

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2019-12-22 through 2019-12-28



Australia

Cardinal George Pell (aged 78, 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; sentenced to 6 years' imprisonment on [March 13, 2019](#); appeal denied on [August 21, 2019](#) on a 2-1 vote, the dissenting judge wrote that his guilt had not been proved beyond a reasonable doubt; **UPDATE**: still in prison, two dozen locals sang Christmas carols outside his prison for him and other prisoners)

Date: [December 24, 2019](#)

Location: Melbourne

Source: <https://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2019/12/26/catholics-sing-carols-for-cardinal-pell-outside-melbourne-prison/>



China

Pastor Wang Yi (husband of Jiang Rong, son of Chen Yaxue, detained on [December 10, 2018](#), charged with 'inciting subversion of state power'; **UPDATE**: tried in closed court without his own attorneys, verdict not announced)

Date: [December 26, 2019](#)

Location: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Source: <https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/12/breaking-pastor-wang-yi-secretly-tried.html>

Fr Peter (said "This year's Christmas is not like that in the past. The official authorities have created a growing political atmosphere of tension. To avoid unnecessary headaches, the parish abolished the Christmas Eve Play, turning it into a meeting of prayer and evangelization. Before the Eucharist on Christmas Eve, the parish provides each member of the faithful with a bowl of lamb soup with special sandwiches to brighten the

atmosphere. Then we pray, we sing, we listen to the Word of God and then we celebrate the Eucharist of the night. Since the authorities do not allow children under the age of 18 to participate in the Eucharist, the parish provides them with a room in the courtyard of the church where they are entertained and cared for by supervisors. At the end of the Eucharist, the priest goes to bless them. The parish has also abolished the tradition of touring the village to distribute 'peace fruit' [a package of apples] to non-Christians. Liturgical ceremonies take place on a regular basis, although the civil authorities send guards to supervise and monitor them")

Date: December 19, 2019

Location: north China

Source: [http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christmas-in-China:-without-young-people-and-under-police-supervision-\(I\)-48860.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christmas-in-China:-without-young-people-and-under-police-supervision-(I)-48860.html)



Egypt

Mervat Jamil Shehata (aged 25, mother of Kyrillos Sami, disappeared on a trip to the post office)

Kyrillos Sami (child of Mervat Jamil Shehata, disappeared)

Date reported: December 26, 2019

Location: Khosous, Cairo

Source: <https://www.coptsunited.com/Details.php?I=2562&A=40356>



India

Pastor Joshua (husband, father of two aged 4 and 11, beaten and clothes torn along with other Christians at an Advent celebration, threatened with death by arson, a 17 year old dressed as Father Christmas was beaten, the couple hosting the celebration was evicted from their home)

Date: December 17, 2019

Location: Permuapalayam, Tamil Nadu state

Source: <https://barnabasfund.org/us/news/extremists-in-india-threaten-to-burn-alive-christians-attending-advent-celebration>

Event: Christian leaders were arrested during demonstrations against a new immigration law

Fr Cedric Prakash (**UPDATE**: arrested, said "I was stopped with so many other people and it is already more than two hours that we are here [in detention]. But in the meantime we sing songs and slogans and read the Preamble of the Constitution. We are really living in a fascist state!")

Date: December 19, 2019

Location: Ahmedabad

John Dayal (**UPDATE**: arrested, said "A day well spent. I was one of the thousands of people arrested across the country under a colonial law [section 144] for opposing a sectarian law that demonizes a fifth of the population")

Date: December 19, 2019

Location: New Delhi

Source: [http://www.asianews.it/news-en/John-Dayal-and-Fr.-Cedric-Prakash-arrested-for-anti-Muslim-law-demonstrations-\(Video-and-photos\)-48869.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/John-Dayal-and-Fr.-Cedric-Prakash-arrested-for-anti-Muslim-law-demonstrations-(Video-and-photos)-48869.html)

Pastor Bibudhan Pradhan (helped parishioners after they were attacked by Adivasi [aboriginal tribal] radicals on [November 26, 2019](#): “They were horrified by what happened...The drunk men abused the Christian families in filthy language and forcefully searched their homes for Bibles. The Christians tried hard to resist them to no avail. They gathered the Bibles from Christian homes at one spot at the center of the village, poured kerosene and lit fire”; attacked on [December 1, 2019](#), said “After we concluded the prayers and community lunch service, a batch of around 15 tribal men came with axes, surrounded the church and threatened that they will chop us into pieces. They took us inside the village and held us hostage for more than four hours. They abused us in vulgar language, words that I can’t utter with my mouth, and threatened us that their gods and goddesses will swallow us alive for propagating Christianity in an Adivasi [indigenous tribal] hamlet”, released, church building destroyed in an arson attack that night; **UPDATE**: physically forced by police to put his thumbprint on a document that stated there would be no more Christian prayer in the village)

