

## North Korea sentences Canadian pastor to life in prison

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North Korea's Supreme Court sentenced a Canadian pastor to life in prison with hard labor on Wednesday for what it called crimes against the state.

Hyeon Soo Lim, who pastors the Light Korean Presbyterian Church in Toronto, was given the sentence after a brief trial. He had been in detention since February.

Lim had earlier appeared at a news conference organized by North Korean authorities in Pyongyang in July and admitted to plotting to overthrow the North Korean state, but other foreigners detained in North Korea and then released have said they were coerced into making similar statements and confessing guilt during their detention.

Lim's relatives and colleagues have said he travelled on Jan. 31 as part of a regular humanitarian mission to North Korea where he supports a nursing home, a nursery and an orphanage. They said Lim, who is in his early 60s, has made more than 100 trips to North Korea since 1997 and that his trips were about helping people and were not political.

North Korea has very strict rules against any missionary or religious activities that it sees as threatening the supremacy of its ruling regime. Merely leaving a Bible in a public place can lead to arrest and possibly severe punishment.

Both the U.S. and Canadian governments warn against travel to North Korea.

Last year, the North released Kenneth Bae, a Korean-American missionary who was convicted of "anti-state" crimes and had been serving a 15-year sentence.

Bae, whose detention received worldwide attention, suffered medical issues in detention. He was freed along with one other American detainee after a secret mission to the reclusive communist country by James Clapper, the top U.S. intelligence official. He is reportedly planning a book about his 2-year-ordeal in detention.

An Australian missionary detained for spreading Christianity was deported last year after he apologized for anti-state religious acts and requested forgiveness.

[News Source](#)

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## French teacher attacked by man claiming IS link

A hooded man claiming to be acting for Islamic State attacked a nursery school teacher with a knife-like weapon as he prepared for classes in a school north of Paris, French officials said on Monday.

The male teacher was taken to hospital after the attack by a man wielding a knife or box-cutter who fled the scene after the attack at about 0630 GMT, said the official, adding that anti-terrorism officials were investigating.

According to one judiciary official, the assailant slashed at the teacher's neck and said the act was a signal from the Islamic State group, also referred to in France by the name Daesh.

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*French police and firefighters are seen in front of the nursery school where a hooded man claiming to be acting for Islamic State attacked a teacher with a knife in Aubervilliers, near Paris, France, December 14, 2015*

This is Daesh, it's a warning," the attacker told his victim, the official said, adding the victim's life was apparently not in danger.

France's education minister and a local government prefect visited the premises of the school in Aubervilliers, in the Saint-Denis region just north of the capital. Classes at the school were cancelled.

The prefect, who was not introduced by name, told reporters it was too early to draw conclusions about the character of the attack, noting that the assailant, wearing a balaclava, had apparently found the weapon at the school premises.

The incident came a month after gunmen and suicide bombers killed 130 people in Paris an attack claimed by Islamic State, the militant Islamist group which controls swathes of Syria and Iraq and has vowed to attack France, a member of the coalition of countries conducting air strikes against it.

It also came days after a knifing in London's underground urban rail network which police are treating as a terrorist attack

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### Pakistan diplomat's links with terror groups revealed

Police have found evidence of the terror links of a Pakistani diplomat, according to documents available with [bdnews24.com](http://bdnews24.com).

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Some Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) activists recently arrested in Dhaka have blown the lid off these clandestine links during their interrogations, the documents relating to police investigation show.

At least one JMB radical has testified to these links in a judicial confession.



*Farina Arshad*

Pakistan High Commission's Second Secretary (political) Farina Arshad is said to be involved with the Islamist radicals.

Earlier in January this year, Mazhar Khan, a Pakistani official working in the Dhaka mission, had been expelled after Bangladesh intelligence accused him of funding Islamist radicals and peddling fake currency.

Two of the four JMB radicals, including Idris Sheikh, arrested at Uttara and Khilgaon in Dhaka on Nov 29, were found to be carrying Pakistani passports, said Detective Branch's Joint Commissioner Monirul Islam at a press briefing at the time.

Both these radicals had been travelling frequently between Bangladesh and Pakistan, he said.

