Evin Prison, Tehran

Source: <https://www.meconcern.org/2019/09/03/iran-christian-convert-starts-one-year-prison-sentence/>



Myanmar

Rev Dr Hkalam Samson (secretary of the Kachin Baptist Convention; criminally charged with defamation on [August 26, 2016](#) for having told U.S. President Donald Trump in a July 17, 2019 Oval Office meeting “I’m...from Baptist Convention from Northern Burma. And then, as Christians in Myanmar, we are very been oppressed and tortured by the Myanmar military government”; **UPDATE:** acquitted after the complainant withdrew the charge)

Date: [September 9, 2019](#)

Source: <https://www.christianpost.com/world/myanmar-military-drops-criminal-case-against-pastor-who-told-trump-about-abuses.html>



Pakistan

Amir Masih (aged 25, husband, father of two sons aged 7 years and 8 days, gardener, reported to a police station on [August 28, 2019](#) with fellow employees after his employer reported a theft, taken into custody, beaten, urinated upon, called a 'filthy Christian'; **UPDATE:** released, hospitalized in a semi-conscious state, **died, body showed signs of extensive torture**)

Date: [September 2, 2019](#)

Location: Lahore

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Lahore,-a-Christian-dies-of-torture-in-police-custody-47971.html>

and <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/pakistani-christian-accused-of-petty-crime-beaten-to-death-while-in-police-custody>

Pastor Naveed Azeem (received a note demanding a payment of more than US\$3,500 or face a terror attack on his church that would kill up to 50 congregants)

Fr Anthony Abraz (later said "Given what happened in Sri Lanka, it is terrifying not only for the pastor [Pastor Naveed Azeem] but for the entire community and those who attend the prayer service at the church. There is a growing sense of insecurity among the already marginalized minorities, but we have to trust our government and law enforcement agencies")

Date: May 1, 2019

Location: Karachi

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistani-pastor-targeted-in-terror-extortion-bid/85128>



Papua New Guinea

Bishop Rolando Crisostomo Santos (aged 70, Filipino citizen, arrested after he reported on Facebook that drunken police had burned 19 homes, released)

Gregory Nimagale (acting diocesan education secretary, house burned by drunken police on September 1, 2019, arrested after Bishop Rolando Crisostomo Santos reported the police attack on Facebook, released)

Date: September 4, 2019

Location: Alotau

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Alotau-Bishop-investigated-for-defamation-after-posting-online-a-story-about-police-abuse-47989.html>



Philippines

Bishop Martin Jumoad (**UPDATE**: condemned a shooting of several church lay leaders in which three were seriously injured)

Father Edilberto Baculi (said the shooting might have been connected to the upcoming elections, said "Life is important, and [the perpetrators] have also their lives. I hope that they will find God and stop the bad intentions")

Date: May 5, 2019

Location: Concepcion, Misamis Occidental province

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-church-workers-hurt-in-election-related-violence/85129>

Auxiliary Bishop Fidelis Layog, responded to recent threats by stating at his ordination "The Church has faced persecutions in the past and even up to this time. Let us not fear, knowing that we are never alone. God is with us. God will prevail")

Date: May 8, 2019

Location: Lingayen-Dagupan

Source: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/new-philippine-bishop-ready-to-face-threats/85145>



Sweden

Aideen Strandsson (convert, refugee from Iran, as of [July 28, 2017](#) has been scheduled for deportation back to Iran despite a high risk of imprisonment; still facing deportation to Iran as of [March 14, 2018](#), denied employment by the government, martial arts certificate seized by the government; no date set for the appeal of her deportation order as of [June 8, 2018](#), denied a work permit and welfare benefits; married Pastor Cai Berger on [July 10, 2018](#); **UPDATE**: granted refugee status and residency)

Date reported: September 2, 2019

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/?p=34700>



United Kingdom

Rev Jonathan Pritchard (church vandalized by Muslim teens)

Date: December 3, 2018

Location: Keighley, Bradford, West Yorkshire, England

Source: <https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/17893352.teen-admits-part-39-mindless-vandalism-39-church/>



United States - California

Pastor Amado Huizar (church vandalized with satanic graffiti after he and his parishioners joined public opposition to a public library Drag Queen Story Hour)

Date: September 8, 2019

Location: Chula Vista

Source: <https://www.christianpost.com/us/church-vandalized-satanic-graffiti-pastor-protests-drag-queen-story-hour.html>

United States - Massachusetts

Fr George Tsoukalas (church including icons vandalized with satanic and anarchic graffiti)
Arthur Argeros (parish council president, said “Somebody has got a sick mind to think this is okay”)

Date: September 8, 2019

Location: Lynn

Source: <https://www.boston25news.com/news/-somebody-s-got-a-sick-mind-lynn-church-taking-vandalism-personally/984199179>
and <http://orthochristian.com/123742.html>

United States - Washington state

Barronelle Stutzman (aged 74, sued by the state attorney general in [April 2013](#) for declining to provide floral arrangements for a [Richland](#) same-sex wedding; found guilty on [February 18, 2015](#); the Washington state Supreme Court upheld the ruling on appeal on [February 16, 2017](#); the U.S. Supreme Court vacated the lower court ruling on [June 25, 2018](#) and returned the case to the Washington Supreme Court for re-evaluation in the light of the similar *Masterpiece Cakeshop* decision; the Washington state Supreme Court upheld the ruling again on [June 6, 2019](#); **UPDATE**: appealed her case again to the U.S. Supreme Court)

Date: September 11, 2019

Source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/florist-appeals-to-supreme-court-for-second-time-over-same-sex-wedding-case-17017>

Today's Martyrs

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

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