



HATE AND TARGETED VIOLENCE
AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN INDIA

REPORT 2017

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION OF
THE EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF INDIA

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Report by:

**RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION OF
THE EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF INDIA**

805/ 92 Deepali Building

Nehru Place

New Delhi—110019 INDIA

Email: mail@efirc.org

CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary and Analysis
2. Graphs
3. Recommendations to the Government of India
4. List of Incidents



“Acceptance goes a step beyond tolerance. Moving from tolerance to acceptance is a journey that starts within ourselves, within our own understanding and compassion for people who are different to us and from our recognition and acceptance of the 'other' that is the rairon d'etre of democracy. The challenge is to look beyond the stereotypes and preconceptions that prevent us from accepting others. This makes continuous dialogue unavoidable. It has to become an essential national virtue to promote harmony transcending sectional diversities. The urgency of giving this a practical shape at national, state and local levels through various suggestions in the public domain is highlighted by enhanced apprehensions of insecurity amongst segments of our citizen body, particularly Dalits, Muslims and Christians.”

Former Vice-President Mohammad Hamid Ansari

(Excerpt from his final address as Vice President, at the 25th annual convocation of the National Law School of India University in Bengaluru, 6th August 2017)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The year 2017 has been one of the most traumatic for the Christian community in India since the mass targeted violence of the Kandhamal pogrom in 2007 and 2008. The Religious Liberty Commission of the Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFIRLC) documented at least 351 cases of violence in 2017, by no means an exhaustive compilation as it is based on voluntary reporting and civil society investigations. Most cases go unreported either because the victim is terrified or the police, especially in the northern states, just turn a blind eye and refuse to record the mandatory First Information Report.

With the political environment heating up as the ruling political group has begun its exercise for the general elections due in spring 2019. Foot soldiers of the Bharatiya Janata Party, collectively called the Sangh Parivar, have shifted into high gear in hate campaigns and targeted violence against individuals and groups, mainly religious minorities and Dalits. They have been assisted with government announcing strict laws against cow slaughter and even a carrying of beef, and the formation of quasi-official vigilante squads to monitor beef and cow transport and marriages between Hindu girls and men from other religions.

The Indian Government admitted in Parliament that “communal violence”, the term used to define clashes between religious groups, increased 28% over three years to 2017. No disaggregated data is available, and the criminal justice system at the village and small towns level routinely ignores or violates provisions in the law. This is deeply disconcerting, and the EFIRLC calls upon the government to ensure that the Constitutional provisions for religious freedom, right to life and freedom are available to the poorest person in the most remote village.

The EFIRLC focusses on the targeting of Christians, but is alive to the persecution of, and pressure on, other religious minorities, caste discrimination against Dalits, and the situation of women in general and when they are trapped during religious or other group violence. It is therefore also deeply concerned at the many men, Muslims and Dalits, who have been lynched in the guise of punishing them for trafficking in cattle. EFIRLC has also been part of civil society initiatives, fact finding committees, and peace initiatives wherever it could. It recognises that issues of cow, caste and attempts to force Hindu religious codes on schools also impact the Christian community.

An analysis of the 2017 data shows Tamil Nadu emerge as the most hostile state where Christian are concerned, with 52 cases. Uttar Pradesh with 50, is a close second, and Chhattisgarh, 43, Madhya Pradesh, 36, Maharashtra, 38, are bunched together. The National Capital of Delhi, its police controlled by the national government, recorded 6 cases. Barring Tamil Nadu, the other states are either ruled by the BJP directly or in collusion with other parties, and the Sangh cadres have free hand with the police and administration either looking the other way, or complicit. The Tamil Nadu violence has a disturbing overlay of caste discrimination, and the victims largely come from the so called lower castes in villages where the dominant groups object to prayer houses and even the entry of missionaries. The political instability in the state in the last one year has aggravated the situation.

The violence is evenly spread across the months of the year, though the prayerful period of Lent and Christmas which involves larger participation of people, also see a bigger targeting of Christians. April saw 54 cases and Christmas month, 40.

In fact, Christmas 2017 was unique in that it saw a considerable targeting of Carol groups, independent pastors and even Catholic clergy and women religious among the victims.

The world came to know of the arrest of carollers through the British Broadcasting, BBC, report from Satna in Madhya Pradesh where carol singers were arrested in, after a man accused them of trying to convert him to Christianity. The state is one of six others with strict anti-conversion laws in India. One of those arrested was a professor at a Catholic theological college. The group said it was only visiting villages to sing songs. A car used by the carol singers was also set on fire, allegedly by right-wing activists. The priest-professor and others had to spend several days in jail before they were let out on bail.

Equally bizarre has been the action against Christian children. In what seems to be a misuse of the provisions of the

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

Freedom of Religion Act in Madhya Pradesh, at least three incidents (during the months of May, June and October) were reported from Madhya Pradesh where Christian children travelling for church related functions and their leaders were taken into custody on alleged charges of kidnapping and conversion.

In one instance, the group was attacked by Hindu Dharm Jagran Manch activists, and it was more than a week before the Madhya Pradesh High Court handed over the children to their parents. A habeas corpus petition had been filed before the Indore bench by the parents who contended that the children were going to Mumbai to attend a Bible-reading session with their consent but were illegally detained and kept at a secret location.

According to the Indian Express Newspaper that covered this incident: “On October 23, Anita Joseph was to board Avantika Express with the seven children, who live near her house, and her 19-year-old old daughter to Mumbai. Before the train started, some right-wing activists reached the station and accused her and one Amrit Kumar Matera, who had come to drop off the children, of taking the children forcibly to Mumbai and later to Kerala for conversion and beat them up. Based on a complaint by activists of the Jagran Manch, the GRP booked Anita and Amrit for alleged kidnapping and under the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act and sent the children to a shelter. Sophie, Anita's daughter, was asked to go home because she is an adult. The two were remanded in police custody. A day later, Amrit was booked under POCSO, allegedly under pressure from the activists. When the habeas corpus case came up on Monday, the bench of Justices S C Sharma and Alok Verma asked the prosecution to produce the children. The parents said they were concerned about the safety of their wards and that despite requests the police did not release them. They alleged that the sequence of events was politically motivated. “The constitutional rights of the petitioners have been imperilled by illegal detention of their children without any reason,” the petition said. Dennis Michael, who filed the petition on behalf of the parents, said he was severely beaten when he reached the police station after hearing the news. He said the activists beat and abused the children and their relatives, but the police did not act against them.” The court asked the children questions and ordered that they be immediately handed to their parents.

Understandably, such actions have angered civil society and human rights activists. Mr. Harsh Mander, the notable civil society activist and leader has observed that a leader as powerful as Mr. Narendra Modi could easily have brought all his colleagues into line with a single rebuke if that was what he wanted. However, with rabble-rousing Yogi Adityanath's appointment as chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, he no longer feels a need for masks.¹

Researcher author Dharendra K Jha, an expert on the shadow armies of the Sangh Parivar, says that Yogi's elevation has been a green light for radical Hindutva groups.¹¹ After Mr. Modi became prime minister, these groups started thinking they have assumed power, it is their government, Jha says. They have gone amok. They don't fear law and order or any democratic institution. They are on a rampage. Modi would never come out and openly help them, but he rarely criticises them. Because of his silence, the message goes to the state machinery that they don't have to take action against them.”

Speaking on behalf of the entire Christian community in the country, the President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) Cardinal Baselios Cleemis has said “From the point of Christian community, this whole incident of attack on priests and seminaries in Satna and the state government's move to file cases against the priests, arresting the poor and the innocent instead of finding the culprits, do not help us to keep our confidence in the government intact. We are losing our confidence in the government. The country is being divided based on religious belief. It is bad in a democratic country. I want my country to be united in a secular fabric. But now, this country is being polarised due to religious affiliations. We should fight against it.”¹¹¹

I <https://thewire.in/123008/india-hindutva-narendra-modi-rss-muslims/>

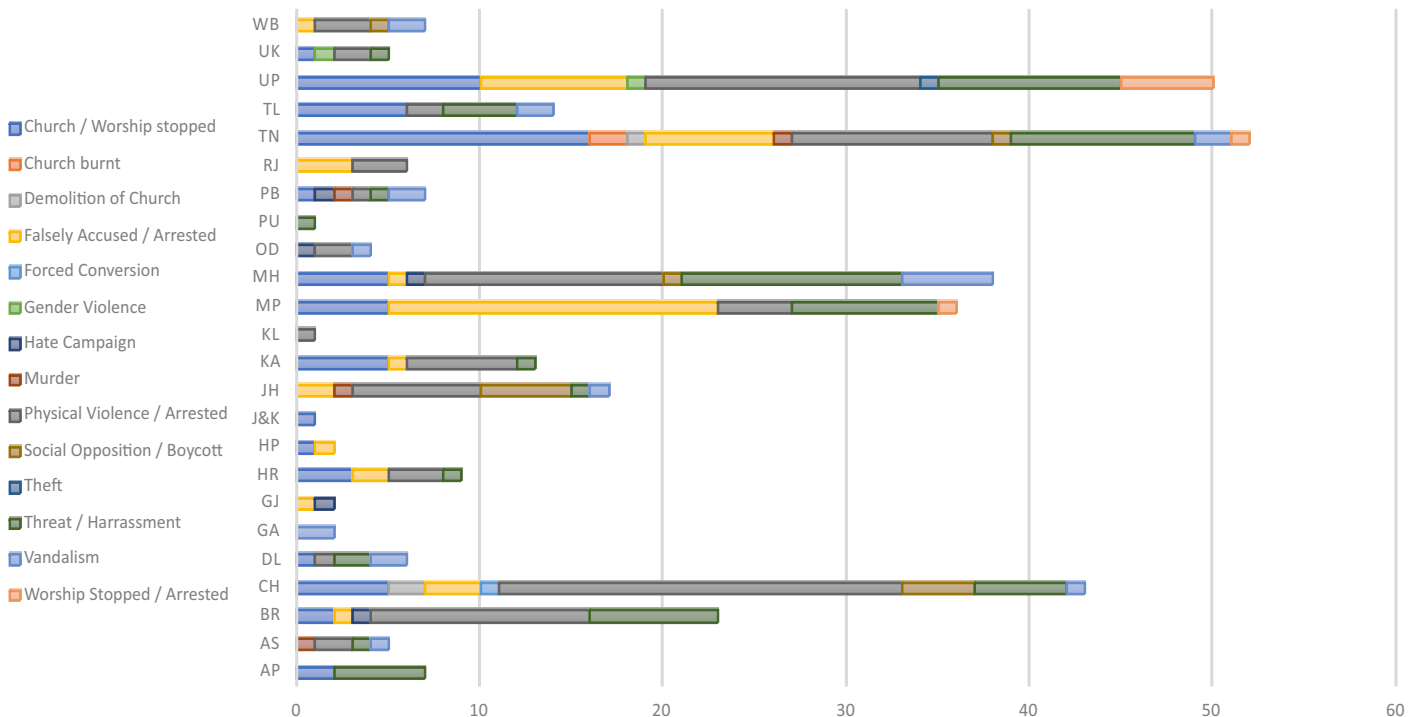
II <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/24/christmas-violence-and-arrests-shake-indian-christians>

III <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/country-being-divided-losing-faith-in-govt-catholic-body-4993755/>

TYPES OF VIOLENCE

Types of Violence	AP	AS	BR	CH	DL	GA	GJ	HR	HP	J&K	JH	KA	KL	MP	MH	OD	PU	PB	RJ	TN	TL	UP	UK	WB	Grand Total
Church / Worship stopped	2		2	5	1			3	1	1		5		5	5			1		16	6	10	1		64
Church burnt																				2					2
Demolition of Church				2																1					3
Falsely Accused / Arrested			1	3			1	2	1		2	1		18	1				3	7		8		1	49
Forced Conversion				1																					1
Gender Violence																						1	1		2
Hate Campaign			1				1								1	1		1							5
Murder		1									1							1		1					4
Physical Violence / Arrested		2	12	22	1			3			7	6	1	4	13	2		1	3	11	2	15	2	3	110
Social Opposition / Boycott				4							5				1					1				1	12
Theft																						1			1
Threat / Harrassment	5	1	7	5	2			1			1	1		8	12		1	1		10	4	10	1		70
Vandalism		1		1	2	2					1				5	1		2		2	2			2	21
Worship Stopped / Arrested														1						1		5			7
Grand Total	7	5	23	43	6	2	2	9	2	1	17	13	1	36	38	4	1	7	6	52	14	50	5	7	351

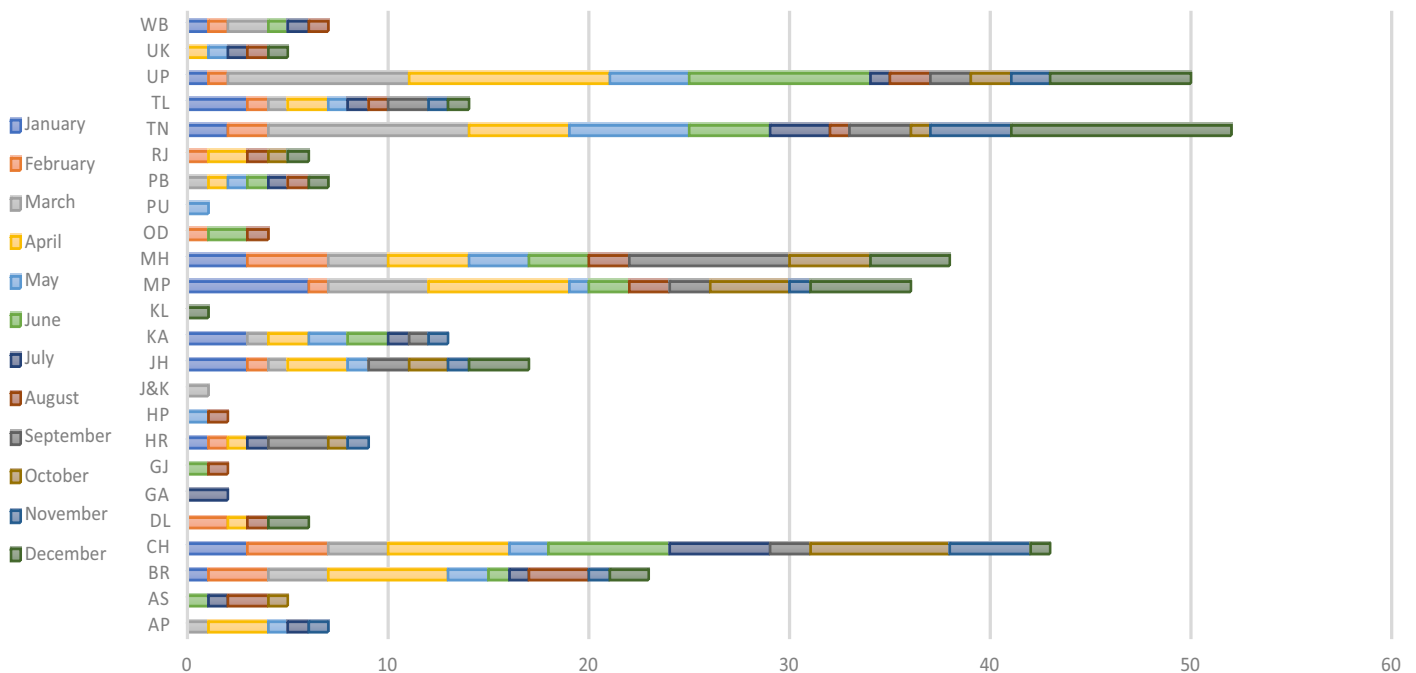
Types of Violence across States



MONTH-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF VIOLENCE ACROSS STATES

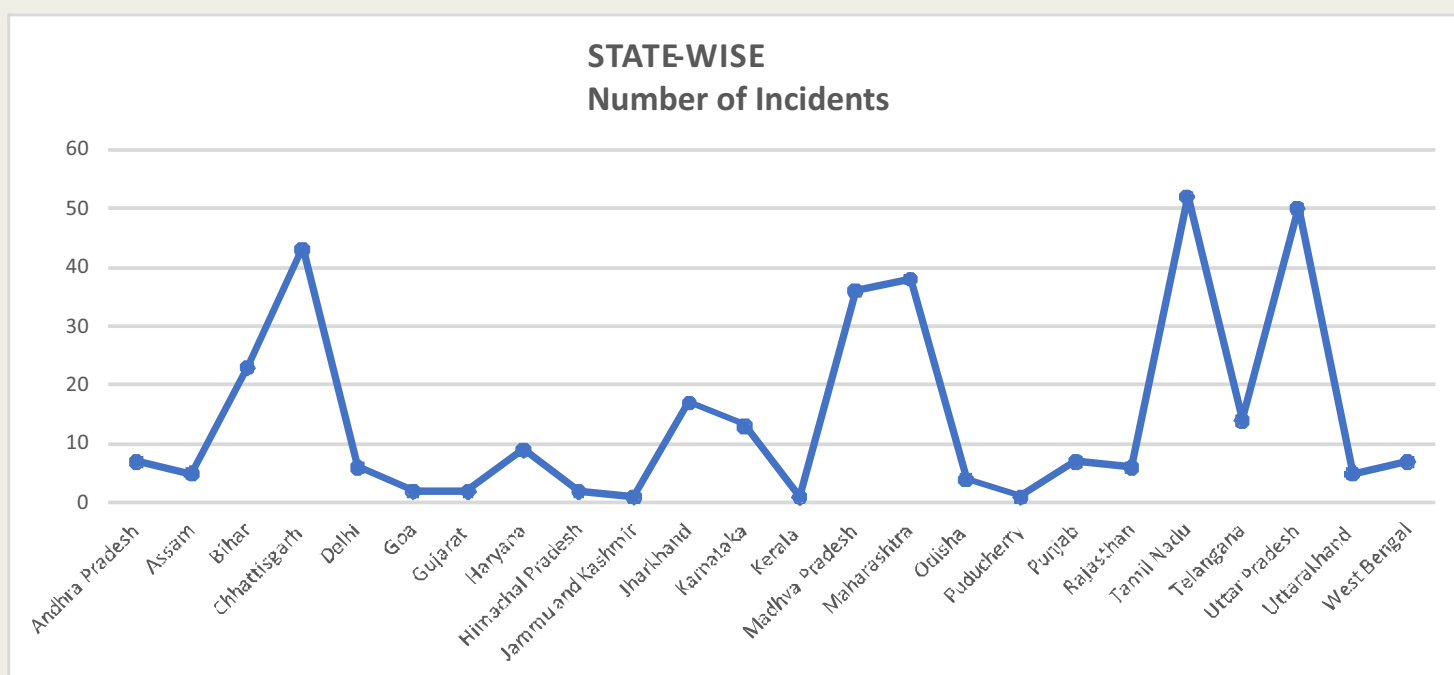
Months	AP	AS	BR	CH	DL	GA	GJ	HR	HP	J&K	JH	KA	KL	MP	MH	OD	PU	PB	RJ	TN	TL	UP	UK	WB	Grand Total
January			1	3				1			3	3		6	3					2	3	1		1	27
February			3	4	2			1			1			1	4	1			1	2	1	1		1	23
March	1		3	3						1	1	1		5	3			1		10	1	9		2	41
April	3		6	6	1			1			3	2		7	4			1	2	5	2	10	1		54
May	1		2	2					1		1	2		1	3		1	1		6	1	4	1		27
June		1	1	6			1					2		2	3	2		1		4		9		1	33
July	1	1	1	5		2		1				1						1		3	1	1	1	1	20
August		2	3		1		1		1					2	2	1		1	1	1	1	2	1	1	21
September				2				3			2	1		2	8					3	2	2			25
October		1		7				1			2			4	4				1	1		2			23
November	1		1	4				1			1	1		1						4	1	2			17
December			2	1	2						3		1	5	4			1	1	11	1	7	1		40
Grand Total	7	5	23	43	6	2	2	9	2	1	17	13	1	36	38	4	1	7	6	52	14	50	5	7	351

