

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2019-12-29 through 2020-01-04



Cameroon

Archbishop Cornelius Fontem Esua (**UPDATE**: resignation due to having reached retirement age accepted)

Date: December 30, 2019

Location: Bamenda

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/67180->

[AFRICA CAMEROON Resignation of the Archbishop of Bamenda and appointment of new Metropolitan Archbishop](http://www.fides.org/en/news/67180-)



China

Pastor Wang Yi (husband of Jiang Rong, son of Chen Yaxue, detained on [December 10, 2018](#), charged with 'inciting subversion of state power'; tried in closed court without his own attorneys on [December 26, 2019](#), verdict not announced; **UPDATE**: sentenced to 9 years' imprisonment)

Date: December 30, 2019

Location: Chengdu, Sichuan province

Source: <https://www.chinaaid.org/2019/12/wang-yi-receives-nine-year-sentence.html>

and <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Pastor-Wang-Yi-sentenced-to-9-years-in-prison-for-'subversion'-48908.html>



India

Fr Anthony Raj Thumma (decried the use of a law used to arrest four men reading Bibles in a public park: "It should apply only to the temple premises and not to nearby areas and public parks. And not at all to the whole town which is against the fundamental rights of the people of other religions living in these towns. The Andhra Pradesh Federation of

Churches had made representations to the government in the past regarding this matter, fearing its misuse”)

Date: December 28, 2019

Location: Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh state

Pastor Anup Ghosh (new church vandalized, said “We had gathered for a prayer on Dec. 28 when about 30 riders on 12 motorcycles arrived outside. They hurled bombs, forcefully entered the campus and vandalized property. All of them were carrying BJP’s [the Hindu nationalist political party] flag and chanting Jai Shri Ram. They broke the doors and smashed windowpanes, damaged 12 ceiling fans and the sound system, furniture and even the water tank. Local residents identified most of the vandals and we lodged a complaint with the police, naming all of them. The attack has shocked us, especially because those who did it threatened to come back and launch similar attacks on all churches in the neighborhood”, later called by the state Chief Minister and promised protection and reparations)

Date: December 28, 2019

Location: East Midnapore district, Bengal state

Source: <http://mattersindia.com/2020/01/christians-face-heightened-intolerance-in-india-activist-claims/>

Cardinal Oswald Gracias (**UPDATE:** accepted an apology from the hosts of a quiz show and from Walmart [the show's sponsor] for having insulted Christians in a Christmas Eve program)

Date: December 30, 2019

Location: Mumbai

Source: <http://mattersindia.com/2019/12/hallelujah-controversy-cardinal-gracias-accepts-bollywood-apology/>

Pastor Mukam Kiraad (aged 35, husband, father of four aged 7 to 13, attacked by a mob during a worship service on **December 10, 2019**, phones and Bibles seized, arrested and released after 9 hours, said “Some of them began to film the worship service while others went out and locked us in from outside, so that we would not escape. They disrupted the service and began to search the place while using vulgar language. About 10 assailants were hiding outside at various locations, to attack us in case any of us managed to escape. They took my [water] bottle, which later was presented in the courtroom as evidence with some test report. I do not know what the report said or what they added to my drinking water later. Everybody shared their faith testimony as the police personnel blamed me for forcefully converting villagers. However, one policeman showed his appreciation towards me for doing such a good work and wondered why the villagers were putting such allegations on me”; called to the police station on **December 16, 2019**, charged with practicing medicine without a license [apparently for praying for healing], said “We were taken before the judge, where I was asked what I do, to which I said I was a pastor and was conducting regular church service. No bail plea was presented. The judge ordered us to be sent to jail. We had a nice time sharing the word of God with fellow prisoners. Some of them had never heard the name of Jesus Christ, nor the gospel”; **UPDATE:** granted bail of US\$420)

Lalsingh Tomar (aged 40, same account)

Nanliya Rawat (aged 38, same account)

Pastor Dilip Rawat (reported on the arrests)