Monirul Islam said Idris was in possession of a 'spy mobile', which he was using to communicate regularly with a foreign intelligence agent outside the country.

"He was regularly sharing information with that agent and was also in touch with a female diplomat based in Dhaka." The police officer did not disclose the diplomat's identity at that time.

In his judicial confession before Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Abdullah Al Masud under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), Idris named Second Secretary Farina Arshad as the diplomat he was in contact with.

The Pakistan High Commission did not respond to bdnews24.com's attempts to cross-check details.

Senior intelligence sources say another junior diplomat of same origin working in a European mission in Dhaka is alleged to have been involved in anti-Bangladesh propaganda.

### **Idris details**

DB's Monirul Islam told journalists in November that Idris had visited Pakistan via India in 1985.

He married a Pakistani school teacher, Shahnaz Begum, in 1990 and settled in that country. A son, Mohammed Adil, was born.

In 2002, Idris contested national elections from Pakistan Muslim Alliance but lost. In 2007, he returned to Bangladesh and joined the JMB.

Monirul Islam said Idris, 49, had been to Pakistan 48 times in the past two years.

Idris told the magistrate that he had hailed from Chitolmari, Bagerhat and that his father, Kausar Sheikh, was no longer alive.

About his links with Pakistani diplomat Farina Arshad, Idris said on return to Bangladesh in 2007, he had first tried his hand in garment business, but five years later, he switched over to air ticketing and visa processing.

That is when he first met Babul and then Kamal, who introduced himself as someone working for Pakistan intelligence.

Idris said in the judicial confession that he had run up a huge debt to Babul who had frequently booked tickets for him. Babul, he said, left for Pakistan at one stage and gave him Farina's contact number.

Idris said in his confession that Babul later told him that a man arrested for peddling counterfeit Indian currency in Dhaka airport was closely linked to Farina.

On return from Pakistan, Idris married again – this time Manowara Begum from a neighbouring village. He has two daughters and a son with Manowara.

Government sources said when Idris was arrested at Uttara, he introduced himself as a relative of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

One government source said Idris had earlier been arrested on May 1, 2011 from the house of a top radical.

At that time, he was found carrying 47 passports and a case was filed with the Airport Police.

Idris said in his judicial confession that he got a ride from Farina in her car from Baitul Mukarram to Fakirapool and received Tk 30,000 from her.

An intelligence official told bdnews24.com that Idris had saved a foreign number in his mobile phone as his own.

That number actually belongs to a Pakistani intelligence official called Captain Asim, who is performing a crucial under-cover assignment based in an airport in Pakistan.

The phone Idris carried had the capability to record conversations of other people using malware.

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### Man guilty of IS-inspired knife plan

A man has been convicted of preparing to carry out a knife attack in London, inspired by so-called Islamic State.

Nadir Syed, 22, from Southall in west London, was arrested hours after buying a chef's knife in November 2014, days before Remembrance Sunday.

Woolwich Crown Court heard how he had been inspired by IS leaders urging attacks on Western targets, including police and soldiers.

The jury could not reach verdicts on two other men on trial.

Haseeb Hamayoon, 29, from Hayes, west London and Yousaf Syed, 20, from High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, denied planning acts of terrorism. They will be retried.

## Syria attempt

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The jury returned a majority verdict on Syed after more than 50 hours' deliberation.

The court heard how he had expressed admiration for the killers of soldier Lee Rigby and how he shared violent footage of beheadings from Syria and Iraq on social media.



*Syed was arrested in November 2014*

Some of his conversations were made on encrypted applications, the jury was told.

The court heard that Syed had also tried to travel to Syria to fight with IS militants but had been stopped from leaving the country in January 2014.

In September 2014, IS militants issued a fatwa or decree calling on its followers in the West to carry out attacks at home, jurors were told.

## 'Stamped on poppy'

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In the weeks that followed, Syed's behaviour became increasingly worrying to MI5 and police intelligence officers who were watching him.

The court also heard how Syed had appeared in a video in which he stamped on a poppy and kicked it towards a drain, which prosecutor Max Hill QC said was demonstrative of his "attitude to the poppy as the remembrance image in this country".