Month-Wise
Distribution of Violence across states



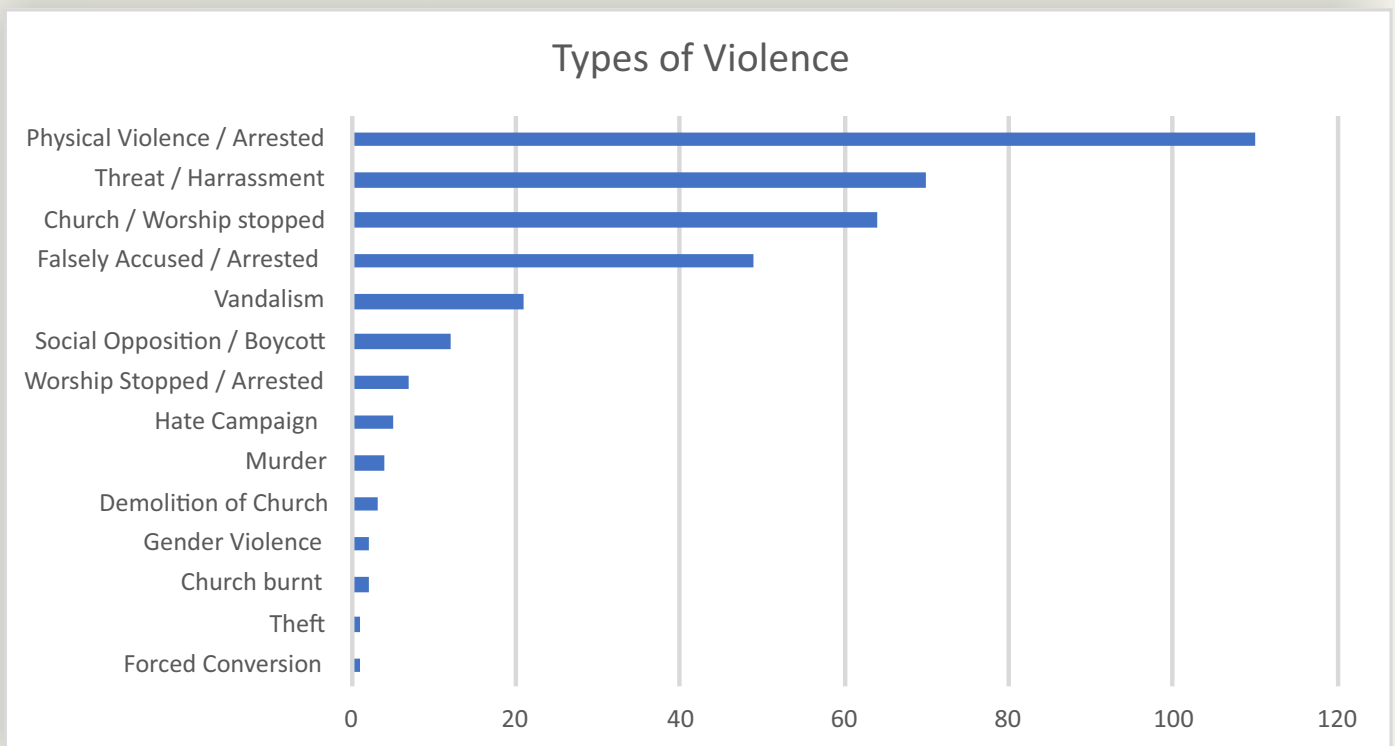
STATE-WISE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

State	Number of Incidents
Andhra Pradesh	7
Assam	5
Bihar	23
Chhattisgarh	43
Delhi	6
Goa	2
Gujarat	2
Haryana	9
Himachal Pradesh	2
Jammu and Kashmir	1
Jharkhand	17
Karnataka	13
Kerala	1
Madhya Pradesh	36
Maharashtra	38
Odisha	4
Puducherry	1
Punjab	7
Rajasthan	6
Tamil Nadu	52
Telangana	14
Uttar Pradesh	50
Uttarakhand	5
West Bengal	7
Total	351



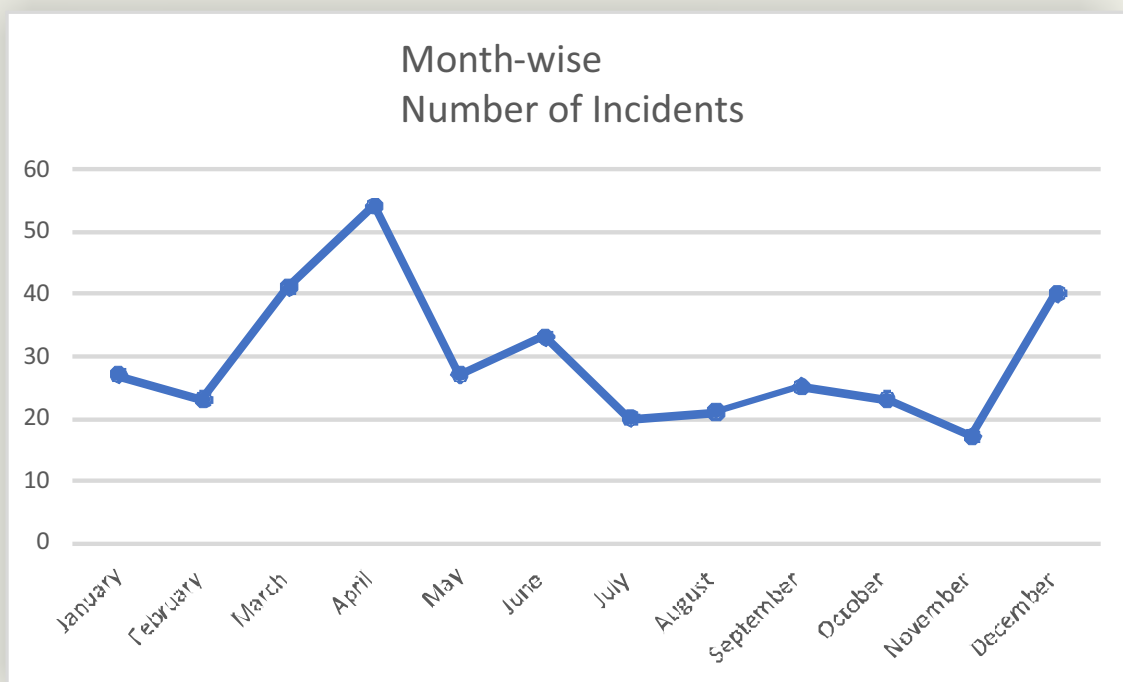
TYPES OF VIOLENCE

Types of Incidents	# of incidents
Forced Conversion	1
Theft	1
Church burnt	2
Gender Violence	2
Demolition of Church	3
Murder	4
Hate Campaign	5
Worship Stopped / Arrested	7
Social Opposition / Boycott	12
Vandalism	21
Falsely Accused / Arrested	49
Church / Worship stopped	64
Threat / Harrassment	70
Physical Violence / Arrested	110
Grand Total	351



MONTH-WISE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

Month	Incidents
January	27
February	23
March	41
April	54
May	27
June	33
July	20
August	21
September	25
October	23
November	17
December	40
Total	351



RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

- Enact a comprehensive national legislation against targeted and communal violence.
- Enforce rule of law and arrest members of groups promoting sectarian hate and violence and others who attack persons on mere suspicion of consumption / storage of beef or on alleged charges of forced or fraudulent conversions, and to take stringent action against them as per law of the land.
- Ensure stringent action under criminal law against all those who deliver hate speech with the intention of inciting violence and hatred against the Christian community.
- Advise State Governments to take adequate measures to protect Christian places of worship which are being increasingly targeted and attacked by sectarian groups who disrupt Christian worship and attack innocent Christians on flimsy and false allegations of “conversions” being performed during the worship services. This kind of attack amounts to desecration and hurting of religious sentiments of the entire community.
- Prosecute those police officials who fail in their constitutionally mandated duty to enforce the law of the land, by being complicit in attacks against religious minorities, and by shielding the attackers or otherwise scuttling due process of law.
- Provide trainings through the Ministry of Home Affairs, on human rights and religious freedom standards and practices to the state and central police and judiciary.
- Advise the state governments of Arunachal Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Jharkhand to repeal the anti-conversion laws known as Freedom of Religion Acts as well as abandon efforts towards a national anti-conversion law which would only curb the fundamental right to freedom of religion or belief, particularly of religious minorities in India.
- Amend paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950 to include Christians and Muslims.
- Ensure that an active Commission for Human Rights and Commission for Minorities is operational in every state, and that members of each commission are appointed by transparent and non-partisan procedures.
- Prevent and pursue through the judicial process, all violent acts against religious and tribal minorities and Dalits.

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE



Andhra Pradesh

On 11 March in Amalapuram of East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh, Pastor Enosh was threatened by radicals to stop the Sunday Christian worship services. He pastors a house church named Carmel Temple for the last three years. On 11 March afternoon two persons, one of whom is a Chairman of a nearby Mukesteshwar Swami Hindu temple, came to him and demanded that he cease all church activities and stop the Sunday worship services. They threatened that if he didn't oblige they would burn down his house church and destroy the church property – sound system, books and offering box, etc.

On 3 April in Burugula village in Chinthapalli mandal of Visakapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh, Pastor Koresh, who is pastoring the Indian Mission Society Church was opposed by local Hindu villagers. This happened when the pastor along with other Christians was carrying out a ceremony of laying the foundation stone for constructing a church building. During the program, the villagers came and forcefully stopped the ceremony.

On 7 April in Undavali village of Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh, local villagers threatened Pastor Suresh Babu and verbally abused him at a village council meeting. Pastor Babu has been leading a Christian fellowship in the area since 2007 and around 40 people gather regularly for worship meetings. About two months earlier, a complaint was made at the local police grievance cell regarding the Christian activities of the pastor. Based on the complaint, the local police and the village council were directed to deal with the matter. When the local police visited the pastor, they found nothing wrong with the prayer meetings since no illegal activities were being carried out. However, villagers decided to confront the pastor alleging that the area is inhabited by Hindu majority. On 7 April evening,

the pastor was called at the village council where the villagers protested against the pastor and the church with abusive words.

On 18 April in Tirupati city of Andhra Pradesh, Pastor Mallem Deva Sahayam, founder of Bible Research Ministry, was arrested over allegations of inciting hatred. The pastor organizes and conducts an annual prayer meeting in Tirupati regularly. This year too, the program was scheduled between 19 - 22 April, permissions were taken, and a sum of Rs. 40,000 was paid as Challan to the Municipal authorities. Elaborate arrangements were made for this prayer meeting that includes large scale promotions. In response, the local Shiv Sena group pressurized the local Police claiming that they anticipated communal violence if the meetings took place. The local Superintendent of Police, Smt. Jayalakshmi, took immediate action and booked the pastor and others under IPC Sec-153A and Sec-294 with CrPc/131/2017 thus obtaining a Non-bailable Warrant against the Pastor. Subsequently, around 500 to 600 local Pastors took out a rally and staged a Dharna at Thunda Indira Maidan, Tirupati seeking justice. However, the local Police continued to stay passive and ensured that the prayer meeting was cancelled.

On 30th May in Miryalaguda in Nalgonda district of Andhra Pradesh, Pastor Yasudas was opposed by Hindu radicals. Around 30-40 Hindu fundamentalists from the Shiv Shakti group approached the pastor after he had finished conducting a worship service and told him to teach his congregation about other gods too otherwise there would be consequences. They handed him a religious book and went away.

On 13 July in Korlakota Village, Amudklavasa of Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh, a pastor was threatened with dire consequences if he construct the church in the area

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

according to <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>. The Church was reportedly allotted the land 12 years ago under the Panchayat act but for want of resources only had erected a temporary shed. But now since the Church members were planning to construct a permanent structure on the land, a complaint was filed with the revenue officer who then along with the complainant threatened the pastor and told him not to build the Church.

On 6 November in Gollaprolu, East Godavari, Andhra Pradesh, local people opposed the Christian worship going on in the area for the last 4 years at the Calvary Christian Fellowship led by Pastor Devdas. The Church meets at a property owned by pastor Devdas and has 40 members.

Assam

On 20 June in Bongaigaon district of Assam, Hindutva activists allegedly vandalized a church alter and sacred hosts. The attack took place in the night. The Church authorities have filed a First Information Report.

On 27 July in Goalpara, Assam, the severed body of Runumoni Rabha, a young Christian girl was found on the nearby railways tracks. Her family had become Christians some years ago and that had not gone well with the Rabha community and she and her family were ostracized. Runumoni was in love with a Hindu boy, but according to reports she was not acceptable to the family of the boy because of her faith. The boy in question later surrendered to the police but denies any hand in the murder.

On 5 August in Goalpara district of Assam, Nayonsingh Rabha was badly beaten up by anti-Christian elements, some of whom are RSS workers. His brother in law, Sanjiv Basumatary, is a pastor and conducts worship service at their house. There has been a steady increase in the number of attendees at the house fellowship, and Nayonsingh too had become a follower of Christ a few years ago. He belongs to the Rabha community. Those of his community who are not Christians were irked by the development. Therefore on a false charge of having a love affair with a Hindu Rabha girl, he was taken to a lonely house on the night of 5 August, and badly beaten up. This was meant to warn the pastor and Nayonsingh's family of dire consequences if the prayer meetings continued. An FIR has been filed and investigation is in progress.

On 12 August in Lakhimpur district, Assam, according to reports, a Christian man, Audesh Kumar, was beaten up very badly and then was picked up by policemen on alleged charges that he refused to give money to the local temple. Till the time of the last update on 14 August, he continued to be in police custody.

On 16 October in village Khilamara, Rangjuli tehsil, Goalpara district of Assam, a local Hindu fundamentalist raided the farm of Biren Raba, a Christian during the previous night and cut about a hundred rubber plants amounting to almost all the rubber trees in his farm. Sources have informed that the Hindutva activists are using this as a tool to teach Christians a lesson, who have not paid heed to their warnings to discourage them from practising their Christian faith. A complaint has been filed in the local police station, and a few people have been reportedly arrested.

Bihar

On 7 January in Buxar, Bihar, a pastor from the India Pentecostal Church associated with India Missions was attacked. Identified only as Pastor Deepak, he has been ministering in this area for the last eight years. He was attacked during the Sunday worship service by a group of about 10 people who used bricks to attack him, due to which he suffered a severe head injury. The pastor did not approach the police, so no complaint was registered.

On 26 February, in Aurangabad, Bihar, Pastor Jinu Raj was threatened once again by a larger group of people who warned him of dire consequences if he does not stop conducting worship services in the area. GEMS ministry has been serving in this place for the past 30 years and about 120 people worship every Sunday at the Church. The house owner has asked Pastor Raj to either vacate the house or to stop the worship services.

On 10 February in Hazipur district, Bihar, Pastor Sikander Kumar along with church members of Mission India Church were attacked by 10 Hindu extremists after a marriage ceremony. Six Christians including a woman were injured in this attack.

On 19 February in Aurangabad, Bihar, Pastor Jinu Raj belonging to the Gospel Echoing Missionary Society (GEMS) was threatened by a group of people who came to the rented premises which is used by the Church that Pastor Raj leads. The mob threatened him and asked him not to conduct worship services in the area.

On 1 March in Lalganj in Vaishali district of Bihar, Ravi Bushan who is serving as the missionary pastor at GEMS church, was threatened over phone that he would be killed if he does not stop preaching about Jesus. The believers in the village had also mentioned that a group of people are seeking to kill him. Rajesh Tiwari, Umesh Singh, Chandan Singh, Bittu Singh and others have threatened him with dire consequences. They have also told him to lock down the church and to not conduct prayers in the church. They also damaged the church

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

roofing. They threatened him a year back too and when Ravi approached the local police station, his appeal was not heeded.

On 17 March at Har Har Mahadev chowk in Begusarai, Bihar, Pastor Ajay Kumar (29) and another Christian working for the Assembly of God Church were beaten up by 20-25 members of the Bajrang Dal. This happened while they were distributing Christian gospel tracts. They were later handed over to the Begusarai town police station on charges of religious conversion. Both Pastors suffered internal injuries. An FIR was filed by the attackers as well as from the Pastor Ajay Kumar. After the medical check-up both pastors were released from the police station late at night on the same day.

On 19 March in Bazidpur village in Begusarai district of Bihar a church was attacked immediately after the regular Sunday worship got over. Around three in the afternoon, a mob of Hindu extremists shouting slogans of "Stop forceful conversion", "stop luring people into religious conversion by offering money", barged into the main gate of the Church. Around 20 Christians were present in the Church at that time. Pastor Bhonsle locked the Church from inside and called the police who on arrival sided with the attackers according to the Pastor. The names, addresses and contacts of the Christians present were taken by the police, Pastor Bhonsle's house was searched and he was scolded for conducting Church.

On April 4 in Siwan, Bihar, according to reports received, a team from YMEF was beaten up badly by Hindu fundamentalists while they were sharing in a Christian prayer meeting. The attackers belonging to various Hindu right-wing groups disrupted the meeting, beat up the people present especially the team of evangelists and vandalized the place, breaking the drum, chairs and mikes etc. Christian literature and Bibles were reportedly thrown in the lavatory by the attackers who also forced the Christians to shout "Jai Shree Ram". The attackers asked the police to arrest the Christians but the police did not comply. No case was registered against the attackers.

