

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Weekly Report – 2020-01-19 through 2020-01-25



Canada

Fr Michael Bechard (Campus Ministry director, attacked in a letter by 43 faculty members for showing the anti-abortion film *Unplanned*)

Date: January 15, 2020

Location: King's University College, London, Ontario

Source: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/professors-demand-apology-after-catholic-college-screens-pro-life-film-unplanned.html>



China

Hu Shigen (church elder, disappeared on [July 10, 2015](#); formally arrested in [Tianjin](#) on [January 8, 2016](#) on a charge of 'subversion of state power'; sentenced in [Beijing](#) to 7 years' imprisonment on [August 3, 2016](#); reported on [January 12, 2019](#) to have been held in a prison hospital, forced to take unknown medications, health apparently not in decline but release on medical parole delayed until another prisoner has been prosecuted; **UPDATE**: still imprisoned, has suffered from a heart attack, high blood pressure, and kidney failure)

Date: January 21, 2020

Source: <https://www.chinaaid.org/2020/01/officials-begin-church-elders-parole.html>

Bishop Augustine Cui Tai (aged 69, disappeared in [mid-April 2018](#); allowed to return home on [January 24, 2019](#), banned from religious activities, weighted only 115 pounds due to ill health; arrested on [March 29, 2019](#); **UPDATE**: paroled temporarily to spend the Lunar New Year with his elderly sister)

Date: January 24, 2020

Location: Hebei province

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Underground-bishop-Msgr.-Cuitai-freed.-He-will-be-re-arrested-after-the-Chinese-New-Year-49074.html>

Ding Mei (aged 73, official church director, church 'repurposed' into a banquet hall on [August 29, 2018](#), began almost daily visits to the Religious Affairs Bureau [RAB] to reverse the decision, publicly blamed herself for the closure of the church, lost appetite and often

wept; told by the RAB on [December 7, 2018](#) that no leniency would be shown to her church because it was national policy to shut down all churches, became distraught, vomited blood and fainted the next day, diagnosed with a brain hemorrhage; **UPDATE: died**)

Date: [December 16, 2018](#)

Location: [Humiao village, Zhecheng county, Henan province](#)

Source: <https://bitterwinter.org/government-persecutions-result-in-church-workers-deaths/>



India

Vinod Kumar (son of Pastor Ram Kishan, described an attempted attack by Hindu radicals on his church: “We kept watch that day and stopped them from causing any disturbance. They could not do anything and waited outside for a while for a chance to attack but, vexed at us restraining them, they left without causing any harm”)

Date: [December 25, 2019](#)

Location: [Siwanka](#)

Pastor Jai Singh (husband, father of four, day laborer, abducted from a home worship service, later said “They pushed me to the floor, and I could not understand who was kicking me, who was slapping or beating on my back. As a huge crowd surrounded me, I could only see their hands and shoes kicking me. They picked me up from the floor and took me inside [Naresh] Singh’s home and told me that I should go with them, if not they would kill me there on the spot”, taken to a school and beaten: “They uttered disgustful, caste slurs against my faith and community that I cannot repeat with my mouth...My eyes got swollen. There was severe bleeding from my forehead. The remaining members who were following us by motorbikes and other vehicles also reached the school, and they took turns to beat me. A batch of six assailants would beat me up at once, after that they would sit back and relax while the next batch of five to six continued the beating. I was howling in severe pain, and I do not remember for how long that continued...From the school, they took me to a Hindu temple and forced me to sit before the idols. They told me that they ‘are policemen, we can make you admit whatever we want.’ They had beaten up my legs with wooden sticks and pulled my legs apart. They forcefully undressed me and threw my Kameez [tunic] away. It was evening by the time they dropped me at Gohana police station. I was severely bruised and was howling in pain”, falsely admitted to fraudulent conversions due to the pain, briefly hospitalized, returned to the police station and charged with attempting fraudulent conversions)

Pastor Ram Kishan (father of Vinod Kumar, charged with attempting fraudulent conversions)

Naresh Singh (home attacked, beaten, minor children injured, charged with attempting fraudulent conversions, later said “After the Jan. 5 attack on our home church, the owner of the shop called and told me to vacate [my business selling eggs from] the premises immediately. It has been two weeks, and we don’t have any earnings since then. It was the only source of livelihood for my family [US\$4 per day]. In the shops, the villagers refuse to sell us daily

necessities. We have been socially ostracized. Even the neighbors and friends in the village, who had long been our regular visitors, do not even look at us now. We were beaten up, but police registered cases against our people”)