By November last year he was actively searching for knives of "sufficient quality to source an attack", the court heard, and he was eventually arrested on 6 November shortly after buying a 30cm chef's knife.

Commander Richard Walton, head of the Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism Command, said: "This was an intense and lengthy operation by my officers, supported by the intelligence agencies, and I have no doubt that London is a safer place today with this conviction."

Syed will be sentenced at a later date.

[News Source](#)

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### 41 police killed in Argentina bus crash

At least 41 Argentine police members were killed Monday after a bus they were traveling in flipped and fell off a bridge in the northern part of the South American nation.

Authorities say the crash happened early Monday while a convoy of three buses with gendarmes officers was traveling near Salta, a city about 932 miles north of Buenos Aires.

'Between 50 and 60 border patrol officers were on board. Some are still trapped,' provincial emergency director Ernesto Flores told the La Red radio station, reports Fox News.

Angel Marinaro, civil defense director for the province, told local station TN that for unknown reasons the driver of one of the buses lost control as the convoy was crossing a bridge.

The vehicle flipped and fell off the bridge, landing about 65 feet below. Local television images show an overturned bus and rescue crews working the scene.

Gustavo Solis, the mayor of Rosario de la Frontera – a city in the area – told the media that the road where the accident happened is known to be in poor condition.

Authorities say survivors are being taken to a nearby hospital.

Police said in a statement that visibility was good at the time of the accident and they are considering mechanical failure as a possible cause, according to Sky News.

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### SA gets 3rd Finance Minister in a week

South African President Jacob Zuma has replaced newly appointed Finance Minister David van Rooyen with the more experienced Pravin Gordhan in a surprise Sunday night announcement.

On Wednesday, the president sacked Nhlanelo Nene in a move that sent the rand to record lows and sparked a sell-off in bank shares, reports the BBC.

His replacement for less than a week, van Rooyen, is a little-known MP.

The latest move sent the rand up almost 5% on Sunday night.

Gordhan was widely respected when he served as South Africa's finance minister from 2009 until 2014.

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### Clashes in southeast Turkey kill seven, new curfews declared

Seven people were killed in clashes with security forces in Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeast, officials said on Monday, as authorities declared curfews across the restive region.

The clashes are the latest in months of violence following the collapse of a ceasefire between the government and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in July. Since then, Ankara has imposed round-the-clock curfews in many areas.

Two people were killed as police clashed with crowds protesting against a security crackdown in the main southeastern city of Diyarbakir, a hospital official and witnesses said.

Further south, five Kurdish militants were killed in Mardin province's Dargecit district, another area under curfew, security officials said. It was not clear exactly when they were killed.

Armoured police vehicles roamed Diyarbakir's streets, firing water cannon and tear gas as hundreds gathered for a march called by the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) to protest a two-week-long curfew in the city's district of Sur.

Teargas billowed in the city streets as armoured vehicles sped around and protesters lobbed stones at police. Shopkeepers shuttered their stores ahead of the protest, which the government said was banned. Few buses were operating, rubbish was not collected and most students did not go to school.

Youths with scarves masking their faces tried to block streets with piles of bricks and burning wood before police pursued them into side streets.

In Sirnak province, the governor imposed a curfew in two towns near the borders of both Syria and Iraq from Monday night, a day after teachers were seen streaming out of the area on the orders of education authorities.

Locals, anticipating that the teachers were being recalled ahead of a curfew, formed queues at bakeries and shops to buy food, witnesses said. Several thousand teachers are based in the towns.

The two towns of Cizre and Silopi were under tight security, with police armoured vehicles stationed at the entrances to both, witnesses said.

"A curfew is declared to neutralise separatist terror group members, remove explosives-laden barricades and ditches ... and secure public order," the Sirnak governor's office said in a statement. It said the curfew would begin at 11 p.m. (2100 GMT).

A curfew was also imposed on Monday in the town of Nusaybin on the Syrian border to restore order "in response to increasing terror incidents", state authorities in the town announced.

According to data compiled by the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, 52 curfews have been imposed since mid-August across seven Turkish provinces in the region, affecting areas where some 1.3 million people live.

The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militant group launched its insurgency in 1984 and more than 40,000 people have been killed in the conflict. It is designated as a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and European Union.

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