On 6 April in Jadhua village of Hajipur district in Bihar, a Pentecostal pastor working with India Missions, was attacked and critically wounded in a sword attack by 15 armed Hindu fundamentalists. Sikandar Kumar, 40, a missionary belonging to India Missions, was attacked at his home by fundamentalists carrying swords, gaga (a spiked metal mace) and wooden sticks. He sustained two deep cuts by the sword on his head and one on his shoulder besides several internal and external injuries. The attack took place when a boy came to the pastor's house and asked him to step outside for a personal talk. As the pastor walked out of the church compound, 15 men armed with deadly



weapons attacked him. The attackers alleged that Kumar was converting people, shouted slogans of, "Jai Shri Ram" (Hail lord Ram) and snatched his mobile phone. After beating him up, they left him lying in a pool of blood. Kumar has led the church of 200 for the past three years and has been an evangelist for 11 years. This was the second attack that he has faced this year.

On 9 April in Kawakol block of Nawada district in Bihar, a group of Bajrang Dal members came to Pastor Santosh's house at around 5pm and threatened him. They asked him to leave the place and to not conduct prayers anymore. They also pressurized the house owner to remove him and his family.

On the evening of 14 April in Dhaka town of East Champaran district in Bihar Mr. Arun, a missionary working with Gospel Echoing Missionary Society was threatened by a mob of 40 people belonging to VHP, Bajrang Dal, Arya Samaj and BJP. Some of the leaders are identified as Bablu Tiwari, Dinesh Tiwari, Vinod Tiwari & Vijay Tiwari (Arya Samaj), Kashi Tiwari, Ajay Sah, Sanjay Sah & Bablu Sharaff (BJP Leader). They accused him of being involved in forced conversion. Again on 16 April (Sunday) while the worship service was going on for almost an hour the same group surrounded Arun's rented house and threatened his house owner to remove him.

On 16 April in Magadh Colony in Gaya city in Bihar a group of Hindu radicals barged into a church of the Gospel Echoing Missionary Society during the Sunday morning service and threatened the missionary, Mr. Arun, to vacate the place and to stop preaching about Christ and stop hold Christian prayers.

On 23 April in Kawakol block of Nawada district in Bihar, the same Bajrang Dal group, that had threatened Pastor Santosh on 9 April, came again to his house at Kawakol at 5 PM, and told him to stop Christian prayers and to vacate the place. They also forced him to be present

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE



in a meeting that they had organized on the following day so that church activities could be completely stopped in the area.

On 5 May at Bagaha city in Pashchim Champaran district of Bihar, Hindu radicals opposed a Christian missionary and compelled him to vacate his rented house. Mr. Palanivelu, a Christian missionary, ministers in Bagaha and stays in a rented house. On the day of the incident, members of Hindu Yuva Vahini came to Palanivelu's house, met with the landlord, and threatened and instigated him to remove the missionary from the house. Fearful of their threats, the house owner asked the missionary to vacate the house by the end of the month.

On 9 May in Magadh Colony in Gaya city of Bihar, masked men manhandled and beat up Sanjay Yadav, a Christian missionary serving with Gospel Echoing Missionary Society at Gaya. On 9 May, around 4:00 PM while on his way to his house, five men belonging to the Bajrang Dal with their faces covered, cornered him at Road No. 9 of Magadh Colony. They threatened him, "Will you stop preaching or not?" and when Sanjay responded, "What mistake are we doing by preaching?" they began to beat him black and blue. Sanjay sustained bruises on his head and all over his body. He was later taken to Magadh Medical College hospital for treatment.

On 7 June at 11am in Simariya village in Barauni block of Begusarai district in Bihar, Pastor Baidyanath Kumar and other Christians were badly beaten and grievously injured by Hindu radicals. The incident took place in 'Jesus Vidyalaya' a school which is run by the pastor and has about 50 students on the roll. The day being a holiday the pastor had organized a weekday prayer meeting for his church members. Around 50-60 people had assembled for the program. Midway during the program around 25 people barged into the building waving revolvers and iron rods. They launched a brutal attack on everyone. The pastor sustained grievous injuries on his head which required 15 stitches, three on his nose, and fractured legs. His wife, father, two brothers and sister in law were badly injured and had to be rushed to the nearby hospital. Shaken and fearful, the Christians approached the

Barauni police station for protection and justice. However, the police did not accept the statements of the injured persons and denied filing an FIR. The Christians continued knocking at the doors of the SP, the DIG, and the DM, but to no avail.

On 27 July in Begusarai district of Bihar, Pastor Dass Joshua of Shalom Prarthana Bhavan faced opposition from locals in his area who have been trying to build a wall in front of the church building to obstruct the way from the main road. The land legally belongs to the Church.

On 1 August in Ahodia market in Muzaffarpur town in Bihar, two Christian Nepalese couples were arrested by the police after being accused by a group of locals of their possible involvement in "forced conversions". The couples came from the Nepalese town of Chiton Narayangarh and were about a month in Muzaffarpur (Bihar). In this month, the two couples were guests in a hotel in the Ahodia market area, but every day they visited an area of the city, preaching Christianity and addressing especially to the poor and illiterate. The couple were detained at the police station of Kaji Mohammedpur following the allegations against them, however they denied the accusations of having used money entrapments to push the poor to convert to Christianity. They said that they have only used their word, speaking of Christianity and things written in the Bible.

On 9 August at Shergatti town in Gaya district, Bihar, a Gospel Echoing Missionary Society's missionary was threatened and a Christian woman was beaten up. A group of fanatics threatened Mr. Barnabas Bengali who serves as missionary and ordered him to stop preaching the gospel and conducting church services. Ms. Sheila Devi, a Christian woman, was also beaten up and her Bible was torn. Three days prior to the incident the attackers had visited the house owner in whose house Barnabas lives on rent and had ordered him to remove Barnabas from his house.

On 14th August in Gardani Bagh, Patna, Bihar,

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

according to reports received, two Pastors Somesh and Jitender, were brutally beaten up and were forced to chant Hindu religious slogans by a group of Hindu fundamentalists who attacked while the pastors were leading a prayer meeting. The pastors sustained injuries on their eyes, ears and head.

On 16 November, in Dograiya village, Nautan in the W.Champaran district of Bihar, Mangal Guriya, an Evangelist, was beaten up by a Hindu fundamentalist. At the time of the incident Mr. Guriya was conducting a prayer meeting at the village, when the Hindu fundamentalist came and disrupted the meeting and beat Mr. Guriya severely. As a result of the attack Mr. Guriya sustained injuries on his nose and both hands. The man warned Mr. Guriya and told him to leave the area.

On 19 December in Shital Bhakurhar village under Lalganj block in Vaishali district of Bihar Pastor Sunil Kumar was physically assaulted by few Hindu radicals. The pastor is serving with New Life Mission and was visiting the village. When he entered the village a few local youths, who were aware that he is an Evangelist, called him and started talking to him. Meanwhile they gathered some more youth at the spot and started beating him. They also warned him of severe consequences if he continued to preach Christianity. Later they forced the pastor to acknowledge that it was his fault and the youth had not harmed him. They video recorded the pastor's confession in a mobile phone.

On 31 December in Karhaniya village, near Mahua village of Vaishali District, Bihar, 10 extremists disrupted the worship service being led by Pastor Rakesh. The attackers alleged that conversions were taking place in the meeting and proceeded to beat the pastor and the Christians present including women. The attack was so brutal that two Christians bled a lot and one of them suffered a cracked bone. When Christians approached the Mahua police station, they were not entertained and were told to come later. The police later wanted the Christians to settle with the attackers via a compromise.

Chhattisgarh

On 25 January in Gorah village, Bemetara district in Chhattisgarh, Pastor Agheshwar Verma, 26, was arrested on frivolous charges. Pastor Verma, who is disabled, was charged under the Chhattisgarh Tonahi (witchcraft) Pratadna (torcher) Nivaran (solution) Act, 2005 and was sent to the Bemetara jail and was held for eight days until 1 February when he received bail.

On 29 January in Shanti Nagar area of Dalli Rajra, Balod district, Chhattisgarh, a mob of about 350

men and women disrupted worship service, beat up Christian worshippers and indulged in vandalism at the New India Church of God. When the Pastor reported the incident at the local police station, he was told by the police station-in-charge, that he does not have the permission to conduct prayers. Later in the evening Hindutva extremists again created trouble for the pastor and his family while they were being visited by some guests. Finally, police arrived and took the Pastor, his wife and their guests to the police station. The pastor and his family and friends were only let go after he gave an assurance that he will no longer conduct any worship in his house Church.

On 29 January in Bakenga, Kondagaon, Chhattisgarh, as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, Hindutva activists assaulted two Christians, parading them in front of the whole village. 60 -70 people belonging to right-wing Hindu groups caught hold of the two Christians, forced them to hold up a saffron flag, paraded them before the whole village, forced them to bow down before religious idols and eat food sacrificed to the idols which was against the conscience and faith of the Christians. The Christians were beaten up and were sprinkled on with water as a way of involuntarily signifying their purification and return to the religious fold of their ancestor's. The Christians were warned of dire consequences if they do not renounce their Christian faith by 5 February 2017.

On 1 February in Silati village, Kondagaon district, Chhattisgarh, 2 Christians were brutally assaulted by 8 villagers as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>. At around 12:30 pm the attackers came and accused the Christians of forceful conversions. Subsequently, the attackers submitted a written complaint at Dhanora Police Station. The Christians belong to a local church consisting of about 45 members.

On 8 February in Buddi Guda village under Dorna Pal Police Station of Sukma district, Chhattisgarh, five Christians - 4 men and a woman belonging to Masih Duniya Prayer House were assaulted by about 50 Hindu villagers because of their faith. Saryaam Mamta, Saryaam Hirma, Kuraam Desha, Kuraam Penta and Pada Subba were falsely accused by the villagers for stealing some coins from the local Hindu temple.

On 12 February in Rahti Para village of Kondagaon district, Chhattisgarh, five Christians belonging to Maranatha Bible college were severely assaulted by Bajrang Dal members and Hindu villagers. Dalsai Netaam, Khurju Ram, Sukru, Bisenteen Netam, Ghadve Bai (3 men and 2 women) were called for talks in the village where over 500 people from 6 different villagers had gathered on the instructions of the district council members. These five

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE



Christians were admitted in the Bisrampuri Hospital where they were treated for their gruesome injuries after the assault. Two of the five were referred to Kanker for further treatment. At the complaints of the Christians, police arrested 5 members of Bajrang Dal but in the evening of the same day, a mob of Bajrang Dal members surrounded the police station and successfully pressurized the five Hindu extremists to be released.

On 19 February in Pandri Paani village under Gorella police station of Bilaspur district, Chhattisgarh, about 25 Hindu right-wing activists disrupted a church service where 20-25 Christians were worshipping along with Pastor Tahveer Sonwani. The Hindu extremists carried a picture of a Hindu deity, which they placed at the Altar. They had got a Pujari (Hindu priest) along with them who was asked to begin with the chanting of Hindu mantras. They forcefully applied tilak on the forehead of two Christian women inside the Church. When Pastor Sonwani tried to question them, they gripped Sonwani by his collar and dragged him outside the Church and beat him up.

On 9 March in Sulani village of Gathari post under Sarangarh police station of Raigarh district, Chhattisgarh, six Christian families were forced to convert to Hinduism. Pastor Uttra Kumar Ajay from Seventh Day Adventist Church reported that 17 Christian families had to go through opposition from the local Hindu villagers who had convened a meeting on 4 March and had tried to convince the families to convert to Hinduism. This was followed by another meeting on 6 March in which they threatened the families again. As a result, six families decided to give in to the threats.

On 24 March in Piplawand village of Bastar District, Chhattisgarh, an Evangelist and a few Christians were threatened by the village council. As per reports, the village council pressured the Christians to forsake their faith in Christ, failing which they were threatened with dire consequences. The Christians were told that if they did not renounce their faith, they will be asked to leave the village,

and their houses will be destroyed and their land taken away. Written complaint has been filed at the Bhanpuri police station.

On 30 March in Pump House Colony under CSEB police station in Korba district, Chhattisgarh, Bajrang Dal and RSS activists barged into a prayer meeting that was being conducted at Mr. Santosh's house who is a devout Christian. The activists accused him and others of running a conversion racket and complained at the police station.

On 1 April in Sundra village of Rajnandgaon district in Chhattisgarh, a funeral service was disrupted and Christians were beaten up severely by Bajrang Dal activists. Dineshwar Lal Sahu, a Christian died on 31 March. When his wife and son in law, Vinay Sahu, were preparing the body for the funeral service, some of the relatives barged into the house demanding that the body be cremated instead of being buried. However, his wife completely disagreed with the demands. This aggravated the members of the Sahu community, and they snatched the dead body away and burnt it. While this was going on, activists reportedly belonging to Bajrang Dal, started sloganeering "Jai Shree Ram" and started beating the 20 odd Christians who had gathered there. They forced the Christians to shout "Jai Shri Ram". Many Christians were injured badly, and many were left bleeding and with swollen wounds. The radicals snatched their mobile phones and id cards and started pouring petrol around them to set things on fire. The police arrived at the spot but was not willing to register a case against the attackers.

On 3 April in Sakti town in Janjgir-Champa district of Chhattisgarh, a three-day open-air meeting, being conducted with permission from the authorities was disrupted at the end of its first day by a group of Hindu fundamentalists. About 300 Christians attended the first day of the meeting (3-5 April 2017) which was organized in collaboration with many Christian leaders and churches of the Janjgir-Champa area. Ramdin Tandan, 53, one of the organizer and an eye witness to subsequent events

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

reported, “Around 40 Hindu fundamentalists belonging to the Dharam Sena and other Hindutva groups disrupted the meeting at 9 in the evening. They had called the police, who on arrival asked the Christians to suspend their program and report to the police station the next morning,” said Tandan. The fundamentalists alleged that the Christians were carrying out ‘conversion activity’ and claimed that ‘20 Lakh INR (2 Million Indian Rupees) had been received by the Christians from foreign countries to do this activity’ said Tandan. He also said that the organizers had received prior permission from the district authorities by submitting a written request at the office of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM). “We were informed that a copy of approval would be sent to the concerned police station directly informing them about the program. Around 40 of us reached the Shakti police station next morning and we were told by the policeman in-charge that he is helpless and can do nothing about this. If we proceed with the program, we will be doing it at our own risk,” said Tandan. The Christian community of the area is very disheartened and angry by the response of the police over the entire episode. “This was a great loss of resources, time, efforts and finances in the entire event,” said an organizer.

On 9 April in Parasvaani village under Kurudh police station in Dhamtari district of Chhattisgarh, a mob of about 100 people disrupted worship at a Church and threatened Christians present. The incident took place as Christians were gathered for Sunday worship service and were being led by Pastor Shiv Kumar Dhurve. Shouting “Jai Shree Ram” the attackers barged into to the Church venue and told the Christians that they will perform a Ghar Wapasi ceremony and reconvert everyone and that the Christians would be beaten up if they continued to meet for worship. The pastor later complained at the local police station, but no action was taken.

On 11 April, Pastor Guakaran from Madruodh village under Kurudh police station in Dhamtari district of Chhattisgarh reported that he received threatening and abusive letters from Bajrang Dal activists who warned him that if he did not stop Christian activities, he will be killed. The pastor was beaten up in the month of December last year as well.

On 16 April in Kathawand village, Kondagaon, Chhattisgarh, as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, a pastor was severely beaten up by a group of Hindu fundamentalist and then taken to the police station.

On 21 April in Lakhinpara colony of Sabag village in Kusmi Block of Balrampur Ramanujanj district in Chhattisgarh, Pastors Cyril Hadad and Arun Kujur of B.C.M. Church, and two other Christian men were badly beaten up. The incident took place at around 9pm when

they had assembled at a Christian family's house for a prayer meeting. A group of 7 to 8 Hindu radicals stormed into the house and started physically and verbally assaulting those who had gathered. Somehow, the pastors were able to escape from there. On the next day at 11 am, the villagers called the four men again to a spot where a group had already gathered and were waiting for them. They pounced on the four men, chasing, and assaulting them. Two of them were able to run into the jungle, while the other two could not be traced. They later beat the Christian man too who had hosted the meeting in his house.

On 11 May in Shivni kala village under Kurudh police station in Dhamtari district of Chhattisgarh, reports came in of a Christian family that continued to live in fear and insecurity because of repeated threats. On 9 April 2017, the family along with Pastor Shiv Kumar Dhurve had faced severe persecution and the church had been shut down. During a village meeting, the Hindu radicals had forced the Christian family - Meena Bai, her husband, and her daughter Leela Nirmalkar, and son, Sanjay Kumar Nirmalkar - to convert to Hinduism. The father gave in to the demands, while the rest remained committed to the Christian faith. This provoked the Hindu radicals who sealed their home and asked the family to leave the house. The family had to take refuge in another Christian home. Financial struggles, persecution and fear had shaken this family to their core and the repeated threats were causing them much trouble.

On 17 May in Kanker district of Chhattisgarh, villagers reportedly influenced by Hindutva ideology thrashed and beat Christian villagers. A meeting of the villagers from Devgaon, Bandopal and Kikodora villages was convened in a jungle area at around 12pm. 90 Christians from 18 families in these villages had already



DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE



been facing boycott because of their faith and were prohibited from taking water from the government handpumps or from plucking Tendu leaves for livelihood earning. During the meeting, the Christians were called at the place and were pressured to renounce their faith. Though the meeting continued until late in the evening, the Christians did not relent. This infuriated the villagers who pounced on the Christians and beat them with sticks and slingshots grievously injuring more than 10 Christians. They were later admitted at the local hospital for medical care.

On 1 June in Bahnakadi village in Arang Tehsil of Raipur district, Chhattisgarh, two pastors were badly assaulted by Hindu radicals. Pastors Sanjay Mahalage and Rakesh Dubey were on their way to visit a Christian family at the village where a prayer meeting had been arranged. As they slowed down their motorcycles upon approaching the village they were unaware that some radicals had been secretly waiting for them in the dark to ambush them. On seeing the bikes slowing down they pounced on them and beat them severely. The screams alerted Rohini Chauhan a Christian woman who, along with two sisters, rushed to the spot, rescued the pastors and brought them to their house. Matters didn't end there; the attackers barged into the house and attacked the pastors again injuring even the women in the assault. Subsequently the police arrived at the spot and brought both the parties to the police station where charges were filed against both groups. The police however, gave a deaf ear to the Christian women who kept insisting and requesting that charges be framed against the attackers for harassing the Christian believers frequently.