Date: January 5, 2020

Location: Bichpari village, Sonipat district

Pastor Jai Singh (husband, father, day laborer, **UPDATE:** arraigned in court, sent to jail, later said “Unknown persons in plainclothes were driving me to the court and then to the jail. At first I suspected that they must not be a police officer as the persons were not in uniform. The journey from court to jail was torturous, as this person in plainclothes abused in vulgar Haryanvi language. He abused my family members, including my wife and children. I kept quiet and said in my heart, ‘Oh Lord, if it is in Your will, then let it be, but give me strength to endure this. I am weak. I need you’...inside the jail, I was very afraid that I might have seizures – I was under medication, and the jail authorities did not allow me to take my medicines”)

Date: January 6, 2020

Pastor Jai Singh (husband, father, day laborer, **UPDATE:** released on bail, later said “Now I’m in a very bad state. I can’t sit or stand or lie down straight on my back for five minutes. The marks of beatings are still all over my body. My legs feel very heavy and stiff, so that I can’t even stand on my feet”)

Date: January 7, 2020

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2020/01/severe-attack-in-northern-india-devastates-families-church/>

Fr Satish OFM Cap (church desecrated, tabernacle destroyed, consecrated hosts thrown on the floor)

Archbishop Peter Machado (**UPDATE:** condemned the church desecration: “I am not only terribly shocked but also greatly grieved that desecration was done to the Eucharistic Lord in that church. We all know. that this sacrilege and serious dishonor done to Our Blessed Lord and Savior is a matter of great concern, not only to the parishioners of St Francis Assisi Parish but also to the religious feelings of everyone in the Archdiocese. In such cases, it is normal for the whole diocese to do penance and reparation in churches and religious houses for this sacrilegious and ignominious deed”)

Date: January 21, 2020

Location: Kengeri, Bangalore

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Archbishop-of-Bangalore-shocked-at-the-desecration-of-St-Francis-of-Assisi-Church-49082.html>



Indonesia

Ramesko Purba (parish spokesman, reported that a small group of Muslim extremists had prevented a needed expansion of an overcrowded church despite it having met all legal requirements, wrote “As we explained to Karimun officials, there will be no symbol or ornament outside the church; no cross, no statue, no image of Mary will be displayed visible outside the church...we accept this to minimize protest. For the Church, this is truly a test of humility”)

Date: January 23, 2020

Location: Tanjung Balai, Karimun, Riau Island

Source: [http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Catholics-on-Riau-Island-in-legal-battle-against-Islamic-extremists-over-church-project-\(photos\)-49119.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Catholics-on-Riau-Island-in-legal-battle-against-Islamic-extremists-over-church-project-(photos)-49119.html)



Iran

Ismail Maghrebi-Nejad (aged 65, convert of 40 years, widower of Mahvash Mahmoudian, arrested on [January 23, 2019](#), charged with ‘propaganda against the state and insulting the sacred Iranian establishment’; accused by a judge on [October 22, 2019](#) of apostasy, bail increased to US\$9,000; appeared in court on [November 2, 2019](#), defense attorney approved; **UPDATE**: sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment on the 'insulting the sacred Iranian establishment' charge, other charges still pending)

Date: January 11, 2020

Location: Shiraz

Source: <https://articleeighteen.com/news/5407/>

Fatemeh "Mary" Mohammadi (aged 21, convert, arrested in [November 2017](#) while attending an underground house church; sentenced in [April 2018](#) to 6 months' imprisonment, released with time served; assaulted on a bus on [July 9, 2019](#) by a woman who objected to way she wore her headscarf, arrested by police when she attempted to file a complaint against the woman and held until 3 AM; tweeted on [December 21, 2019](#) that she had been denied an application to Azad University without explanation; arrested on [January 12, 2020](#) near an anti-government demonstration concerning the January 8, 2020 downing of Ukrainian airlines flight 752, earlier in the day had sent several anti-government tweets concerning “soft repression”, “false beliefs through selective coverage of the news”, “lies that are bigger and more repetitive make them more believable”, **UPDATE**: whereabouts still unknown)