Pastor Vikelson Sewla (reported on the arrests, said they were a well-planned conspiracy: “They did this to cause trouble to the arrested and their families. They had no money for their bail bond, they are poor people. We helped them by raising money from the church. The court case has just begun, and on the other hand the worship service has completely stopped, and the house church has been shut down”)

Date: December 26, 2019

Location: Vadi village, near Alirajpur, Madhya Pradesh state

Pastor Rahul Bariya (aged 38, husband, father of three, attacked by a mob of about 100 Hindu extremists as he returned home with his family from a worship service, dragged to the police station and detained for over 24 hours, said “The landlord forced my wife and children out of the house at 11 in the night while I was in police custody and did not allow them to pick up the household stuff. Without bedding and warm clothes, they were forced to wander in the middle of the night looking for some shelter...The house church is closed now. There are about 200 believers in the village, and they have been travelling in a radius of 25 miles to attend a church fellowship every week, all in different directions”)

Date: December 2, 2019

Location: Paara village, Jhabua district, Madhya Pradesh state

Pastor Ramesh Vaskale (arrested along with 2 others on forced conversion charges during a Christmas program)

Date: December 27, 2019

Location: Mathwad village, Madhya Pradesh state

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2020/01/christians-in-india-spend-christmas-in-jail-accused-of-illegally-practicing-medicine/>



Iran

Event: Nine Christians were sentenced to a total of 45 years' [i.e., an average for each of 5 years'] imprisonment

Abdolreza Ali Haghnejad

Babak Hosseinzadeh (**UPDATE**)

Behnam Akhlagh (**UPDATE**)

Hossein Kadivar

Kamal Naemania

Khalil Dehghanpou

Mehdi Khatibi (**UPDATE**)

Mohammad Islam Doust

Mohammad Vafadar Kamal

Date: October 15, 2019

Location: Tehran

Source: <http://mohabatnews.com/?p=36608>

Asghar Salehi (arrested in his home on [September 18, 2018](#); summoned to court on [April 18, 2019](#), warned he should stop all Christian activities; sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment on [September 22, 2019](#) on a charge of 'propaganda against the system through promoting Zionist Christianity'; **UPDATE**: arrested to begin his sentence)

Mohammadreza Rezaei (same account)

Date: December 12, 2019

Location: Eghlid

Source: <https://www.meconcern.org/2019/12/27/iran-three-converts-start-their-sentences-in-eghlid/>



Montenegro

Bishop Metodije (beaten by police while peacefully protesting a new law which authorized the confiscation of church property, two others beaten while protecting him, hospitalized)

Date: December 26, 2019

Location: Durdevica Tara Bridge

Source: <https://orthochristian.com/126743.html>



Myanmar

Event: The United Wa State Army allowed Protestant churches to reopen after 15 months' closure, but not Catholic churches

Bishop Lazarus (said "All of our churches finally opened last week, and only a Bible study school remains closed in Hotaung. We don't know why they will not allow this one to reopen yet")

Date: December 17, 2019

Location: Kyaing Tong

Bishop Philip Lasap Za Hawng (**UPDATE**: reported that Catholic buildings remained closed)

Fr Soe Naing (said churches remained closed, added “We heard the school in Winkhaung was converted into a police station, and that the school in Maingmaw was demolished”)

Date reported: December 19, 2019

Source: <https://www.licas.news/2019/12/19/catholic-churches-schools-remain-shuttered-in-separatist-controlled-myanmar-state/>



Nigeria

Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah (**UPDATE:** said of the government “They are using the levers of power to secure the supremacy of Islam, which then gives more weight to the idea that it can be achieved by violence. With the situation in Nigeria, it is hard to see the moral basis they have to defeat Boko Haram. They have created the conditions to make it possible for Boko Haram to behave the way they are behaving...The only difference between the government and Boko Haram is Boko Haram is holding a bomb...If the people in power don’t do enough to integrate Christians then they give oxygen to Islamism. If they have countries where everybody is Muslim in power then you give vent to the idea that Islam should be supreme...Christians have every reason to feel insecure and also there is a general feeling of their marginalization from the political process. If the principles of our religion were different, there would be a civil war by now. It is the glory of our religion that this hasn’t happened”)