On 4 June in Pateta village, Bilaspur district, Chhattisgarh, around 30-40 fundamentalists barged in to a church service and beat up the pastor. They insulted the women, desecrated the holy place, and grabbed money from the offering plate. They threatened the pastor and believers demanding them to stop the worship services, and if they didn't oblige and showed the courage to gather the next Sunday they would be beaten up badly and taken to

the local police station.

On 19 June in Jashpur district of Chhattisgarh, a church construction work was disrupted. A group of Hindutva activists barged in to the site of the church construction, stopped the work and accused Christians of carrying out religious conversion. They forcefully detained the pastor and other Christians and snatched away the motorcycle keys from the Christian believers. They also accused Christians of land encroachment alleging that the Christians had not fulfilled any legal formalities.

On 21 June in Kurdeg village under Bagicha police station of Jashpur district in Chhattisgarh, at around 2:30 pm, Pastor Shivprasad Ekka who belongs to the Friends Missionary Prayer Band was arrested. The incident took place while he was conducting a fasting prayer meeting in a believer's house with a few Christians and about seven pastors who had assembled there. In a sudden attack, members of the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) barged into the meeting, stopped the program, and attempted manhandling the assembled Christians. When the pastors tried to escape the spot, the attackers snatched their motorcycle keys and brought them to the local police station. The police charged a pastor and three other Christians under Section 151 of the Indian Penal Code. Later that night, at around 10.30, they were released when their bail plea was approved by the Tehsildar.

On 23 June in North Bastar, Kanker district in Chhattisgarh, Christians were beaten up on the false allegation of conversion. At around 7 pm about 150 Hindutva activists barged in to a Christian meeting and started to beat up the Christians. Villagers accused Christians of performing witchcraft and carrying out forceful conversions. Subsequently in a village meeting, the villagers passed an oral order saying that Christians would have to leave the village or renounce their faith, and if they did not comply there would be dire consequences.

On 25 June in Binje village of Kondagaon district in Chhattisgarh a Christian worship service was stopped

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

and Christians were threatened with dire consequences. Around 12 Christians had gathered for worship at a local Christian's house when about 400 Hindutva activists from different villages came and stopped the worship. They pressurized and threatened the Christians that if they don't renounce their faith they would have to face consequences. When the Christians refused, the infuriated Hindutva activists broke into a rampage, destroying household items and the house. They left after issuing a strict warning to stop all Christian activities. This incident was in line with an earlier incident on 23 June when Christians had been severely beaten up by local villagers for attending church services. On 26 June the Christians approached the Iragaon police station to lodge a complaint against the attackers. The police remained passive to their complaints and no action was taken. Later police called both parties to the station for a compromise. The Christians were very few in number compared to the villagers who had gathered at the police station. On seeing the mob, police declared that the Christians had decided to renounce their faith, despite their repeated protests that they had no intention of renouncing what they so sincerely believed.

On 4 July in Ketulnar village, Bjiapur, Chhattisgarh, as per reports by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, villagers beat up Christians charging them of defiling the whole village and converting their relatives. The attackers forcefully took all the Bibles from Christians and collected them in a big basket and brought them to a temple. The Christians were threatened and pressured to leave their faith and were given a week's time to convert to Hinduism.

On 13 July, in Korea district, Chhattisgarh, it was reported by persecution relief that the Indian Pentecostal Church building was demolished by fanatics.

On 14 July in Sukma, Chhattisgarh, a group of Hindu extremists beat up Christians very badly and destroyed their household things as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>. A complaint was registered at the local police station.

On 19 July in Panchasheel Colony of Durg city in Chhattisgarh, the India Full Gospel Mission (IFGM) church building was attacked in the afternoon by a local property dealer named Srivastava and his friends, who are staking claim over the plot which belongs to the church. They tried to break into the building and forcefully gain possession of it. Pastor Vinod Acharya who conducts prayer meetings in the building was able to stop them with the help of the local police.

On 31 July, Ambikapur Village, Surguja, Chhattisgarh, a pastor was arrested on false charges of hurting religious sentiments as reported by

<https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>. A group of Hindu fundamentalists had complained against him of hurting religious sentiments and hence the pastor was arrested. The incident took place after a tribal person who had accepted the Christian faith passed away. The deceased was a regular Church attendee and had mentioned in his will that he should be buried according to Christian rituals. However the Hindu groups made an issue of his burial demanding that he be cremated as per Hindu rituals and filed a false complaint against the pastor.

On 7 September in Matri village in Durg district of Chhattisgarh, two Christian families were summoned by the police. Mr. Seventh Devangan belonging to one of the families, became a follower of Christ about 3-4 years ago, and became a member of the Believers Church. Consequently the family ceased to be involved in any religious activities of the village and stopped giving donations, etc. In response, the village elders called for a meeting of the village panchayat on September 3, and a resolution was made that the two families should be socially ostracised and no one should converse with them. Any villager who failed to comply would be fined Rupees 20,000. A complaint, lodged by the villagers at the police station against the two, Devangan and Patel families, prompted the police to summon them.

On 8 September, in Modata Village, Bastar, Chhattisgarh, as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, a Christian man was severely beaten up because of his faith. The villagers along with Hindutva activists beat the man up. A complaint has been registered.

On 4 October in Panchasheel Colony of Durg district, Chhattisgarh, the India Full Gospel Mission (IFGM) Church was attempted to be demolished by a man identified only as Srivastava who led a crowd along with local Municipality officials in spite of the Church having a judgment in their favour. Pastor Vinod Achari had to rush to the Church and stop the demolition in time by producing legal documents. This was the second attempt of demolition with the first being on 19 July 2017.

On 10 October, Bijapur, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh, as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, Christians families were threatened by the village head and told to renounce their faith or face dire consequences. They were threatened with destruction of their houses and livestock if they refused to renounce their faith.

On 13 October in Sakti Tehsil, Janjgir-Champa district, Chhattisgarh, Pastor Khel Prasad Kurrey of Believers Church was attacked by two men. Kurrey was on his way to visit a Church member when these men with

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE



faces covered attempted to stop him. While he continued to drive, these men chased him forcing him to halt. They ambushed Kurrey and attacked him with wooden sticks hitting his head thrice. Kurrey fell to the ground, bleeding profusely. They continued to beat him until the local villagers reached to his rescue after hearing his screams. A police complaint was lodged against unidentified assailants.

On 15 October in Dantewada, Chhattisgarh, as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, Hindu extremists disrupted a prayer meeting and beat up the Christians present alleging religious conversions. Even children and women were not spared but were chased and beaten up mercilessly. The attack took place even as the Christians were gathered for Sunday worship at the Church. The attackers destroyed all articles which were kept in the Church including the Altar, Bibles, utensils, furniture and musical instruments etc.

On 23 October in Pharsagaon, Kondagaon district, Chhattisgarh, Lalsay Markam, a Christian lodged a complaint in the Pharsagaon police station after being physically assaulted and verbally abused by the villagers on 22 October. Markam, who conducts regular Sunday worship in the village was summoned by local Hindu activists before the village council for peace-talks. Furious at the ever-increasing number of worshippers getting added to Markam's Church fellowship, the gathering started to assault Markam who somehow managed to escape the mob assault only to face continuous threats from the villagers throughout the night. Fearing the physical and verbal abuse, he approached the local police.

On 23 October in Chhoti Themli, Kondagaon district, Chhattisgarh, Sahdev Markam, was forced out of his own house by angry villagers for his new-found faith in Jesus Christ. Markam, who works as a daily wage labourer faced the wrath of the villagers after he started to attend Church. He along with his wife were forced to leave his ancestral home and take shelter in another Christian's home.

On 30 October in Nagri, Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh, as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, a pastor was severely beaten up and detained at the police station. The pastor was attacked when he was visiting a family he regularly visits for prayer. Hindutva activists who were reportedly on the lookout for him, beat him up and took him to the police station on and alleged charges of forcible conversions.

On 1 November in Mura village of Kurud Tehsil, Dhamtari district, Chattisgarh, five Christian families were socially boycotted by the village council. The five Christian families had been earlier threatened by the villagers to stop participating in Christian activities and renounce their Christian beliefs. Since the Christian families did not pay heed to their warnings, the village council meeting of 1 November decided to deny them access to drinking water, prohibit any purchase of essential commodities from the village market and block any access to food rations. Later in the evening the villagers again met the Christians at their home to threaten them. The growing tensions brought the Superintendent of Police to the village, who ordered the Christian families to immediately stop conducting all prayer services.

On 15 November in Balod district, Chhattisgarh, three pastors - Younus Kumar, Balalaram Ahirwar and Vikram Sonwani were arrested by the police after they had come out of a prayer meeting. They were booked under Sections 151, 107-16. Later they were released on bail on 18 November.

On 16 November in Bhilai Charoda of Durg district, Chhattisgarh, members of Bajrang Dal and Dharma Jagran Manch tore up Christian posters that were put up at the Railway Ground. A three -day Good News Festival had been organized by the New Life AG Church, Indian Pentecostal Church and Gap Foundation, from 16 to 18 November at the venue and permissions had been granted by the respective authorities. Despite that, the

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

Hindutva activists raised concerns over the name of the program, the banner and the posters, alleging that conversions may take place in the meeting. As the matter heated up, the police ordered that the meetings be stopped with immediate effect.

On 18 November in Birejhar village of Kurud tehsil, Dhamtari district in Chhattisgarh, police came to Mahendra Kumar Sahu's house and warned him not to conduct Sunday worship service on 19 November. He was further warned that if he did not oblige he may be arrested. The pastor and faithful are in a state of fear.

On 6 December in Kopra village of Rajim Tehsil in Raipur district of Chhattisgarh, a church service was attacked by a mob of 500 radicals who surrounded the Ashirwad Prarthana Bhawan where about 300 Christians had gathered for prayer. The mob, mostly comprised of Shiv Sena and Bajrang Dal activists, entered the church and physically assaulted the Christians. Several vehicles were set on fire and many children and elderly people were injured. The arrival of the police force at the spot was untimely and much violence had already been orchestrated by the Hindutva elements.

Delhi

On 10 February in Sector 3, Rohini, Delhi, the St. Basil Church was vandalized by two men. The unidentified men, both juveniles, broke into the Church and took away Rupees 5000 cash from the donation box of the Church. They desecrated the Holy Cross and an idol of Mother Mary. The entire incident was captured on CCTV cameras installed in an adjoining school. The juveniles, were arrested on February 11, 2017. A police officer quoted Father George Kurian Thomas as saying that many articles were found strewn across the church floor, the Holy Cross was damaged, and the donation box was lying empty. Father Thomas told the police that the incident was the first of its kind in the Church over the last 25 years.

On 24 February in Badarpur, Delhi, Hindu extremists attacked a 'Peace Festival' organized by a collective of 12 Churches belonging to Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR). It was the last day of the two-day festival, when a mob of about 250 - 300 attacked the 1700 people seated for the program. Shouting slogans of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" (Hail Mother India), they assaulted those seated in the crowd and on the stage, vandalizing the property including the sound system, stage, chairs and tables. Many were injured in this attack. Pastor Emmanuel Masih, the Pastor of Satsang Yeshu Ka Darbaar was the worst hit and bled from his nose and mouth for hours as a result of the beatings before he was given first-aid. The program had to be discontinued and resulted in a huge

financial loss for the organizers. A case was registered later, against unidentified miscreants.

On 28 April in Neb Sarai, Delhi, Pastor Shabnish Lal from Spiritual Faith Revival Ministries, was threatened by anti-Christian elements. A few days ago, a certain businessman had damaged the pastor's car and an altercation had ensued. The man tried to give it a religious colour and mobilized other radicals to oppose the prayer meetings that are conducted by the pastor at his house. Threats kept pouring in since then, to stop all Christian activities and shut down the meetings. Emotionally harassed, the pastor sought the help of the local police, who promised protection.

On 5 August in Delhi, Pastor Jableen informed that some members of the Capstone church were threatened and verbally abused for conducting a prayer meeting at Baljeet Nagar colony. It is a weekly prayer meeting conducted on Saturdays in the evening at the house of a Christian family residing in the same colony. Christians were intimidated and abused for conducting the meeting and were warned saying not to show up in the colony and share anything with anybody in the area about Christianity.

On 10 December in Badarpur town of South Delhi district in Delhi, five Hindu extremists barged in to a Christian prayer meeting where about 30 people had gathered. Pastor Amit Kumar and the Christians were asked to stop the service. The extremists threatened them that if they assembled again for Christian meetings they would have to face dire consequences at the hands of Hindutva groups. The pastor and Christians are filled with fear after these threats.

On 15 December in Guru Nanak Dev Colony in Jahangirpura, Bhalswa of Delhi, persons allegedly belonging to the RSS broke down the main door of a hall which is owned by Jeevan Jyoti Mandali, a registered trust which conducts day care classes, pre-nursery school for toddlers and tailoring classes for slum dwellers. The day care centre though had been closed for the past many months, the hall had been set aside for resuming the social work activities after funds would resume to come in. Pastor Diwan Chand who looks after the ministry of Jeevan Jyoti Mandali has received threats from the Hindutva extremists that soon the RSS would break in to the hall and take control of the place.

Goa

On 2 July in St. Jose de Areal and Gudi Paroda of Panaji district in Goa, two incidents of desecration of Holy Cross were reported. While two crosses were desecrated in

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

St. Jose de Areal one was desecrated in Gudi Paroda. The incidents have caused outrage among the local people and have prompted a police probe.

On the night of 25 July the Caranzalem cemetery in Panaji in Goa was defiled. The incident, most likely perpetrated to intimidate the religious minority, happened on 25th night at the Caranzalem cemetery, where some Crosses were destroyed near the Chapel of Our Lady of Fatima. The damage to the cemetery was discovered when a Christian named Silveira went to pray at the graveside of his wife, who died about six months ago. Shocked for the destruction of the Cross above his wife's grave and those of at least another twelve, he raised the alarm. The local police went on site and started investigating a supposed Catholic involvement already in the arrests. However Christian leader feel that "since the Hindu Janajagruthi Summit (HJS) had its rally at the beginning of the year, minorities live in a climate of insecurity. More than 150 groups of saffron (Hindu nationalists) participated in that meeting, who outlined an action plan for the creation of a Hindu Rashtra (Hindu nation).

Gujarat

On 9 June in Gujarat, reports emerged of a textbook meant for schools in Gujarat that addressed Jesus Christ as 'Demon'. A Class 9 Hindi subject textbook of the Gujarat State Board referred to Jesus Christ as a demon. Advocate Subramaniam Iyer, who noticed the mistake, says that the error attracts section 295 (a) of the IPC, which pertains to deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class.

On 27 August, in Godhra, Gujarat, a Christian family running an orphanage for tribal children were accused of being involved in forcible conversions. A mob came to their house along with media people and police. While the media interviewed small children without any empathy, the police took away Esther to the police station for questioning, even though her husband, Christopher was out of station. She was kept for hours in the police station and was asked for all kinds of documentation including financial statements. The vernacular media was used to spread false information about the work the couple were doing.

Haryana

On 1 January in Kaithal, Haryana, as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, a Christian Evangelist was beaten by Hindutva activists alleging conversions. The Evangelist along with other Christians

were taken to Civil Lines Police Station for questioning. It was found that the allegation of the Hindutva activists was false.

On 13 February in Haryana, two sisters, Savita and Kiran (names changed) were severely assaulted by their husbands because of their Christian faith. They used to attend the Tabernacle of Christ Church pastored by Pastor Naresh Paul in Karnal, Haryana, every Sunday. Savita, who has been a practicing Christian for the past two years was beaten more severely than Kiran, who had started attending Church for the past six-months.

On 9 April in Kaithal, Haryana, local Hindu extremists disrupted the Church meeting pastored by Pastor Yashpal. The attackers threatened and manhandled the Christians present as well as complained against the Christians at the local police station alleging conversions. Soon the police arrived and took into custody Pastor Yashpal and the Christians gathered for Sunday Worship. They were taken to the Civil Lines Police Station. The Inspector In Charge Mr. Jaswant spoke to EFI and said that the Christians had been taken into protective custody. The Christians were released as the allegations against them were found baseless.

On 15 July in Jhundpur village, Sonapat district, Haryana, villagers led by Hindutva activists disrupted a Bible study going on in a private home and beat up the pastors conducting the study. The attackers alleged that the pastors were indulging in conversions. Pastor Unnimon and Pastor Rahul belonging to the Christian Evangelistic Assembly, were told by the villagers not to come back to the village again. The mob photographed the pastors and took their IDs and other details.

On 3 September in Nehru Colony in Faridabad, Haryana at around 11.30pm, during the Sunday morning worship service, Pastor Abraham Thomas was physically attacked by a mob of 30-40 people belonging to a fundamentalist organization. The mob kept him in custody, and upon receiving some information of another church in the locality, they entered into Pastor K.G. Mathew's Rehoboth Fellowship Church, situated in Nehru Colony. The unruly mob destroyed the musical instruments, desecrated the church properties, and damaged the Cross. The matter was brought to the police, where both Pastor Abraham Thomas and Pastor K.G. Mathew appealed for help. A complaint has been registered against the attackers. The police has promised help and are providing protection to the pastors during the Sunday services.

On 9 September in Kaithal, Haryana, a pastor who had already made an application for protection was summoned to a police station after Hindutva groups complained against the Church alleging forceful

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE



conversions as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>. The Church has around 3000 members and they were reportedly getting threatening messages, therefore the Christians had filed a petition in the court seeking police protection. The court had given an order to the police station to look into the matter and do the needful. However the Station House Office alleging that he has received 'conversion' complaints from Hindu groups, called the pastor to the police station.

On 20 September, residents of Nigdhu village in Karnal district, Haryana, filed a complaint at the police station that the Christian worship services conducted by Mr Ashok Kumar at a Christian home was too noisy, and that the Christian attendees practised black magic inside the house. Ashok Kumar was summoned by the police where he was forced by the officials and the villagers to sign a written agreement that he would immediately cease from conducting the religious services.

On 17 October in Panipat, Haryana, an open-air meeting was organised, with Bishop Amos Singh as the guest speaker. The organisers are reported to have secured all the necessary permissions from authorities to conduct this event. However, there was strong opposition from the extremists and they were forced to conduct the entire open-air meeting without a sound system after police intervened.

On 4 November in Faridabad district, Haryana, a group of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh activists barged into a Christian Meeting which was being conducted at the New Industrial Township and accused the Christians of running a conversion racket. About 45 Christian pastors in the region had organized a meeting and Convention for 4,000 Christians that had gathered from their respective churches from 2 to 5 November at the Daulatram Dharamshala situated in NIT, Faridabad. A popular Christian pastor, Sukhchain Masih was invited as the main speaker. Prior to the incident of 4 November, the pastors had requested for protection and permission from the local police station. However, no help had come. The incident prompted the pastors to seek help from the local MLA,

whose presence led to the coming of the police personnel at the venue, and subsequently the Convention could be conducted successfully.