Date: January 21, 2020

Source: <https://articleeighteen.com/news/5352/>

and <https://articleeighteen.com/news/4242/>

and <https://www.christianpost.com/world/iran-arrests-christian-convert-activist-after-criticizing-regimes-soft-repression.html>



Niger

Fr Mauro Armanino SMA (missionary, **UPDATE**: reported on continued instabilities: "The repeated threats to the Christian communities in the border area with Burkina Faso have achieved the aim they set: to decapitate the communities and then fall prey to the fear of professing faith in Sunday prayers in the chapels...On Tuesday, January 14, in a village not far from Bomoanga, which for over a year has helplessly witnessed the kidnapping of Father Pierluigi Maccalli, a group of criminals who went to settle the scores with the chief nurse who works in a dispensary in the area, took the nephew from his home and was beheaded. In Bomoanga people no longer go to church on Sunday. The 'basilica', as Fr Maccalli used to call it, conceived, built and inaugurated by him, is now deserted, as well as the school recently attacked")

Date: January 21, 2020

Source: <http://www.fides.org/en/news/67283->

[AFRICA NIGER They will be able to cut trees but not the roots of the cross threats to Christians in the country](#)



Nigeria

Rev Lawan Andimi (husband, father of eight, abducted by Boko Haram in [Michika, Adamawa state](#) on [January 3, 2020](#); **UPDATE**: **beheaded** after refusing the invitation to Islam, said in his last video from captivity "If the opportunity [for freedom] has not been granted, maybe it is the will of God. I want all people close and far, colleagues, to be patient. Don't cry, don't worry, but thank God for everything. I have never been discouraged, because all conditions that one finds himself is in the hand of God")

Rev Samson Ayokunle (Christian Association of Nigeria president; **UPDATE**: confirmed the murder of Rev Lawan Andimi, called it "gruesome, unfortunate and a shame on the federal government")

Kwamkur Vondip (Christian Association of Nigeria legal and public affairs director, said "[the church did] everything within her reach to secure the safe release of this pastor gentleman [Rev Lawan Andimi] but it was not possible because they didn't have the military power to do so...In the light of the current developments and the circumstantial facts surrounding the prevailing upsurge of attacks against the church, it will be difficult for us to believe that the federal government under President Muhammadu Buhari is not colluding with the insurgents to exterminate Christians in Nigeria, bearing in mind the very questionable leadership of the security sector that has been skewed towards a religion and region! Is that lopsidedness not a cover-up for the operation of the insurgency? If not, why couldn't the well-equipped security agents of Nigeria get this man killed rescued? A government that cannot protect the governed is a failed

government...Since the government and its apologists are claiming the killings have no religious undertones, why are the terrorists and herdsmen targeting the predominantly Christian communities and Christian leaders?")

Date: January 20, 2020

Rev Dennis Bagauri (**shot dead** in his residence)

Date: January 19, 2020

Location: Mayo Belwa, Adamawa state

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2020/01/boko-haram-executes-brethren-pastor-in-northeast-nigeria/>

Briget Philip (aged 18, secondary school student, **killed** by Muslim herdsmen)

Priscilla David (aged 19, secondary school student, **killed** by Muslim herdsmen)

Benjamin Peter (aged 19, wounded, hospitalized)

Goodluck Andawus (aged 12, wounded, hospitalized)

Henry Jonathan (aged 18, wounded, hospitalized)

Solomon John (texted: "As the people fled into nearby bushes to take cover, the attackers retreated and left. We are sad about these attacks on our people, which seem to be unending")

Date: January 17, 2020

Location: Gora-Gan village, Zango Kataf county, Kaduna state

Grace Taku (aid worker, captured in an attack on a convoy in **Damasak, Borno state** by ISWAP on **July 18, 2019**; **UPDATE**: still in captivity)

Date: January 20, 2020

Event: Five aid workers were captured on the **Monguno-Maiduguri highway in Borno state by ISWAP on **December 22, 2019**; UPDATE: released**

Adamu Ozeshi

Arthur Ibojekwe Chima

Asabe Cletus Musa

George Danbaba Micheal

Jennifer Samuel Ukumbong

Jummai Markus (neighbor of Jennifer Samuel Ukumbong, said "Ever since Jennifer was kidnapped by Boko Haram [actually the ISWAP breakaway faction], her family has been holding prayer vigils and fasting for her release. In fact, her mother, who's a widow, was in the church praying for her daughter's freedom when the news about her rescued filtered in")