Sure Kadraka (wife of Bhasker Rao, attempted to file a police report against the perpetrators of the November 26 and December 1 attacks, police detained the attackers for a few hours but refused to file a report)

Bhasker Rao (husband of Sure Kadraka, church elder)

Hananiyo Lima (reported on events following the November 26 and December 1 attacks “Police held the suspects in custody for a while and sent them away. No cases were registered against the assailants, who confessed that they had set the Bibles ablaze, held the pastor hostage and later burned down the church. We refused to sign on any document, but they took our fingerprints forcefully”)

Date: December 2, 2019

Location: Perigaon village, Rayagada district, Odisha state

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2019/12/axe-wielding-tribal-animists-set-bibles-church-building-ablaze-in-eastern-india/>



Indonesia

Trisila Lubis (aged 56, reported that police had banned Christmas celebrations in her village including any gathering in homes and offered to transport the Christians 120 km to a church, declined the police offer out of concern a precedent would be set)

Date: December 23, 2019

Location: Jorong Kampung Baru, West Sumatra

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Christians-banned-from-celebrating-Christmas-in-two-Muslim-majority-West-Sumatra-villages-48889.html>



Iraq

Patriarch Louis Raphael I Sako (**UPDATE**: cancelled Christmas midnight Mass due to security concerns)

Date: December 19, 2019

Location: Bagdad

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Card-Sako-cancels-Christmas-midnight-mass-in-Baghdad-48859.html>



Israel

Archbishop Theodosios aka Atallah Hannah (hospitalized after a tear gas canister was fired into a church)

Date: December 18, 2019

Location: Jerusalem

Source: <https://orthochristian.com/126551.html>



Niger

Fr Pierluigi Maccalli SMA (Italian national, abducted in Bomoanga on September 18, 2018 by jihadists, probably taken over the border into Burkina Faso; **UPDATE**: still in captivity)

Date: December 17, 2019

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/67136-EUROPE_ITALY_Father_Maccalli_is_a_thread_that_has_united_us_for_15_months_w_e_entrust_him_to_the_Lord



Palestine

Fr Gabriel Romanelli IVE (Argentine citizen, reported on the granting of visas by Israel for travel to Jerusalem and Bethlehem for pilgrimage: "[Christians are in] a condition of hyper-surrealism: a thousand people, 117 of whom are Catholics, compared to a total population of 2.3 million, there is no possibility of moving, of perennial war")

Date: December 23, 2019

Location: Gaza

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Gaza-Christians-Christmas-joy,-stronger-than-walls-and-prohibitions-48888.html>



Philippines

Fr Zaldy Robles (reported on a grenade attack outside his cathedral during Mass that injured 22 including 12 soldiers guarding the building, many fled into the cathedral for refuge, said "It is sad that this kind of violence is happening while we are celebrating the holy Christmas season. Let us not let the reign of darkness rule over us")

Date: December 22, 2019

Location: Cotabato, Mindanao

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/67169-ASIA_PHILIPPINES_Terrorist_violence_on_Christmas_eve_attack_in_front_of_the_Cathedral
and <https://morningstarnews.org/2019/12/grenade-attack-near-cathedral-leaves-several-wounded-in-the-philippines/>



Serbia

Bishop Joanikije (Montenegrin bishop, possible victim of an assassination attempt while meeting in a hotel with a Montenegrin businessman, the businessman received a non-life threatening gunshot injury)

Date: December 10, 2019

Location: Belgrade

Source: <https://orthochristian.com/126363.html>



Switzerland

Pastor Christine Dietrich (church invaded by hooded activists during a service, possibly in retaliation for her past writings on Islam, said "The reaction of the worshipers to the action was a mixture of horror and fear")

Pastor Dr Lukas Kundert (President of the Church Council, condemned the disruption to the service: "It is a mockery that the activists call for peace and stand up against agitation, but also blow up a peaceful Christmas night service and incite the pastor")

Date: December 24, 2019

Location: Kleinhunigen

Source: <https://telebasel.ch/2019/12/25/aktivisten-stoeren-gottesdienst-in-kleinhunigen/?channel=105100> - with translation