Himachal Pradesh

On 14 May in Rampur, Himachal Pradesh, tensions ran high as angry members of the Dev Sanskriti Raksha Manch, a fundamentalist Hindu group, disrupted a Christian meeting which was being held at the auditorium of a local school. Christian leaders from Rampur and surrounding areas had organized the Satsang (prayer meeting) for the benefit of local Christians and had obtained all the necessary permissions beforehand. The two-day Satsang was to be held at the auditorium of a local school since that was the largest space available in the area and since Rampur is the hometown of the Chief Minister Mr Virbhadra Singh, he was expected to join the meeting on the second day. On the very first day of the meeting, members of the Dev Sanskriti Raksha Manch held a protest against alleged 'conversions'. They mobilized a crowd of nearly 150 plus people for the march and attempted to break into the school where the meeting was being held. "The Dev Sanskriti Raksha Manch members, armed with sticks, attempted to break the large iron gate at the venue. In doing so, they attacked and injured several police personnel who tried to prevent them from entering the venue of the meeting. As a result of the attack, the meeting was cancelled while the protesters blocked traffic on the Hindustan-Tibet National Highway for about two hours. The members of the Dev Sanskriti Raksha Manch made inflammatory statements against the local church community to local media alleging that Christians were hand in glove with so-called Islamic State and was conspiring against the nation. The next day, church authorities led by Pastor Kamlesh Negi reported the incident to the police.

On 11 August in Mandi district, Himachal Pradesh, according to reports received, two pastors were taken for inquiry by the police on allegations from local

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

residents that they were coming from another state and proselytizing. Based on a written complaint the police called them to the police station for inquiry and asked for their bank statement and educational qualifications. Later they were let go.

Jammu and Kashmir

On 30 March in Malhar village under Rembal police station in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir, Pastor Mohan Lal and some other pastors faced opposition from a local villager who was drunk. Pastor Mohan Lal was visiting Malhar village to conduct a prayer meeting. The drunk man arrived at the spot of the prayer meeting with his tractor and tried to damage the motorcycles of the pastors. A confrontation ensued and the pastors approached the local police for help. The police on duty did not want to register the complaint and favoured the inebriated man, who in turn complained that the Christian pastors had physically assaulted him and snatched Rupees 30,000 from him. An FIR was lodged by the police against the pastors.

Jharkhand

On 6 January in Aikuti, Jetia Police Station, Jagannathpur block, West Singhbhum District, Jharkhand, according to media reports, a Christian family was socially boycotted and Christian evangelists were beaten up and chased away. Six Christian families along with Christian evangelists were summoned to a village council led by Munda Sagar Tiriya. The families were given an ultimatum to either renounce the Christian faith or be socially boycotted. They were told that they would be deprived of all community privileges including land rights and government schemes meant for Tribals. While five Christian families renounced their faith under pressure, the family of Bamiya Tiria did not and hence his family was boycotted. The Evangelists were also threatened and then beaten up and chased away from the village while being beaten up.

On 15 January in village Barhe, Khalari, Ranchi district, Jharkhand, a Christian family was boycotted because they refused to recant their faith. Surendra Lohara's family started following Christ because of a miraculous healing. But the leader of the local Bajrang Dal, Chotan Mahali and the BJP leader Sattanand Singh etc. called for a community meeting and boycotted the family when they refused to renounce their faith in Christ.

On 20 January in village Kubua, Palamu district, Jharkhand, Bartu Oraon died of severe torture, owing to his faith in Christ. In a horrifying incident Bartu Oraon, around 50, died due to physical torture that he and his wife

underwent at the hands of extremists of his village for not denying Christ. Out of ten families who had started worshipping Christ, seven turned back to their ancestral Sarna faith. Bartu, his wife, their son Bineshar Urawn and his wife, and his younger brother were assaulted, discriminated and harassed several times. Bartu was forcefully fed idol sacrificed food and then made to drink fermented liquor. When he refused to forsake his faith, the villagers tied Bartu and his wife's hands and put them in a pond with only their heads above the water. They were forced to remain in the water throughout the night for about 17 hours, which led to constant illness for Bartu leading to his death on 20 January. Bartu's mortal remains were not allowed a decent funeral inside the village for two days. When Bineshar approached the head of the village (Sarpanch) to intervene, he said that he would not go against the village and would do whatever the villagers decided. Thus helpless, Bineshar walked over 10 kilometers to bury his father in a government land. Even though Bineshar approached the police station to file a complaint against the torment they underwent, the police termed it as a religious conflict and refused to file any formal complaint. Finally, on 3 February, the police called the villagers and the Oraon family and made them sign a peace agreement.

On 13 February in Dibadi village of Ranchi district, Jharkhand, two sisters Sushma Tigga and Rashmi Tigga were reported to be facing severe opposition from their family and relatives. They became followers of Christ 5 years ago, and since then have been tortured because of their faith. They have been assaulted 4 - 5 times in the past and in one such recent assault that took place on 13 February, their brother beat them up severely and as a result of which one of the sisters sustained a neck injury.

On 25 March in Charhi village in Hazaribagh district, Jharkhand, a Christian named Chandradev Ravidas and belonging to the Assembly of God Church, was beaten by Hindutva radicals and was later arrested by the police. He had come to a Christian prayer meeting organized at the house of one Rajkumar bhanu's house in Charhi. Suddenly Bajrang Dal and RSS activists barged into the house and took him to the police station where he was beaten up by the police and kept in lockup.

On 2 April in Simtimda village around 30 kilometres from Ranchi, Jharkhand, Hindu fundamentalists beat up and injured a Christian evangelist named Amit Aied (23) according to media reports. The incident took place in the night even as Amit was sitting with his family members outside his house after dinner. Around 7 – 8 people called him to go with them and when he refused, they started beating him up and also fired three bullets in the air before leaving. Amit who sustained injuries on his face, back, head and other parts of his body, was taken to the local PHC for treatment.

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

On 22 April in Bagodar village in Bagodar CD Block in Bagodar-Saria subdivision of Giridih district in Jharkhand, three Christians were badly beaten up. The incident happened in the evening when Mr. Nagendra and two others were meeting and having religious discussions with other Christians in the area. Around 30 to 40 people approached them and started beating them with the intention to kill them. Police personnel from the Bagodar police station rushed to the spot and saved them. They were later admitted at the local hospital.

On 23 April in Ganaloya village in Murhu Tehsil of Khunti district in Jharkhand, four Christian families were threatened with social boycott if they did not renounce their Christian faith. The families have been following the Christian faith since 2010 and are the only Christians in the entire village. Local Christian leaders alleged that Hindu right-wing groups are behind this demand of re-conversion. The families of Karmu Pahan, Sukhu Lora, Lepa Munda, and Pyari Mundain were told that they will be expelled for life from the village, if they did not renounce their Christian faith.

On 9 May under Sadar police station in Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand, a Christian evangelist Damodar Durai was arrested when he was distributing pamphlets about an upcoming program. The India Every Home Crusade had planned for a Christian convention at the Church of North India parish hall from 18 to 20 May 2017. While Damodar was distributing pamphlets, a group of Bajrang Dal radicals informed the police that he was involved in conversion activities. One of the activists claimed that the evangelist had promised him some favors if he agreed to become a Christian. Based on the complaints, the local police arrested him and kept him in the lock up until late at night. When no strong evidence could be obtained regarding Damodar's conversion activities, they released him at midnight.

On 15 September in Simdega, Jharkhand, as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, Hindutva activists beat up six Christians who were invited to pray for a sick woman. While the prayer meeting was going on, a group of Hindutva activists stormed the place and accused the Christians of performing religious conversions, beat them up and took them to police station. Charges were filed against Christians and they were out in jail.

On 27 September in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, local police arrested Pastor Soma Singh after a complaint alleging forcible conversion was filed by one Mohan Mahto, who is a mason by profession. Mahto had alleged that Pastor Singh was pressurizing him to convert to Christianity and had even beaten him up on his refusal to do

so. He had also alleged that Pastor Singh has already converted his wife and elder son into Christianity after offering them inducements. Local Christian leaders deny the charges. A bail application was moved for Pastor Singh, but the local court has rejected it. Mahto also named Professor Amit Soren in his complaint as a co-conspirator of Pastor Singh who was allegedly pressurizing Mahto's family for conversion to Christianity. As a result, twelve police men raided Soren's house late in the night with intentions to arrest him but could not do so as he was not available. His family had approached the court for anticipatory bail, but higher police officials denied cooperation citing immense pressure from higher bureaucrats and political forces. Professor Soren is working at the local St. Columba college.

On 8 October in Dumka district, Jharkhand, the Central Joint Secretary of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Dr Surendra Jain issued an open threat to Christian missionaries and warned them to leave the country or else they would be forced to 'Quit India'. Dr Jain was participating in a two-day regional meeting of Vishwa Hindu Parishad at Agrasen Bhawan. He further alleged that Christian missionaries confiscate tribal lands and construct church buildings on them.

On 9 October BBC News reported that 13 Christian families from District Latehar in Jharkhand have been denied ration for many months because of their faith. The Christians were warned by the village council on 2 October and were told that if they do not renounce their faith, they will be socially ostracized and will have to leave the village. They were told that their electricity connections would also be severed.

On 3 November in Amwatad village, Chandwa, Latehar District, Jharkhand, around 10 members of Hindu right-wing groups trespassed and disrupted a Christian worship meeting. At the same time, almost 35 villagers, armed with wooden sticks and sharp objects, also turned up at the venue and pounced on the Christians. The attackers vandalised the place. When the Christians attempted to file a FIR at the Chandwa police station the following day, no action was taken. However, the copy of their complaint was passed on to the village council head and members by the police. On 9 November the Christians were summoned by the village council meeting who pressured them to renounce their Christian faith and threatened them that if they do not renounce Christianity, they will not only be boycotted from the village, but their belongings and land will be taken away from them.

On 23 December in Hurchurigitwatoli, Ratu, Ranchi, Jharkhand, around 500 fundamentalists along with members of Bajrang Dal, BJP Youth wing and the RSS,

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

disrupted and vandalised a Christmas program and shouted anti-Christian slogans alleging conversions. The attackers broke the equipment and other instruments and used extremely foul language to denigrate Christianity. The Christians approached the police who chose to classify the event as a quarrel between two parties instead of a communal event. However, an FIR was lodged by the Christians. In protest almost 700 Hindus surrounded the police station. The Church is attended by around 100 members regularly and is pastored by Pastor Amit Tirkey.

On 24 December in Harmu area under Itki police station in Ranchi district of Jharkhand Hindu extremists allegedly belonging to the RSS, attacked and disrupted a Sunday worship service organized at the Believers Church. While the worship was going on a mob of extremists barged and brought the meeting to a halt. They started physically assaulting the assembled Christians. Pastor Karma Oraon, who is pastoring the congregation, and another Christian believer were badly injured in the attack.

On 25 December in Behratoli area under Itki police station of Ranchi district in Jharkhand a Christmas program was attacked by Hindu radicals reportedly belonging to the RSS. The program was being conducted by Pastor Rakesh Tirkey when around 50-60 extremists barged in, disrupted the program, tried to burn copies of the Bible, and beat the pastor and other Christians. The pastor was severely injured during the rampage.

Karnataka

On 1 January in village Maradiyuru, District Mysore, Karnataka, according to reports received, Hindu fundamentalists disrupted the construction of a Church building even though the Pastor had got permission from the High Court. The Church is led by Pastor Stenson.

On 22 January as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.co> in **Ramavilas Road, Mysore**, m, police personnel from the Devaraj Police Station visited a location in Ramavilas road, Mysore, where Christian prayers are conducted every Sunday. They told the Christians that such prayers cannot be conducted in the future without the permission of the Mysore Corporation and that they had received complaints of alleged illegal religious conversions taking place there. The persons who lead the Sunday prayers were reportedly questioned for several hours by the police.

On 25 January 2017, in Kondlahally, Molakalmuru Taluk, Chitradurga district, Karnataka, Pastor Basavraj, who leads the Atma Prayer church, was severely assaulted by a mob belonging to Hindu Jagran, a Hindutva extremist group. Basavraj was celebrating his

daughter Tejashree's birthday and had invited about 100 Church members and guests for a prayer meeting and celebration organized in the Church hall. While the celebration was still on, fundamentalists belonging to the Hindu Jagran barged into the prayer hall carrying petrol and kerosene bombs with them. They dragged Basavraj outside the Church and started to hit him with fists, legs, hands and footwear. The mob chanting, 'Jai Shri Ram' (Hail lord Ram) broke and burnt the Church equipment (amplifier, sound system, drums etc), Bibles and other Christian literature. The eye witnesses later reported that Basavraj was beaten so ruthlessly that they thought he would die. The attackers took him by force to the local Hindu temple, Sindoor was put on his face and was forced to perform Hindu rituals. Basavraj sustained several internal injuries on his head, chest, and arms. He is a resident of Thungurahalli village, which is 11 km from where the incident took place.

On 20 March in Sri Mangala village of Coorg district, Karnataka, Pastor Ranga of Paul Mission Church was attacked by Hindutva activists, was arrested by the police and put in lock up at the local police station. This happened during his visit to a family's house where he had been called to pray. When he was returning home along with another Christian, around 20 Hindu extremists stopped and attacked them, and took them to the local police station. They were kept there for five days and later released on 24 March.

On 2 April in Viveknagar, Bangalore city, Karnataka, the Sunday worship service was stopped by the police based on a complaint filed by a neighbour having Hindu right wing sympathies. The Mizbah House of Worship has been conducting worship services in their church building for the past 17 years. A Hindu family in the neighbourhood, which reportedly has close affinity to the RSS ideology, decided to complain against the church in the police station claiming that Christian services cannot be allowed in a residential area. Acting on the complaint, the police barged into the program and ordered the Christians to shift their services to some other place.

On 3 April in Yelahanka, Bangalore Rural District, Karnataka, Hindu fundamentalists beat up a Christian lady Sujatha and her husband Naveen Kumar. Sujatha the sister of Pastor Joshua Lukas who has been ministering in the area for many years. On the day of the incident, Sujatha and Naveen had gone to Mrs. Bhagyamma's house, who is a member at her brother's church and lives in Rajanakunte village. All of a sudden RSS leader Rajan and his team entered in to Bhagyamma's house and started to beat Sujatha and Naveen Kumar saying that they have come to convert Hindus in the village. Sujatha went to Rajanakunte police station and gave a written complaint, but the police at first denied filing

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE



FIR because Rajan is the nephew of Yelahanka MLA Vishwanath. Then, Pastor Joshua along with his fellowship in Yelahanka and with 50 other Pastors went to the police station and requested the inspector to file an FIR. Subsequently, the Hindu fundamentalists are now trying to chase Bhagyamma away from the village.

On May 13 in Lingrajpuram, Bangalore, Karnataka, a group of protestant Christians was assaulted. The Christians, led by Pastor Manohar were distributing religious material in a non-intrusive way, leaving free choice to passers-by, whether or not to accept the material. Before they knew it, unknown suspected Hindu radicals attacked them and vandalized their materials.

On 16 May in Ramamurthy Nagar, Bangalore, Karnataka, a group of Pentecostal Christians were attacked reportedly by Hindutva activists. The Christians were distributing religious leaflets and were led by pastor Gibi. Unknown assailants attacked them alleging conversion activity.

On 21 June in Tiger Block area of H D Kote Taluk in Mysore district of Karnataka, a Christian named Ravi who is the brother of Pastor Devdas was badly beaten up. The incident took place around 6 pm. According to reports, Bajrang Dal activists - Anish Kumar, Sudhakar, Hemantha and Gururaj - beat Ravi on the false allegation that he had entered the Hindu temple in the village without removing his footwear. The assailants also went to H D Kote police station and lodged a false complaint against Ravi. Police filed an FIR against him as non-bailable offence. The incident is being seen by the pastor as a means to harass and threaten the Christians in the area.

On 29 June in Devar Hipparagi town in Sindagi Taluk of Bijapur district, Karnataka, A group of 20 Hindutva activists beat up Pastor Gopal Doddimani. The attackers stopped the pastor while he was speaking with two villagers. He was taken to an old school building in the village and was kept illegally detained until late night. While taking him to the school the attackers took away his motorcycle and his mobile phone, abused him and beat him

severely. Meanwhile a police officer in his civil dress met the pastor and told him that he was unable to help him since the matter was a serious one. When the pastor responded that sharing about his faith is a fundamental right granted to him by the Constitution of the land, the officer verbally abused him and snatched his Aadhaar Card (a government identity card) and handed it over to the radicals. Pastor was illegally detained until 11 pm. The next day, five people came to his house, returned his mobile phone and the motorcycle and threatened him to vacate the house in two days and return back to his native place. No police complaint was filed by the pastor.

On 31 July Pastor Nagaraj from Nallur Village, Channagiri Taluk, Daveregere district in Karnataka reported that the local police is harassing him. The pastor conduct services in the village for the past 20 years and about 50 Christians gather there regularly in a temporary house. Now the police officers at Channagiri police station are asking him to stop all the services and resume only after getting permission from the local panchayat.

On 2 September in Rabkavi town in Bangalkot district of Karnataka, The Living Water Ministry (Brethren Assembly) under the leadership of Brother Kumar, had organized a special prayer meeting in their house church. Two guest preachers, Biju John from Mumbai and Jose Mathew from Mangalore, had been called. During the meeting, some Bajrang Dal activists gathered around the house and started alleging that forced conversion of innocent people was taking place in the meeting. Police appeared at the spot in no time, and reprimanded the pastor and the believers. After issuing a verbal warning to the Christians and the Bajrang Dal activists, the police left the place.

On 5 November in Keni Gabitwada village of Karwar taluk, Uttar Kannad district, Karnataka, two policemen visited the DCM Bethel church during the evening prayer service and informed the Christians who had assembled at the prayer house that they had received complaint about the prayer services. However, they did not specify the nature of the complaint. They further ordered

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

the Christians to stop all the prayer services immediately. This is a second visit of the police at the Church. On an earlier visit a couple of months back, the police officials had made the Christians to give an undertaking in writing that they will not invite any newcomer for the Christian services. Kerala (1)

On 18 December at Kuttamala in Thiruvananthapuram district some anti-social elements attacked a church following allegations of religion conversion. This came soon after the attack on a priest from Amboori for the same reason. Damages were caused to HMS church that comes under the Church of South India. The miscreants who broke into the church destroyed furniture, public address system and articles used for prayers. The culprits are yet to be identified though the police have started the search for them. A week before this incident, Lawrence, an Amboori native and the priest of the same church, was attacked near the church. He was beaten when he was taking back a child to the latter's home after participating in Christmas Carols.