Date: December 29, 2019

Location: Sokoto

Source: <https://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2020/01/03/nigerian-government-are-islamic-fundamentalists-without-bombs-says-bishop/>

and <https://www.aidtochurch.org/acn-news/601-islamic-state-says-it-beheaded-10-christian-hostages-in-nigeria-where-is-the-moral-revulsion>



Pakistan

Dawood Shahid (aged 14, son of Safia Bibi and Shahid Sardar, brother of Awais Shahid, embroidery factory worker, raped and **strangled to death** by two coworkers)

Safia Bibi (mother of Dawood Shahid, witnessed her son's murder)

Shahid Sardar (father of Dawood Shahid, witnessed his son's murder)

Awais Shahid (brother of Dawood Shahid, witnessed his brother's murder)

Date: December 15, 2019

Location: Faisalabad

Source: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/head-line-news-details/7280>



Philippines

Fr Clifford Baira (described a grenade attack on a church, no injuries)

Date: October 14, 2019

Location: Datu Piang, Maguindanao province

Source: <https://www.licas.news/2019/10/15/grenade-explodes-outside-catholic-church-in-southern-philippines/>



Ukraine

Fr Peter Monastyrsky (locks on his church changed on [December 22, 2019](#) by men loyal to the Kiev patriarchate; **UPDATE**: beaten along with four priests and five laymen loyal to the Moscow patriarchate with brass knuckles by inebriated supporters of the Kiev patriarchate, thrown down stairs and kicked)

Archpriest Dmitry Tsmokalo (reported on the attack)

Date: December 28, 2019

Location: Novozhivotov village, Vinnitsa province

Source: <https://orthochristian.com/126868.html>

and <https://spzh.news/ru/news/67411-v-novozhivotove-storonniki-pcu-grozyatsya-otobraty-khram-u-zakonnyh-vladelycev> - with translation



United States – Texas

Event: A gunman opened fire in a church, killing two

Deacon Anton "Tony" Wallace (aged 64, registered nurse, father of Sarah and Tiffany Wallace, **shot** while serving communion, **died** at the hospital)

Richard White (aged 67, **shot dead**)

Sarah Wallace (daughter of Deacon Anton "Tony" Wallace, said of his murder "He always wanted us to be in the church, he was always my role model. We just say God wanted him more than we did. They couldn't handle his perfectness here")

Tiffany Wallace (daughter of Deacon Anton "Tony" Wallace, witnessed her father's shooting along with her children, ran to her father's side, said of his murder "He was just our rock

that held us together. Even when talking about Heaven, he said he was always prepared, but I never thought this would happen. You think dad would get old and sick but never get murdered...I forgive him, and it's the hardest thing to say because it's like, somebody killed your dad, but I forgive him. I'll never forgive what he did, but I forgive him")

Senior minister Britt Farmer (husband of Lisa Farmer, said of the gunman "I had seen him. I had visited with him. I had given him food. I had offered him food at other occasions that he had been to our building")

Jack Wilson (retired law enforcement officer, shot and killed the gunman)

Isabel Arreola (congregant, said of the gunman "I told him [my husband] I don't feel comfortable. I feel he's like dressed in like a beard and that's a wig...It looks so fake...I just kind of kept looking back there...I saw him pull the gun out and I was just panicked and then we heard it go off and we're just screaming, you know, trying to get under the pews")

Date: December 29, 2019

Location: White Settlement

Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2019/12/30/us/texas-church-shooting-monday/index.html>
and <https://www.christianpost.com/news/texas-church-shooting-daughter-of-man-killed-while-serving-communion-forgives-gunman.html>

Today's Martyrs

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

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