Thailand

Juliet Chowdhry (British citizen, commented on the arrest of 28 Pakistani Christian asylum seekers including 6 children on immigration violations: "This will be a devastating Christmas for all those arrested and we will do all we can to make Christmas feel special for these and other detainees. Our primary concern is to cover the overstay fines those arrested will have to pay in order to prevent them from incarceration in a brutal Thai Jail with murderers and rapists - this will adversely affect the children in particular. Our staff in Thailand are producing Christmas cards made by asylum seeker children and will distribute them to as many IDC's as financially possible with some Biryani rice near to Christmas. Biryani is a traditional Christmas meal for pak-Christians and when I think of the plain boiled rice they will eat on other days, I hope this will remind them that one day this world will end and more pleasant things are awaiting us in heaven")

John (said "The timing of these arrests could not be worse. Our community is feeling distraught and extremely sorrowful for our suffering brothers and sisters. We were all beginning Christmas celebrations but for many now their joy will be dulled as they await upon their future with only the thinnest strand of hope")

Date: December 19, 2019

Location: Bangkok

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/christmas-arrests-of-pakistani-christian-refugee-and-asylum-seekers-in-bangkok-shatters-hope-for-saf>



Uganda

Florence Namuyiga (aged 27, convert, mother of three aged 2, 5, and 7, beaten by her husband on [November 29, 2019](#) after she refused to attend a mosque service, later said "I began bleeding with serious injury on my left arm. That evening he did not come to the house but slept in the house of one of my co-wives"; **UPDATE**: divorced by her husband, evicted from her homestead along with her children, later said "I have been supporting my three children by washing peoples' clothing around the village. Indeed life is quite difficult for me and the children. I have realized that following Jesus is not easy. Sometimes I spend sleepless nights thinking on my future and that of my small kids, especially their school fees")

Date: [November 30, 2019](#)

Location: [Lwebitati village, Kitumbi parish, Mubende district](#)

Richard Wamala (aged 25, convert, husband, father of a 1 year old daughter, driven from his land by Muslims after his conversion was discovered, threatened with death and witchcraft, said "I am troubled in my heart, very sic. I lost my farm and the house, amounting to huge amount of money. I am homeless, and my appeal [to the local government] for help bore no fruits. I need help to get back the land, and possibly sell it so as to buy another piece of land to settle my family", spoke about his September 25, 2019 conversion thanks to a local pastor: "He shared with us the message of salvation of God. After a month, my wife and I were convicted of our sins, and we surrendered our lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and since then our lives were totally changed")

Date reported: [December 23, 2019](#)

Location: [Butumo village, Kasambira parish, Kamuli district](#)

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2019/12/christian-mother-in-uganda-loses-marriage-for-turning-to-christ/>



Ukraine

Metropolitan Anthony (**UPDATE**: thanked the Supreme Court for siding with his church and against the government's attempt to force it to legally change its name)

Archpriest Nikolai Balashov (said "Of course, we evaluate this decision of the Supreme Court positively. It testifies to the judges' respect for the law and Constitution of Ukraine", added that the case was not over)

Date: [December 17, 2019](#)

Location: [Kiev](#)

Source: <https://orthochristian.com/126470.html>

Fr John Deket (threatened with death, wife assaulted)

Date: [November 16, 2019](#)

Location: [Rososhka village, Rakhov district, Transcarpathian region](#)

Source: <https://orthochristian.com/125650.html>



United Kingdom

Liane Pibworth (mother of Evangelina and Honey, has filed several complaints over more than two years against Muslim neighbors who have assaulted her or her children or threatened their lives, no action was taken by authorities, a retaliatory complaint was filed against her in October 2019, produced written statements from Muslim friends testifying to her good character)

Honey (aged 15, daughter of Liane Pibworth, had been the victim of the majority of harassments by her Muslim neighbors)

Evangelina (aged 5, daughter of Liane Pibworth, forced to give up her dog after it had been injured by Muslim neighbors)

Wilfred Wong (attorney, activist, defended Liane Pibworth at a Childrens Services hearing after her Muslim neighbors alleged she was neglecting her children, noted there was no evidence to support the allegations and the retaliatory nature of the complaint)

Date reported: December 15, 2019

Location: Hammersmith, London

Source: <https://www.britishpakistanichristians.org/blog/white-christian-complains-of-no-muslim-no-go-area-after-being-persecuted>



United States - Texas

Judge Dianne Hensley (censured by the Commission on Judicial Conduct for recusing herself from performing same sex weddings)

Date: November 12, 2019

Location: Waco

Source: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/texas-judge-files-lawsuit-against-state-agency-after-she-was-warned-about-not-conducting-same-sex-weddings>

Today's Martyrs

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

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