Kerala

On 18 December at Kuttamala in Thiruvananthapuram district some anti-social elements attacked a church following allegations of religion conversion. This came soon after the attack on a priest from Amboori for the same reason. Damages were caused to HMS church that comes under the Church of South India. The miscreants who broke into the church destroyed furniture, public address system and articles used for prayers. The culprits are yet to be identified though the police have started the search for them. A week before this incident, Lawrence, an Amboori native and the priest of the same church, was attacked near the church. He was beaten when he was taking back a child to the latter's home after participating in Christmas Carols.

Madhya Pradesh

On 15 January in Piploda Bada, Meghnagar, Madhya Pradesh, the administration locked up a Church which was to be dedicated and inaugurated citing complaints against it by villagers. According to media reports a complaint was filed against Sukia Pargi who had given his land for the Church. The complainants demanded that the inauguration of the Church be stopped and so the police, in the presence of the tehsildar (judicial officer) locked the newly constructed Church and started investigation. It was also reported that Hindu activists organised a re-conversion program and the Christians who refused to participate in the same were beaten up and one Christian was even jailed on alleged false charges.



On the eve of 23 January, in Petlawad town of Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh, police arrested a Christian couple on charges of forcible conversion. Ramesh Malji Damore and his wife Leela Damore from Chhayan village of Jhabua district, were visiting and staying the night with Ramchandrar Medha's family on 22 January, when around 2:30 am, a group of Hindu extremists accompanied by the police, stormed the Medha residence. Ramesh, who works with the Department of Railways, and his wife were taken to the Sarangi Chowki (police outpost) and were detained there. In the morning the Chowki was surrounded by close to 200 people who agitated against the couple and demanded that the police charge Ramesh with forcible conversion. The local media published the story the same morning and carried a photograph depicting a Bible and Rosary as proof of the alleged forcible conversion. While Ramesh's wife was let go after he was forced to pay Rupees 9000 as 'facilitation charges' to the police, he was granted bail only on 24 January 2017. He rejected the claims of the newspaper as false and denied that he was every carrying a Bible or a Rosary. The out-post in-charge Ashfaq Khan informed the media that a case was registered against Ramesh under IPC 153 A, & Sections 3 and 4 of the Madhya Pradesh Religious Freedom Act 1968.

On 23 January again in Mandla, Madhya Pradesh, as reported by <https://speakoutsthate.crowdmap.com>, a Christian was falsely accused of circulating derogatory material about religious scriptures of another religion on social media. A complaint was filed at the Anjaniya Police Station stating that the message hurts the religious sentiments of that religious community. The Christian was booked under Section 295A of the IPC and Section 67 of the IT Act. He was reportedly subsequently released on bail.

On 25 January in Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh, two Christians including a Pastor were beaten up by Hindu extremists and the police and were arrested. Pastor Bahadur Singarh from Mohodipadakalla village, Thana Raipuriya and Kallu Sarkota from Naharpura village had participated in a prayer meeting at Ballu Garwaal's house

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

in Bodaeta village. After the meeting, around 3 pm, they both went their way. Singarh was on his motorbike when 10-12 people belonging to Seva Bharati (a Hindu group) stopped him and started to assault him. After hitting him, they asked him where Kallu was and forced him to take them in the direction that Kallu had left for. They met Kallu on the way and beat him too. "The attackers were carrying a Rosary and a Bible with them," said Bahadur while speaking to EFI. The extremists assaulted the duo in front of the villagers before taking them to the Raipuria police station where they were beaten once again by the policemen. The attackers mobilized a mob that pressurized the police to detain them for the night. The next day, 26 January, they were presented at the Petlawad court and were charged under section 153A of the Indian Penal Code (Promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion). The Christians were bailed out later.

On 25 January in Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh, Pastor Bahadur Bhuriya, Fateh Singh and Jaymaal Bhabor of Kaldel were arrested by the Sarangi police post of Petlawad. In a family gathering at Jaymaal's house, a drunken man entered and started to abuse him of carrying forceful conversions. The drunk also pelted stones at the house, which was witnessed by some Hindutva activists. Next morning, about 50 activists lured the drunkard and once again went to Jaymaal's house and abused him with filthy language. Soon they returned with the police and got Jaymaal arrested after filing a false complaint against him through the drunken man. The false complaint alleged that Jaymaal had approached the drunken man and had lured him with money and job, insisting him to join for the meeting at Jaymaal's residence. The complaint also falsely implicated Bahadur Bhuriya and Fateh Singh alleging that they were also present at that prayer meeting. The police arrested Jaymaal, Bahadur Bhuriya and Fateh Singh. The 3 were sent to jail under IPC section 153 A & B and were later released on bail on 7 February.

On 28 January in Betul, Madhya Pradesh, Hindutva extremists attacked a Christian and got him arrested. Yuvraj Dhurve, an evangelist belonging to the Glory Mission was having tea at the house of another Christian, Suraj Kakadiya, at Bhimpur in Betul District of Madhya Pradesh when 10 extremists barged into the house. The trespassers abused Yuvraj and accused him of carrying out forceful conversions. They took him outside and attempted to beat him up. However, the villagers in the neighborhood prevented the incident and vouched for Yuvraj. The extremists called the police and had Yuvraj arrested. He was kept in the police lock up for over 15 hours before being let go.

On 28 February in Shivpuri district, Madhya Pradesh, members belonging to Hindu Vahini, a right-wing group, disrupted a wedding taking place at the Jeevan Jyoti

Ashram Church. The marriage was being formalized between a Christian girl Anukampa and a Hindu boy Avnish Sharma. The affiliates of the Hindu Vahini accused the priest of forcefully converting the boy and getting him married to a Christian girl. The groom (Avnish), persistently denied the charges that he was being converted and even produced his wedding card as a proof that their wedding would also take place on 13 March in Indore according to Arya Samaj rituals, but the hooligans did not let the Church continue with the ceremony as reported by newsbits.in. The town inspector Sanjay Dixit later in his statement to the Hindustantimes.com said that the incident was the outcome of some confusion, "Members of the Hindu Vahini had come to us alleging that a forced conversion was taking place. A police team accompanied them to the church and the charges were found to be untrue. No case has been lodged."

On 8 March Ujjain district, Madhya Pradesh, Pastor Santosh Maurya of Assembly of God church was targeted by a man who was disgruntled because his brother had become a Christian minister. Gaurav Dev threatened to beat up Pastor Maurya and not finding him at home indulging in vandalizing his house. The pastor did not file a complaint against Gaurav after his family members intervened on his behalf and apologized to the pastor.

On 9 March in Derinala village under Bandol thana in Seoni district of Madhya Pradesh Mr Vinay Das, a member of CSI (Church of South India) was called to the police station over the inauguration of a nursery building in Derinala Shanti Ashram. Around 500 people, which included a few bishops, church pastors and church members, had come to attend the inauguration ceremony. Around 4 pm the police came the program and asked the Vinay to come to police station. When he arrived at police station around 5 pm, the police personnel blamed him for conversion activities, and started inquiring about the source of funds for the programs and activities that he is doing. Vinay responded that he was only a worker and he didn't receive any funds from anywhere. He further asked whether an FIR was lodged against him, to which the police responded saying, "There is no FIR lodged, we are only investigating based on a complaint." He was later let go.

On 19 March in Ganesh Tarai village under Mogath police station of Khandwa district in Madhya Pradesh, Pastor Ashok Soren and his family faced severe opposition from Bajrang Dal activists. While they had gone to meet a believers' family for prayer, a mob of Bajrang Dal's activists suddenly barged into the house and started making false accusation against the pastor. They accused him of giving money and jobs to lure others to Christianity. After this incident the police is searching the pastor for investigation.

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

On 24 March in Nepa Nagar village of Burhanpur district of Madhya Pradesh, Pastor Pathan Jaamra of Indian Evangelical Team faced opposition from Hindutva activists. The pastor had just started construction of a church building in Maadwa Nepa Nagar when a group led by local villagers, RSS and Bajrang Dal activists started opposing the construction of the church building and filed an FIR against him.

On 31 March in Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh, according to reports received, police arrested Pastor Ashok from the Full Gospel Church of God on false charges of being involved in conversion activity. He was later bailed out the following day.

On 3 April in Mandwa village, Burhanpur District, Madhya Pradesh, Hindu groups threatened Christians of an attack that would be carried out against them on 7 April 2017. The Christians filed a complaint at the Nepa Nagar police station on 4 April 2017, asking for protection but no action was taken by police authorities and the threats continued.

On 7 April in village Mandwa of Nepa Nagar of Burhanpur district in Madhya Pradesh, local villagers beat up and threatened Christians. A few days back, the same villagers had threatened Pastor Shivram Mundale who is pastoring the Beersheba Church of God, and the Christians that he will be facing dire consequences for conducting church services. Consequently, the pastor had lodged a complaint at the local police station, but no action was taken. On the day of the incident, the villagers started visiting Christian houses, threatening and beating them, and warning them that they will remove their names from the ration list. Three Christian, two men and a woman were grievously injured in the beatings with the woman sustaining injuries on her face. When the local police reached the spot, they did not take any action against the villagers, and instead ordered the victims to visit the police station later in the evening.

On 8 April in Tensa village of Chapara post in Seoni district of Madhya Pradesh, Hindu radicals trespassed into a pastors house and threatened him. Devkant, a member of Bajrang Dal, along with seven other people came to Pastor Fakirchand Dhurvey's house and threatened him. They warned him of dire consequences if he did not stop conducting Church services and forced him to shout "Jai Shri Ram".

On 9 April in village Sitabedi, Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh, RSS members accompanied by police personnel disrupted worship service and arrested the pastors and their wives and other Christians and took them to the local police station at Piplod. The Pastors who were arrested were:

Pastor Amar Singh Solanki, Pastor Kishore Barela, and Pastor Prabhakar Solanki. The Christians were accused of conducting conversions by force and allurement. The incident took place around 12:30 pm. According to reports received the RSS members surrounded the police station demanding action against the Christians. Later after 6 pm, the police released three women and two men but an FIR was registered against the Pastors under the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of religion act.

On 13 April in Nepa Nagar, Burhanpur, Madhya Pradesh, a Christian only identified as Prakash and belonging to IET, was beaten up by Hindu fundamentalists who were pressurizing him to renounce his faith in Christ. According to reports Prakash received severe injuries.

On 17 April in Tensa village of Chapara post in Seoni district of Madhya Pradesh, Pastor Fakirchand Dhurvey, reported that due to fears of opposition from Hindu radicals the Easter Sunday services had been badly affected and almost no Christian turned up for worship due to fear. As reported earlier, on 8 April the pastor and his wife had faced strong threats by the radicals and had been in constant fear of persecution from them.

On 24 April in Jhingajhar Gaharwar village located in Sihawal of Sidhi district, Madhya Pradesh, local police arrested Rajpal Singh, a Christian, under IPC section 151 and produced him before the court, where he was granted bail. The complaint against Singh was filed by his extended family alleging his involvement in conversion activities. Rajpal had become a follower of Christ only a few months ago after one Mrs. Geeta Dixit told him about Christ. In a separate incident, some of Geeta's neighbors have also filed a complaint against her at the local police station, accusing her of conversion activities. Amid the fear and threats, she approached the SP's office for help in upholding her fundamental right to profess and propagate her Christian faith.

On 21 May in two separate cases in Madhya Pradesh, police detained 71 Christian children and nine caregivers including a pastor travelling with the children to a Christian summer camp organized at Nagpur, Maharashtra. In the first incident, police detained 59 children, five Sunday school supervisors along with three Christian leaders in Ratlam, and in another incident, 140 kilometres away in Indore, detained two Christian leaders along with 12 children. Based on the suspicion of 'conversions', the 71 children were held and questioned at police stations for three days after the arrests. Even though their parents said that they were Christians and have sent their children with their approval for the camp, the police still detained the children for three days and the adults could only get bail after two and a half months. One of the adults detained in Ratlam, had his own children traveling to

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

the camp and yet both children and the parent were detained on suspected charges of conversion and kidnapping.

On 2 June in Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh, a pastor of a church was arrested on the allegation of religious conversions and produced in the court. Allegation were made against him that he had tried to convert a person into Christianity by alluring him with promises of a luxurious life and money.

On 13 June at Satna railway station in Madhya Pradesh, four tribal girls and one nun from Jharkhand were apprehended by the Government Railway Police Force while traveling in Shipra express from Jharkhand to Bhopal to pursue a study course in the English language. Some activists of the Bajrang Dal were in same train and noticed the women. They in turn informed the Bajrang Dal activists in Satna, who forced the GRPF to arrest the women on charges of conversion. The SDM arrived at the spot and realized that there was no case of conversion involved despite vehement protests by the Bajrang Dal activists to arrest the women. Police kept the Christian group under inquiry the entire day and released them late at night.

On 20 August in Ratlam district of Madhya Pradesh a team of police personnel barged in to Father Babulal's church, who serves as a priest with the Believers Church. Fr Babulal and Fr Ramcharit Patel were present at the church at the time of incident. The police stated that their purpose in doing such a thing was to interrogate the church attendees to find out whether the church was indulging in conversions. After finding no evidence after interviewing the church members, they left.

On 30 August, in Rewa district, Madhya Pradesh, a Catholic priest who is the principal of the Jyoti Senior Secondary School was charged by the police of molesting a 17 year old girl student studying in class 12th. Fr. Sebastian Panthalluparambil was booked under the stringent Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act. The allegation of the girl is that when she and another girl went to their principal's office to seek his permission to organize a farewell program for a retiring teacher, the permission was denied and the principal "inappropriately touched" her body. Bishop Joseph Kodakallil of Santa rubbishes the allegation as "baseless and false complaint" citing that the CCTV footage of the principal's office proves that the complaint is baseless and that the same has been submitted to the police.

On 3 September in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh, Pastor Prahlad and Mr. Sunam were arrested by the Kesla Police Station officials and kept in the lock up. The villagers had complained against them and were furious about their Christian evangelistic efforts in

the area. Later the matter was sorted out between the villagers and the Christians in the presence of Police SHO Mrs. Monika Gaur.

On 11 September in Mohanpur village in Guna district of Madhya Pradesh, Hindu radicals barged into the Mohanpur Mission compound which falls under the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sagar. The mission has been serving the residents of the Mohanpur village since 1997, especially through the hostel for poor tribal boys, which is taken care by Fr. Siljo Kidangan. On the night of 11 September a group of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh activists entered the hostel premises and threatened the priest and the children, asking them to vacate the place. On the following day the Tahsildar, Naib Tahsildar, Sarpanch, Patwari and two policemen came and forcefully closed down the hostel. The local Christians, who are around 30 in number, feel insecure and are being threatened to flee from the village. The priest has taken refuge in a nearby mission station.

On 12 October in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh an agitated mob led by the Hindu Dharma Sena, Hindu Seva Parishad, Dharma Prasar Vibhag and Vishwa Hindu Mahasangh, handed a memorandum to the Superintendent of Police strongly objecting to a Christian meeting scheduled to be held from 27-29 October in Christian Higher Secondary School, Jabalpur. Yogesh Agarwal, the Regional President of Hindu Dharma Sena has alleged that Dr Paul Dhinakaran, who is the guest speaker for the event is engaged in the allurements and conversion of Tribals and poor people. Agrawal demanded legal action against Dr Dhinakaran and the organizers of the upcoming meeting.

On 15 October in village Lakhvariya, Shahdol district of Madhya Pradesh, Pastor Munnalal Baiga's house Church fellowship was disrupted by a mob of 60-70 Hindu extremists during an ongoing worship service. The mob argued with the pastor and threatened him and the Christians attending the fellowship. The police were called-in to handle the situation who reprimanded the extremists and dispersed them. Pastor Baiga was later called to the Burhar police station where he was asked to obtain permission from the Shahdol Superintendent of Police to hold the Sunday service in future.

On 21 October in Lakhvariya village, Shahdol district, Madhya Pradesh, Pastor Munnalal Baiga approached the Superintendent of Police of Shahdol requesting protection for conducting Sunday service of 22 October, after his Sunday service which was conducted in a Church members house was attacked on the previous Sunday (15 October) by a mob of about 70 Hindu extremists and police had to be called to control the situation. The SP denied protection and instead asked Baiga to conduct Sunday service in a church building in

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE



future and not in a church member's house.

On 23 October in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, Anita Francis and Amrit Kumar were arrested at the Indore railway station with seven Christian children who had boarded the train to Mumbai for a Christian camp. A mob of about 100 Hindu extremists gathered at the platform and brought Anita and the other children on the platform along with Amrit Kumar and his son who had gone to send them off and started to interrogate them. The mob soon began to assault Amrit, his son, Anita and the children. They were all handed over to the railway police accusing Anita and Amrit of forcefully converting the children. The children continued to tell the police and later told the High Court magistrate that they were all Christians and that the police had also assaulted them while in custody.

On 8 November in Ward 2 of Lanji town in Balaghat district, Madhya Pradesh, Mahendra Nagdeve was served a notice by the Town Council regarding the use of his house for conducting Christian worship. The notice warned him that since he had not declared his house as a church building, and was holding prayer regularly without permission, his house may be demolished under the Madhya Pradesh Municipalities Act 1961, if he did not stop the Christian prayers with immediate effect. Mr Nagdeve feels that it is a violation of his fundamental right to profess and practice his religion inside his own home, and that the administration was siding with the anti-Christian elements who may be behind this.

On the evening of 7 December in Namanpur village in Satwas Tehsil of Dewas district in Madhya Pradesh, Pastor Umrao Singh Metha, Pastor Rahul Ranoja, Pastor Lakhman Malvi and two others were arrested by the police and taken into custody at Satwas police station. Umrao Singh and the other two pastors had conducted an evening prayer meeting at the house of Radhesham and Rup Singh who are Christians and were returning back to their homes. On their way local policemen met them and interrogated them about the prayer meeting and took them to the police station.

On 14 December in Satna town of Satna district in Madhya Pradesh, police detained a group of priests and seminarians on allegations of religious conversion after they were attacked by members of right-wing Hindu groups. The 32 Christians, accompanied by two priests, were singing Christmas carol songs as part of Christmas celebrations while the attack happened. The police, who were called by the Hindu group, detained the Christians and took them to the police station. Eight priests who later went to the police station to enquire into the matter were also taken into custody. Meanwhile the Hindu radicals torched the vehicle which had been used by the second group to arrive at the police station. The priests and seminarians were kept in custody late into the night while the radicals kept vigil outside the station virtually creating a siege around the place.

