

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2019-12-15 through 2019-12-21



China

Pastor Zhang Shaojie (husband of Wang Fengrui, met with police on [November 16, 2013](#) at his registered church in [Nanle County, Henan](#), tied up without a warrant, church and family members gathered to protest his illegal detention but were beaten, parents hospitalized with hypertension, two sisters detained; convicted on [July 4, 2014](#), sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment and fined US\$16,113; health in prison in decline as of [July 7, 2017](#), described as a "bag of bones" and as having dark discolorations under his eyes, when asked if he had been beaten replied "Do you need to be beaten to become like this?"; **UPDATE:** has been forced to take unknown medications in prison, family reported symptoms of mental disintegration during their last visit)

Zhang "Yunyun" aka "Esther" Huixin (daughter of Pastor Zhang Shaojie and Wang Fengrui, wife of Sun Zhulei, mother of Sun "Jesse" Jiexi; escaped China via a Christian 'underground railroad' to Southeast Asia and as of [July 14, 2014](#) has been allowed entry to the United States; **UPDATE:** reported on her father's condition)

Date: [December 13, 2019](#)

Location: [Xinxiang, Henan province](#)

Source: <https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/12/pastor-force-fed-medicine.html>



India

Fr Cedric Prakash SJ (director of the Prashant Jesuit Centre for Human Rights, Justice and Peace; **UPDATE:** said "2019 is a truly horrible year for the protection of human rights in India...Since the government led by the Baratiya Janata Party took over power in May 2014, there has been a constant deterioration regarding respect for human rights in the country...According to the latest data, there is an increase in common incidents in nine states: Uttar Pradesh this year registered 457 episodes of religiously motivated violence between January and October. Nearly five hundred attacks against Christians have been reported in various parts of the country. Fundamentalists thrive on 'hate speech' and lynching has become terribly frequent...The situation is critical also for the defenders of human rights, who suffer threats, coercion, intimidation, arrests, insults and false

accusations just because they promote human rights, justice and peace. A few months ago five well-known human rights activists, including the writer P Varavara Rao, were arrested on entirely fictitious charges. The ancient 'sedition law' is still used to suppress dissent")

Date: December 13, 2019

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/67122->

[ASIA INDIA A priest the government must put more effort into protecting human rights](http://www.fides.org/en/news/67122-ASIA_INDIA_A_priest_the_government_must_put_more_effort_into_protecting_human_rights)



Netherlands

Cardinal Willelm Eijk (said that priests cannot be present during acts of voluntary euthanasia or assisted suicide and must speak clearly against such acts)

Date: December 17, 2019

Source: <https://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2019/12/17/cardinal-eijk-a-priest-cannot-be-present-at-euthanasia/>



Niger

Fr Mauro Armanino SMA (missionary; **UPDATE**: reported on threats against Christians: "The church of the Christian community is not far from the place of the assassination [of the local animist]. Shortly after his killing it was the turn of his Christian nephew to be threatened and 'invited' by the head of the group to inform the Christian community of the village that, if they go to pray in church, the only people to survive will be women and children...Next Christmas for the parish of Bomoanga will be very close to the original of Bethlehem, with the Herods of the moment")

Date: December 20, 2019

Location: Koutougou

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/67154->

[AFRICA NIGER Threats against Christians in the area of Bomoanga and targeted killings for others reports a missionary](http://www.fides.org/en/news/67154-AFRICA_NIGER_Threats_against_Christians_in_the_area_of_Bomoanga_and_targeted_killings_for_others_reports_a_missionary)



Nigeria

Pastor Kayode Shogbesan (abducted)

Date: December 17, 2019

Location: Adamawa state

Source: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/nigeria-gunmen-kidnap-pastor-amid-rising-number-of-abductions.html>

Event: Two priests were abducted on the Benin-Owo highway on December 6, 2019 for ransom while travelling to a wedding; **UPDATE: released**

Fr Joseph Nweke

Fr Felix Efobi

Date: December 10, 2019

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/67110-AFRICA_NIGERIA_Two_priests_kidnapped_on_December_6_released



Tajikistan

Pastor Bakhrom Kholmatov (aged 43, husband, father of three, arrested in Khujand on April 10, 2017 by the NSC secret police on charges of 'extremism'; reported on July 14, 2017 to have been sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment for 'singing extremist songs in church and so inciting religious hatred', friends and family threatened with arrest if they disclose details of the trial; **UPDATE:** released)

Date: December 18, 2019

Location: Yavan Prison

Source: <https://www.persecution.org/2019/12/19/tajik-pastor-released-early-3-years-prison/>



United Kingdom

Bishop Gavin Ashenden (forced to resign as a Queen's Chaplain on January 22, 2017 after criticizing the Church of Scotland for allowing the reading of a Quran chapter on the birth of Jesus in Glasgow cathedral during the Epiphany because the chapter explicitly denied the divinity of Jesus; **UPDATE:** announced that he would be received into the Catholic Church and would be relinquishing Anglican Holy Orders)

Bishop Mark Davies (**UPDATE:** invited Bishop Gavin Ashenden to join the Catholic Church, told him he was needed, said "I am conscious of the witness which Gavin Ashenden has given in the public square to the historic faith and values on which our society has been built. I pray that this witness will continue to be an encouragement to many")

Date: December 17, 2019

Source: <https://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2019/12/17/former-queens-chaplain-to-become-catholic/>



Venezuela

Rev Luis Gregorio Coronado (aged 58, husband, father of three, disappeared on **December 12, 2019** while travelling to visit parishioners; **UPDATE: body found** in a nearby church building, **had been murdered**)

Date: December 16, 2019

Location: Puerto Ordaz

Source: <https://www.charismanews.com/world/79249-missing-pastor-found-murdered-on-church-property>

Today's Martyrs

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

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