Date: January 15, 2020

Lilian Gyang (university student, abducted by Boko Haram while returning to school)

Date: January 9, 2020

Location: Damaturu-Maiduguri highway

Event: Several Christians remain in captivity

Leah Nathan Sharibu (aged 17, student, abducted by Boko Haram in Dapchi, Yoba state on February 19, 2018)

Alice Ngaddah (mother of two, UNICEF worker)

Bitrus Z Bala

Patience Ishaku

Awagana Kwagwi

Saratu Kwagwi

Date: January 20, 2020

Source: <https://morningstarnews.org/2020/01/two-young-christian-women-killed-in-kaduna-state-nigeria/>

Ropvil Daciya Dalep (aged 22, university student, abducted by Boko Haram on the Damaturu-Maiduguri highway on January 9, 2020 while returning to school; **UPDATE: shot dead** by a child soldier)

Date reported: January 18, 2020

Source [warning - graphic]: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/is-child-soldier-executes-nigerian-christian-student-declares-we-will-not-stop.html> and https://twitter.com/Rita_Katz/status/1218618560576139265

Event: Four people and killed and at least one injured, possibly by Fulani Muslim gunmen

Augustine Avertse (son of Akaa'am Avertse, church leader, **shot dead**)

Akaa'am Avertse (father of Augustine Avertse, **shot dead**)

Date: January 20, 2020

Location: Abebe, Keana local government area, Nasarawa state

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/67280-AFRICA_NIGERIA_The_head_of_a_Catholic_community_in_central_Nigeria_has_been_killed

Archbishop Matthew Manoso Ndagoso (**UPDATE: said "No other country will tolerate this type of insecurity without calling for mass protests. Definitely our country is under siege"**)

Date: January 20, 2020

Location: Kaduna

Source: http://www.fides.org/en/news/67263-AFRICA_NIGERIA_We_are_under_siege_says_the_Archbishop_of_Kaduna_where_4_seminarians_were_kidnapped



Sweden

Isa Gergin (church caretaker, church damaged in an arson attack on [August 5, 2018](#), later said "I think they have closed the investigation"; church damaged in an arson attack on [December 3, 2019](#), said "Someone had poured gasoline on the outside and lit it. But the emergency services were quickly in place"; **UPDATE**: reported on another arson attack on his church, said "We have not gone through all the damage yet, but the building has survived and internally it is only smoke damaged")

Date: January 5, 2020

Location: Norrkoping

Source: <http://www.aina.org/news/20200110174456.htm>



Ukraine

Archimandrite Gideon Kharon (dual U.S. citizen, detained upon re-entry to the country at [Boryspil Airport, Kiev](#) on [February 13, 2019](#) after returning from the United States where he had testified to Members of Congress on the situation in the country, passport seized and then declared lost, denied access to attorneys, Members of Parliament, and medication, stripped of his Ukrainian citizenship and deported under armed escort; a district court ruled on [September 19, 2019](#) that his citizenship had been illegally revoked; **UPDATE**: an appellate court upheld the district court ruling, ordered reinstatement of his citizenship)

Date: January 22, 2020

Source: <https://orthochristian.com/124069.html>

and <https://orthochristian.com/127307.html>



United Kingdom

Julia Rynkiewicz (aged 24, university student in a midwife program, blocked from a hospital placement in [September 2019](#) after her involvement in an anti-abortion student group was discovered; **UPDATE**: reinstated after a "fitness to practice" hearing, demanded an apology and compensation for the one year delay of her graduation)

Date: January 20, 2020

Location: University of Nottingham

Source: <http://catholicnewsagency.com/news/dont-call-a-pro-life-midwife-uk-university-said-47820>



United States - New Jersey

Rev Wil Wilson (church organ destroyed in an act of attempted theft or vandalism)

Date: January 21, 2020

Location: Freehold

Source: <https://nypost.com/2020/01/23/new-jersey-churchs-decades-old-organ-destroyed-by-vandal/>

United States - New York

Fr Jossy Vattothu (sprayed with red juice during Mass by an apparently mentally ill man)

Date: January 12, 2020

Location: Greenpoint, Brooklyn

Source: <https://nypost.com/2020/01/15/video-shows-vandal-spraying-juice-at-catholic-priest-in-brooklyn/>

Today's Martyrs

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

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