On 17 December in Madhya Pradesh, according to reports received, the police barged into a Christian Sunday worship service conducted by the India Evangelical Team and ordered them to stop the meeting immediately. They took the Christians to the police station for enquiry. Meanwhile around 50 Hindu extremists kept watch outside the police station in order to build pressure upon the police to act against the Christian. Earlier on 10 December a few suspicious looking young men had entered the Sunday service, had taken pictures and recorded videos on their mobile mobiles and had left.

On 18 December in Bandarimal village of Varla taluk of Barwani district of Madhya Pradesh, a police complaint was filed by the head of the village against the local Christian. He further warned the Christians that he would not allow any kind of Christian worship services in the village. The police are trying to investigate and have asked the Christians to report at the police station.

On the evening of 28 December in Ranjhi area of Jabalpur district in Madhya Pradesh, Pastor Samuel Martin was arrested and taken to the police station while he was returning home from a prayer meeting in a Christian believer's house. The police acted based on a complaint filed by Hindu extremists that the pastor was involved in

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

conversion activities. The pastor was released later that night.

Maharashtra

On 3 January in village Saale, Korchi Tehsil of Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra, Pastor Tilak Kumre and eleven other Christians were brutally attacked by a mob of Hindu villagers, following dispute over the funeral rites of Tulsiram Hedame, 60, who with his wife had started to attend the Indian Friend Fellowship Church in the nearby Korchi town for the past five months. Hedame's son did not consent to a Christian burial and the Hindu villagers did not allow a Hindu cremation to Hedame. The villagers invited Pastor Tilak for peace talks and assaulted him and the eleven others who were accompanying him. Chandrasai Kamro, 55, had his ear bleeding profusely as a result of the beating; Barsu Uikey, 26, was hit with so many blows that he was unable to walk; Lalsai Uikey, 45, suffered head injuries and was bleeding copiously; Prakash Malgaam had his shoulder cap fractured, and Pastor Kumre sustained shoulder and hip injury. Five of the 12 Christians assaulted were seriously injured.

Between 2 - 7 January, in Lakhandur of district Bhandara, Maharashtra, the Believers Church building was attacked by unknown persons, when Pastor Lakhan Makde was out of station. On his return, he found the Church windows broken, "Stones were pelted on the Church building," informed Amit Tawade, a friend of Pastor Makde. Stones were lying inside the Church along with broken glasses scattered all over the place. When Makde inquired in the neighborhood he was told that they had not seen anybody attacking the Church. Makde did not approach the police, so no case was filed.

On 24 January in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, Pastor Vijay Thanekar was forced to vacate his rental accommodation. Pastor Thanekar leads the Shalom Church in Yadrav village in Kolahpur District. He has been serving in this village for about 3 years and lived in a rented accommodation. On the said date his landlady objected to his stay in her house and asked him to vacate the same. She was furious with the pastor because her younger brother had started attending church worship services.

On 5 February in Nagpur, Maharashtra, the Sunday worship service of St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India was disrupted the third time in the past few months. Pastor Nitin Atkur was conducting the regular Sunday worship service when a man from the neighborhood identified as Prakash Sumendra along with his son charged into the Church hall and started to verbally abuse and shout at Pastor Atkur. He alleged that the Church was causing disturbance by using instruments and PA system. In his

response, Atkur said that they have not been using instruments and PA system at all. At this Sumendra and his son got furious and using abusive language they ran towards Atkur to attack him. The Church members surrounded Atkur and saved him. The local police were informed, who investigated the Church and Sumendra's house and denied the veracity of Sumendra's charge. A warning was issued to Sumendra by the police.

On 19 February in Kurla, Mumbai, Maharashtra, a grotto of Mother Mary installed by a roadside, was found desecrated in the early morning of 19 February. The Christians of the Kurla area staged a strong protest and demanded action. The Vinobha Bhave Nagar police arrested two youths - Kiran Rode (28) and Babu Kunchikurve (19) on 21 February. They were booked for theft and hurting religious sentiments, according to media reports.

On 23 February in Indira Nagar East Mumbai, Maharashtra, the Evangelical Church of India (ECI) located faced opposition from a neighboring Hindu family led by one Kapil Kadam. The 37-year-old Church building is presently undergoing renovation and Kadam displaying his resentment against the renovation started to throw bricks at the laborers working on the construction site on 23 February. He approached Pastor Koil Raj, who pastors the ECI church for the last four years and is overseeing the renovation work, with abusive language and slapped the pastor on his face. According to reports, Kadam hit himself with a brick and falsely reported to the police that Pastor Koil had attacked him. The police took both Pastor Koil and Kadam to the area police station, where they asked Kadam to maintain peace in the area. "The Kadam family has been causing trouble for the past 15-20 years for the Church and have thrice in the past approached local authorities appealing for the shut-down of the ECI church," said Pastor Koil Raj. There are 150 members, who attend the ECI church.

On 28 February in village Batti of Bhamragad, Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra, a group of 20 villagers got together in a panchayat meeting and summoned the three Christian families living in the Hindu majority village for 'peace talks'. The meeting was attended by Kuma Lekhani, his wife Maini Lekhani and another Christian identified as Janu. Some of the villagers present in the meeting were reported to have intoxicated before the meeting began. The Hindu villagers insisted that they did not want Christians in their village and pressured the Christians to leave the village. Soon the villagers got agitated and started to assault the three Christians present and proceeded to vandalize their homes. Pastor David Jacob of the Church Growth Missionary Movement, who ministers to the Christian families in this village got news about the assault. He took the assaulted Christians along

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

and reported the matter to the local police station. The police called the villagers and warned them against the assault and instructed them to repair the Christian homes that have been vandalized. No case was registered against the attackers.

On 5 March in Karve village in Chandgad taluk of Kolhapur district, Maharashtra, Siyon Church was attacked by unidentified armed people who came in two groups. While one group of about 40 people came on foot, the other group came on 7 – 8 motorcycles with three persons on each vehicle. A birthday service was in progress inside the Church with about 50 people present when the attack took place. The masked attackers, who were carrying wooden sticks and iron rods beat up the people present including the pastor's wife, Mrs. Milagrin Fernandez, and indulged in vandalism breaking most of the furniture and instruments belonging to the Church.

On 15 March in Shera Village, Satara District, as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, Christians were forcibly stopped from giving away gospel tracts and Bibles. They were then taken to the village council alleging conversions and were told that they had not taken permission for distributing Christian literature.

On 25 March in Kuldharan village, Karjat tehsil of Ahmednagar district in Maharashtra Pastor Prakash Walke, working with Vishwa Vani, was threatened by local villagers when he started the reconstruction of his church building. Earlier on 2 September 2016 he had faced a similar opposition and the construction work had stopped.

On 3 April in Sakari village in Bhusawal tehsil of Jalgaon district in Maharashtra, the Gram Panchayat leaders threatened Christians and forbade them from practising their faith. The Christians belong to the Katkari tribe and around 40 of them gather regularly in the village for prayers, which are conducted by Pastor Basavraja. The higher caste members of the village have been wary of the regular prayer meetings. Matters took a turn when the Christians requested the Gram Panchayat to provide them a small prayer hall. This infuriated the high caste Hindus in the village, especially Prakash Patekar, a Gram Panchayat member, who decided to launch an all-out warning to them. He along with others, warned them that their ration card will be taken away, that if they want to continue being Christians they cannot stay in India, and all their identity cards, like Aadhaar, job card, caste certificate, etc. will be seized. The Christians are now very scared and fear that they will be thrown out of their village.

On 12 April in Gaothan village in Santacruz (West), Mumbai, Maharashtra, the Mumbai police registered a case against unknown people for desecrating a cross. Parishioners going for morning Mass in the village

saw a garland of slippers around Jesus nailed on the cross. The cross was below the skywalk on the station road. This incident occurred two months after a statue of Mother Mary was desecrated at Kurla, some 10 km southeast of Santacruz. Local people saw the latest incident as a case of mischief when Christians observe Holy Week, the time to commemorate the passion and death of Christ. Police have registered a case for hurting religious sentiments and mischief causing damage under the Indian Penal Code. A police team visited the scene and took away CCTV footage.

On 21 April under Tulinj police station in Nalasopara East of Palghar district in Maharashtra, Hindu radicals stopped a Christian prayer meeting. The Palghar Pastors and Leaders Fellowship had organized a meeting of Acharya Vikas Massey at Divine High School. At around 8:30 pm while the meeting was going on, a mob of 25-30 Hindu fundamentalists came in and started abusing the gathering, thus forcing the meeting to close. After this, all the leaders of the fellowship went to the Tulinj Police station and filed a complaint. Three of the accused were later arrested by the police.

On 9 May in Kinod village in Jalgaon tehsil in Jalgaon district of Maharashtra, Pastor Kailash Bhadale was threatened by RSS activists and local police. The pastor works with the Beersheba Church of God since last seven years and is based at Jalgaon. On the day of the incident, the pastor was visiting a Christian family. At around 9:30 pm, while he was praying and preaching from the Bible, about 10 to 15 RSS activists surrounded the house and called the pastor outside. They started questioning him whether he had the permission to come to the village and what kind of Christian work he did. After a while, the local police officer and the Sarpanch (village head) also arrived there, and accused him of converting gullible villagers, and threatened him of dire consequence if he ever entered the village again. They took his contact number and pictures and warned him that the RSS activists in the area will be keeping an eye on his activities. Fearful and insecure, the pastor stayed that night in another village and returned back to his village the next day. No police complaints were lodged.

On 14 May in Amravati district of Maharashtra, it was reported that a Christian girl named Pooja Tagade was beaten by her maternal uncles and was being forced to marry a non-Christian boy selected by her relatives. They had placed a bottle filled with poison in her hand, snatched her mobile phone and threatened her to renounce her Christian faith.

On 20 May in Bhendipada in Ambernath (West) in Thane district of Maharashtra, a pastor extending the roof of his building faced stiff opposition from his neighbours.

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

Pastor Thompson who leads the Only True God Church in the area was extending the roof of his building when his neighbour Shivaji Kamble and his son Dutta Kamble intervened and asked him to stop. The pastor told them that since he was building in his own land, they should not have an issue. The matter was taken to the police station where the two parties were led in a compromise by the police.

On 12 June in Sakari village in Bhusawal tehsil of Jalgaon district in Maharashtra, Christian members of the FMPB (Friends Missionary Prayer Band) along with local Christians and pastor approached the SDPO sub division police station for registering a complaint against the Hindu high caste community that had been threatening the Katkari Christian tribals. The police officials promised a meeting on 16th June for inquiries at Mukhada police station. The Christian believers are from Katkari people group and high caste people had been threatening them and demanding their women to sleep with the high caste men if at all the Christians wanted to construct the church building at the village. Earlier on 3 April a complaint had been lodged by the Christians and the matter had died down. However, after the transfer of the PSI the local high caste Hindu extremists had started harassing the Christians again.

On 16 June in Ambapani village in Vaghjira tehsil of Jalgaon district, Maharashtra, Pastor Sakharam Ganpat Pawra, his son Anil Sakharam and his other family members were brutally assaulted by anti-Christian elements. A day before while the pastor was conducting a fasting prayer meeting, the same group had threatened him and warned him to stop all Christian activities. On 16 June in a bid to instigate a fight the radicals cut down a tree and lay it across on the road in front of the pastor's house. When the pastor's family asked them to remove it, a violent manhandling ensued. They beat the pastor's family severely. The pastor and his son sustained grievous injuries and had to be rushed to a private hospital in a state of unconsciousness. Six other Christians also had to be given immediate medical treatment. An FIR was lodged against the assailants; however, no actions was taken by the police despite repeated requested by Christian community leaders. Pastor Pawra has been conducting Christian prayers in the village for many years, and about 18 to 20 Christians gather regularly.

On 27 June in Dahila (Gethipada) village of Palghar district in Maharashtra, Hindutva activists threatened Christian families for not giving financial donations towards the construction of a Hindu temple in the village. The next day the Christians filed a complaint at the police station. The Inspector summoned the radical villagers and warned them not to harass the Christian families.

On 12 August in Uran, a part of Navi Mumbai city in Raigad district, four Christians - Isaac Emmanuel, Ezekiel Srinivasan, Mark Suryavanshi and Samuel Stephen were arrested and taken to Uran police station in Maharashtra. The Christians were distributing tracts in a school in Uran, when an unidentified person came and started arguing with them. In the meanwhile, someone called the police and they were taken to the police station. They were later released, after signing a written statement.

On 26 August in Satara district of Maharashtra, Pastor Sandip Gholap, who conducts worship service at his house church, was threatened by the local police while he was conducting the worship service. The police came to his house and ordered him to stop the prayers. He was then taken to the police station and asked to provide his Aadhaar Card and contact details. This is the second time the pastor has been called by the police and compelled to stop the church service.

On the evening of 2 September, in Khandpoli village, Sudhagad-Pali taluk, Raigarh district of Maharashtra, Rama Hilan from the Katkari tribe, was badly beaten up and later admitted in the hospital. Rama, a 25 year old young man, had become a follower of Christ some 2-3 years ago. On the fateful evening, Rama had been called to a village meeting, where around 60-70 people had gathered. They questioned his newfound faith and an argument ensued. The mob beat him with sickles and badly injured his head, ear, hands and legs. Rama and his parents are now living with a sense of fear and insecurity. A police complaint was registered, and two people have been arrested.

On 2 September in Kasarwadi village, Sudhagad-Pali taluk, Raigad district of Maharashtra, Chimi Ghati a 40 year old woman was physically assaulted by her husband. Chimi had become a Christian around 3 years ago, and this had not gone well with her husband. On the eventful day, the husband, provoked by local villagers to teach his wife a lesson, came home drunk and violently pounded on his wife with a stone in his hand. Chimi sustained grievous injury on her face, hands and legs. Despite her life threatening condition none of the villagers or the nearby hospitals were willing to offer help or medical treatment. No police complaint has been lodged. Her situation remains grim.

On 10 September in Umerda Khadan, Taluk Erandol, District Jalgaon, Maharashtra, Pastor Kailash Sahadar Barela was cross examined by the two police officials after the pastor had finished the church service. They sought to know whether the pastor had permission to conduct such services. Later he was asked to report at the local police station, along with his house owner, on the following day. The pastor, who is working with the Indian

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

Evangelical Team under the local church name, Beersheba Church of God, has been conducting church services in a rented house for the last 8-9 years without any hindrances, thus far.

On 11 September in Saravali village, Dahanu taluk, Palghar district of Maharashtra, Mr Suresh who is working as a Christian missionary faced severe opposition from the local people. He had earlier complaint at the local police station but no action was taken. On the night of the incident, at around 8pm, a crowd of locals gathered outside his house and started pelting stones, which damaged the house, and badly injured him. The case has been brought to the local police officials.

On 16 September in Boisar of Palghar district in Maharashtra, three Christian families were mercilessly beaten up by members of the Shiv Sena. The families were badly beaten up with bamboo sticks, kicked and punched, both men and women were stripped naked, hit on their private parts, and later taken to the local police station. The violence had ensued after a small argument brewed up, and owing to victims' Christian faith, the extremists attacked them brutally. The police tried to calm the situation, and compelled the attackers to write an undertaking that if the same kind of violence occurred again in the future, strict actions will be taken.

On 18 September in Borpada village, Harshul taluk of Nashik district in Maharashtra a Christian prayer meeting was disrupted. Nivrutti Galat led the attack along with 40 other people, and started verbally and physically assaulting the Christians who had assembled for the meeting. A Christian woman named Sangita Yashwant Galat was injured. Despite continued requests from the Christian evangelist, Mr. Gulab Galat, the local police station in-charge was initially unwilling to file an FIR. However, a police complaint was later registered.

On 23 September in Nirmal Colony in Nagpur city of Maharashtra a complaint was filed against Pastor Pritesan Lima. The pastor conducts Christian worship services in the house of a Christian family the colony for the past 6 months. A few neighbours had complained about the religious services at the Jaripatka police station. The station in-charge advised them to resolve the matter with the pastor. However the neighbours were adamant that the services be closed down. The services have thus been stopped.

On 23 September in Belhe village, Nashik district, Maharashtra, a group of residents of along with Bajrang Dal activists, disrupted and stopped an ongoing Christian prayer meeting and threatened the pastors who had assembled there. The village leaders have made up their mind to stop any kind of Christian activity that takes

place again.

On 14 October in Maskawad village, Raver Tehsil, Jalgaon district, Maharashtra a mob of 300-400 extremists stormed into the house of Janu Barela at night and started to manhandle the family. They questioned the faith of the family and ransacked the house searching in the shelves and the furniture. They snatched Barela's cell phone and took away the memory card, carried the Bibles and song books with them. They questioned Barela for conducting prayer meetings in his house and threatened him with dire consequences if he did not deter. During the incident, Barela was with his wife and three children, two of whom have been handicapped. Mentally shaken by the attack, Barela vacated the rented house and moved to a different town. The mental and physical abuse has rendered them jobless in a new town, as they try to come to terms with the fear and agony they had to undergo.

On 23 October in Ghattemni village, Amgaon Taluk, Gondia district, Maharashtra, Hindu extremists barged into the area vandalising the place where Pastor Laxman Mesram was screening a film on the life of Jesus. The extremists not only created a ruckus but also filed a complaint against Mesram in the local police station. The police sternly questioned Mesram for organizing the screening of the film in public area without availing permission from the concerned local authorities. They let him go after issuing him a strong verbal warning.

On 27 October in Talav Pani, Thane, Mumbai, Maharashtra, as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, Hindutva activists disrupted a Christian meeting and threatened the Christians present. The Christians had organized the meeting with proper police permission but in the evening a group of Hindutva activists came and using abusive language against Christian, threatened them and attempted to attack them. They also attempted to destroy the banner and other things kept at the venue. Finally things improved when the police intervened.

On 13 December, according to media reports, Amruta Fadnavis, the wife of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis was attacked and trolled on social media for putting out a post on Twitter promoting a Christmas-themed charitable event in Mumbai. The right-wing trolls on social media alleged a conspiracy to convert children.

On 15 December in Pragati Nagar in Nalasopara East of Palghar district, Maharashtra, Pastor John Soni of Salvation Ministry was threatened and opposed by local Hindu radicals who ordered him to close down all Christians prayer meetings. Pastor Soni conducts religious services where about 50 Christians gather regularly. On the

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE



aforementioned date few radical elements entered in to the prayer meeting and started abusing and threatening him and the attendees. The pastor is insecure and feels that his right to profess his religion is being jeopardized.

On 16 December in Bhagirathi Mangal Karyalaya, a wedding hall in Udgir Taluk of Latur district in Maharashtra, Hindu radicals barged into a Christmas festival celebration where hundreds of Christians had gathered. The mob destroyed the stage and musical equipment and badly beat the organizer Pastor Jaideep Londhe. Abused and injured, the Christians approached the local police station in huge numbers to lodge a complaint and seek justice. However, the local police inspector showed no cooperation. The Christian leaders and pastors allege that it was incited by the local MLA who was influencing the police to deny support to Christians.

On 25 December in Yadav Nagar in Boisar East of Palghar district in Maharashtra Pastor Shailesh Gaddal and four other Christians were beaten up during a Christmas program. The pastor who has been serving in the area for the past four years, was conducting the Christmas worship service in which about 150-200 people had gathered. During the program around 10-15 Hindu extremists entered and stopped the program. They approached the pastor and started beating him and few other Christians. Pastor Shailesh sustained a severe injury on his ear. Fearing further violence, the pastor decided not to file any police complaint against anyone.

On 30 April in Bandra West, Mumbai, Maharashtra, a Cross erected in 1895 was demolished by the Municipal authorities. At around 10.30 am, Assistant Municipal Commissioner Sharad Ughade along with staff of H/West Ward and many Police Officials arrived at the site. The Cross is erected on Plot No.38 situated at C.S. No. A/650 near Dmonte Street and Bazar Road, Bandra West, Mumbai. Earlier, on 26 April Sharad Ughade had issued a notice to the Christian community stating that in reference to a Public Interest Litigation No. 104 of 2010 pending in Honorable Bombay High Court, the cross was an illegal structure and will have to be demolished. In reply to the

notice, the community had handed a written reply with documentary evidence including Revenue Plan/Property Card, and personally met Mr Ughade and categorically clarified that the Holy Cross was built on private property, and hence the PIL did not hold true in the case of the Holy Cross. Despite these developments, the Assistant Municipal Commissioner with the assistance of the Bandra West Police Station stayed adamant and declared to the protesting Christians, "Humne EK Mandir Toda Hai to ek Cross bhi todna padega" (We have destroyed a temple, hence a Cross also need to be demolished). Thereafter, the Holy Cross was demolished. The deeply hurt Christian community, led by Bombay Catholic Sabha, immediately lodged complaint against Mr Ughade at the police station and demanded the Municipal Commissioner to suspend him. The community has also approached the Bombay High Court for justice.

On 5 October in Gondia district, Maharashtra, Hindu fundamentalists created disturbance over a Christian prayer meeting scheduled from 6-8 October at Circus Ground, Ganesh Nagar demanding the venue to be either changed or the program cancelled. Rev. Dr. Mathew Kuruvilla was the chief speaker. Neeraj Masih, one of the organizers, reported that they approached the Superintendent of Police for protection which was granted to them during the program.

Odisha

On 3 February in village Khaliapali, Bargarh district, Odisha, members of the Bajrang Dal indulged in vandalizing a Christian cemetery belonging to the Church of North India (CNI). The Bajrang Dal members had carried the cadaver of a beggar who belonged to the Hindu faith and were adamant on performing his last rite in the cemetery. When Christians objected the Bajrang Dal members indulged in vandalism of the cemetery. Finally the police intervened and asked the Bajrang Dal members to take away the body and to perform his last rites according to the faith he belonged. At that the Bajrang Dal

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

members left but not before threatening the Christians of 'something more dangerous and severe coming their way'. According to further reports the area continued to be tense and about 40 Hindutva extremists tried to attack the local Christians on 9 February as well.

On 12 June in Jeypore sub division of Koraput district in Odisha, Bajrang Dal activists raised objectionable slogans against the Christian faith and community. A delegation from minority communities met the Jeypore Sub Collector on 15 June and submitted a memorandum protesting the hate campaign unleashed in the area by Hindu right-wing groups. Notably, Bajrang Dal had organized an organizational training camp at Borigungma from June 5 to June 12 and a rally was organized on the concluding day.

On 18 June in Abasingi village in Talamunda panchayat of Rayagada block in Gajapati district, Odisha, Pastor Samuel Karjee and fellow Christians were attacked by local villagers. While the Sunday worship service of the Saura Baptist Christian Mandli was in progress at a Christian believer's house, at around 11:30 am, about 80-90 villagers, including women, barged into the house and disrupted the prayer meeting. All the Christians, men and women, were manhandled and were warned that they were not allowed to hold Christian services in the village, and if they continued there will be severe consequences. Later in the evening, Christians went to the Rayagada Police station to submit a written complaint. They were told that since the Station In charge was not present their complaint cannot be filed. The 30 Christians along with Pastor Samuel were totally outnumbered by the 300 villagers who had also flocked to the station. Amid pressure the police prepared an agreement stating that Christians who did not belong to the Abasingi village would be barred from entering the village, and only the lone Christian family with their family members were allowed to assemble for Sunday services.

On 22 August, it was reported that a Christian

family from Borkoliguda, Malkangiri, Odisha were brutally beaten up by Hindu extremists and were given the ultimatum to leave the village. Padlam Kurani and his two sons were beaten up so badly that they had to be rushed to Lamtapur Christian Hospital.

Puducherry

On 21 May in Malagudi Pattu, Puducherry, Pastor Devan was reportedly opposed by local RSS radicals. The pastor had been trying to construct a church building. The radicals warned him that if he continued the work they would demolish the structure and ensure that the pastor is behind bars.

Punjab

On 22 March in Rupnagar, Punjab, according to media reports, a Christian prayer meeting was stopped by the police after Hindu right-wing groups complained against it. The meeting was organized at the Gandhi school but Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena and ABVP complained against it alleging conversions in the guise of praying for the sick people. The SHO Mahesh Saini reached the spot where the meeting was going on and stopped it.

On 13 April, in Mani Majra, a small city in the Union Territory of Chandigarh, Pastor Mukesh Kumar (29) was threatened by the Pradhan of Agrawal Sabha. Pastor Mukesh Kumar is ministering in Mani Majra area since 2008 and leads a church by the name of Tejaswi Church where 35-40 Christians gather regularly for worship service.

On 16 May in Taran Taran district, Punjab, anti-social elements captured a Church building which was constructed by Pastor L M Sahotra. The anti-social elements not only took over the building of the Church but reportedly also desecrated Bibles, broke furniture and demolished the cross. The pastor filed an FIR after much effort but no action was taken till report.

On 27 June 2017 in Tarn Taran, Amritsar, Punjab, police arrested four people for blaspheming the name of Christ. The local Gurudwara members called two Christians, a father and son, threatened them and reportedly cursed the name of Christ. The duo was accused of converting people to Christianity by offering money. The Gurudwara members recorded a video in which they cursed the name of Christ and uploaded it on social media. This provoked a tremendous fury among the Christian Community

On 15 July in Salem Tabri locality in Ludhiana,



DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

Punjab, Pastor Sultan Masih, 50, of the Temple of God Church was shot dead by two armed men from a close range. The pastor was standing outside his church late in the night and talking to someone on his mobile phone when the incident occurred. The pastor was hit by multiple bullets. He was rushed to the DMC Hospital where the doctors declared him dead on arrival.

On 6 August in Rasulpur village of Ladhawal area in Ludhiana, Punjab, a church building was reportedly attacked by some unknown miscreants. The parish priest Babu Karma Masih said in his complaint that he had gone to village Majitha on August 6 after locking the church. When he returned on August 8, he found windowpane of the church broken. The Ladhawal police registered a case under sections 295 (Injuring or defiling place of worship with intent to insult the religion of any class) and 34 (Acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) of IPC against the unidentified accused.

On 19 December in Karoli village in Pathankot tehsil of Gurudaspur district in Punjab, 75 years old Pastor K. K. Oommen from Brethren Church, was badly beaten up. The pastor along with Evangelist Mukesh Kumar had finished visiting a family and were waiting for their transportation to take them back home, when the attack took place. An unidentified person assaulted them and asked them to leave the area immediately. Following this the same person lifted up a thick branch of a tree and chased the Christians while continuing to beat them. The aged Pastor, who could not keep up with the pace, unfortunately fell down. Using this opportunity, the man continued to attack the pastor mercilessly, until the evangelist came to his rescue. Finally, the Christians managed to get a 3-wheeler to get away from the place. However, the man accompanied by a few more people was relentless. The mob chased down the two Christians on their bikes, stopped the 3-wheeler and beat them more. It was only after reaching Pathankot, that both were able to get medical attention. Pastor Oommen was grievously injured, especially on his eye. He has been ministering in the area for the last 50 years.

Rajasthan

On 13 February in Udaipur, Rajasthan, Christian leaders belonging to the Seva Bharat Mission were conducting Adult Literacy Training and Facilitation Program with around 35 staff members, when their program was disrupted by the police from the Sukher Police Station on the complaint of some Hindutva activists from the nearby area who accused the Christians of carrying 'some conversion activity' in the guise of the program. The police detained Mahendra Baria, Ramesh, Dinesh Kataria and Johnson for interrogation and took

them to the police station. Members belonging to the Bhartiya Janata Party surrounded the police station and pressurized the police to take action against the Christians. The Christians were then booked under Section 151 and 107 by the police. They were released on bail in the evening after the intervention of local Christian leaders.

On 5 April in village Dhadkha, Kushalgarh Tehsil, Banswara district, according to reports received, police took into custody Hakji Bhabhor after people complained against him of being involved in conversions and constructing a Church building without permission.

On 9 April in Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan, Hindu extremists disrupted the worship service of the Church of God and Pastor Saji Mathew was arrested and taken into police custody along with seven Christians. According to reports local villagers with the help of a Hindu Priest had complained to the local Sarpanch that Christians are involved in the conversions. After getting the letter signed by the Sarpanch the villagers gave it to the police officials as a complaint, following which the police arrested the Christians. Local Christian leaders approached the police for the release of pastor Mathew and all Christians were released late at night.

On 17 August in Hanumangarh district of Rajasthan, Pastor Harjot was beaten up while he was conducting a prayer meeting. About 50-60 people came and attacked the pastor and dispersed the meeting. He was left with an injury on the head and a fractured leg. The police arrested him and took him for medical treatment and an FIR was later lodged. A team of 15 Christian pastors rushed to the police station to provide help to Pastor Harjot. Around 8 people were arrested on the same day in connection with the incident.

On 20 October in Kishanpur village, Bhil tehsil, Bharatpur district, Rajasthan, angry villagers attacked Pastor Phul Singh's house late evening with iron rods and threw burning firecrackers at it. This happened as a reprisal after Singh had asked some boys to burst firecrackers maintaining distance from his house. A mob soon gathered blaming Singh to be a Christian and alleged that he carried out conversion activity. The matter flared up to an extent that the mob became physical. Some of Pastor's well-wishers locked him inside his own house to save him from the violent mob. Eventually, Singh along with his daughter had to escape from their house to seek protection in the local police station.

On December 19, in Pratapgarh, Rajasthan, Hindu right-wing activists stormed the venue of a 2-day Christmas celebration alleging forcible conversions. The 20 plus activists reportedly belonging to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, accompanied by the police, barged into the hall

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

where over 300 Christians were gathered and disrupted the entire meeting even though the Christians had obtained permission to hold the 2-day celebration. The Hindu activists went on stage, pulled wires, and destroyed Christian literature while the police watched.

Tamil Nadu

On 22 January in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, the Rehoboth Prayer House was forcefully shut down following a court order. Prior to this too, in November 2015 the Prayer House, which had about 100 members, had been shut down at the complaint of local RSS people. However, later Pastor Vijay Kumar had begun to conduct services on the roof of a shop that belongs to a Church member and 60–70 Church members would regularly gather there. Recently the local RSS leaders again started objecting and filed a complaint at the police station claiming that the Church gathering is causing 'noise pollution' and 'traffic jam'. As a result, the worship service was disrupted and brought to a halt by the local police on 22 January.

On 22 January in Kotagiri, district Nilgiri, Tamil Nadu, police and Hindu extremists trespassed into the home of a Christian family and disrupted their private prayers. Pastor Asir Jesudass, 52, from Gilgal Prayer House, informed EFI that he was praying in his house with his family including his three children on 22 January when three men from the Hindu Munani (local Hindu fundamentalists group) along with a policeman, identified as, Sub Inspector K. R. Rajan from Sholur Mattam Police Station barged into his house and demanded a written permission letter from the District Collector for conducting prayers in his house. Pastor Jesudass has been ministering in the area for the past 27 years. He was conducting worship services in a rented house previously but since 2013 he started to conduct prayers in his own house. But in this specific incident, Jesudass told EFI that no one from outside the family were present in their house. Since the day of the incident, extremists from the Hindu Munani group have been making frequent calls and threatening him to stop conducting prayers in his house.

On 6 February in Sholurmattam, the Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, a church received a notice from the Tamil Nadu government under Section 33 of the Tamil Nadu Building Rules 1997 with the subject - usage of building other than the purpose for which it was approved. It is an owned area used for church purposes, and the church has been functioning there for the last 10 years. The church does not have a banner installed on the outside, and no loudspeaker is used. Around 30 members participate in the Sunday worship service.

On 24 February in Theni, Tamil Nadu, a 3-day Christian meeting that was scheduled from 24 - 26 February at VKV Veluchami - a private marriage hall was opposed by local Hindu extremists. The Theni district pastors had organized this open-air meeting for a large audience and had obtained the necessary permission from the authorities as well as the consent of the local police to provide police-protection to the entire event. However, an influential Hindu leader approached the police and insisted that the meeting should not be allowed, claiming that the meeting will 'create law and order situation'. The police in-turn persuaded the owner of the marriage-hall to cancel the bookings of the Christians for the meeting.

On 3 March in Tiruvarur, Tamil Nadu, as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, a church was set on fire. An FIR has been lodged bearing FIR No. 104, filed by the pastor at Kodavasal Police Station.

On 12 March in Udumalpet, Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, according to reports received, pastor Giften David, his son, and a few other Christians, were beaten up by a mob of Hindutva activists. The pastor, along with his son, were visiting a local Christian for conducting a prayer meeting. As the worship began, Hindutva activists, on the pretext of higher sound volume emanating from worship service, barged into the house and argued, manhandled them and took three Christians to the local police station.

On 18th March in Pettavaithalai, Trichy district, Tamil Nadu, a mob of Hindutva activists attacked a Christian prayer meeting and physically abused Pastor Rajendran. The pastor had organised a meeting in which another pastor, Stephen, was scheduled to speak. The meeting began with a film show. Just when the film was to an end, a group of Hindu fanatics came and asked him to stop. Even though the pastor stopped, an activist named Suresh kicked him and attempted to damage the amplifier and projector. He then broke the table and chair, a speaker, and then threw a chair on the film screen. When the police arrived they took Pastor Rajendran and Pastor John Gabriel to the police station. The Hindutva activists kept insisting that a case be registered against Pastor Rajendran, but the inspector refused to comply.

On 19 March in Erode, Tamil Nadu, as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, a group of Hindutva activists threatened and forcefully stopped a Christian family from distributing Gospel tracts and Bibles later on snatching the literature away.

On 26 March in Villiyannallur village in Mayiladuthurai taluk of Nagapattinam district in Tamil Nadu, members of the Christian community were attacked by a mob after they denied to contribute towards a Hindu

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

festival called Masi Maham. Christians have not been contributing towards the festival for over 40 years but this time they were threatened by a group of Hindu men belonging to extremist groups. After the Christians refused, the mob started to beat them, torched a hut and threatened to kill Christians. Both parties lodged police complaints, however Christians allege that the police and even the local panchayat is biased. Many Christians have fled the area due to the threats.

On 26 March in Kotagiri taluk of Nilgiri district in Tamil Nadu, the Sunday service of Shining Jesus Church was disrupted by local Hindutva fundamentalists. Pastor Krishnan who conducts church services in a rented place for past 20 years was conducting the service, when a group of Hindu Munani members came along with the police and disturbed the service. The police asked them to show proof of permission to run the church and later took him to the Kotagiri police station for further interrogation.

On 26 March in South Coovam Road, Pudupet, Chennai, Pastor Johnson Ponnambalam faced opposition at the hands of Hindutva activists who complained against him and the Church alleging sound pollution during worship services. The pastor leads the Immanuel Apostle Church which was established in 1995. The church is involved in many social activities and has been a blessing to the neighbourhood. The pastor feels threatened and worried.

On 29 March in Puliampatti of Sathyamangalam taluk in Erode district, Tamil Nadu, some people trespassed into the Assembly of God Church and were caught drinking alcohol by the Pastor and other Christians. On getting caught, the drunkards, used abusive language against Pastor Mathew and Christians present and threatened them. The Christians filed a complaint at the local police station the next day.

On 30 March in Tamil Nadu Pastor Mohan was arrested by the police because he criticized yoga as reported by AsiaNews. Rev Mohan was arrested because of one of his sermons "in which he spoke against the use of Hindu terminology in the practice of yoga." However, "the clergyman has praised the ancient Indian practice for its beneficial effects on mental and physical health".

On 1 April in Palani village of Keeranur Taluk of Dindigul district in Tamil Nadu, Pastor Gunasekharan was called by the police officials at Palani police station and told not to conduct any worship services till he obtains permission for doing so from district administrative authorities. Pastor Gunasekharan has been working with Maranatha Church for the last 24 years.

On 9 April in Keeranur Post, Palani Taluka,

district Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, the revenue inspector and village administrative officers disrupted private prayers at the house of Pastor Gunasekaran. The officers took video clips and pictures of the people praying in the house and told the people to stop the prayers. They also told the Christians to take permission from the District Collector before praying in the house. Pastor Gunasekaran's extended family (about 20 people) has gathered every Sunday for the last 24 years in his house for private prayers. The prayers are not attended by public and are a family affair. No loudspeaker system is used either during these prayers. In spite of telling the authorities this, they did not relent and forced pastor Gunasekaran to sign on a letter that they had prepared and asked him to report at the Tehsildar's office on the following day.

On 14 April in Sogandi village in Sriperumbudur tehsil of Kancheepuram district in Tamil Nadu, police prevented hundreds of Dalit Christians from climbing a hill to make the Way of the Cross for the Good Friday procession. The episode took place in Thirukazhukundram. Christian Sogandi Dalits had received permission to celebrate on the slopes of the mountain, but then the situation got worse when they took up the crosses and tried to climb the hill. Sogandi Christians have a church in the village and claim to have a religious structure on top of the mountain for more than 10 years. Since it was Good Friday the Christians were trying to climb the hill with the crosses. It was at this time that the police along with the RSS radicals confronted the Christians and things turned violent. The altar and the communion table was desecrated, priests, nuns, women and children were forcefully pulled away from the hill. Subsequently Christian leaders sat in protest and demanded that the action of the police and the radicals be probed.

On 18 April in Coimbatore city of Tamil Nadu, two Christian pastors were physically assaulted and injured. The incident took place when Christian leaders had gathered at the office of the District Superintendent of Police to complain about issues of persecution being faced by the church members of Indian Pentecostal Assembly. While there, Hindu radicals caught hold of two pastors, David Raj and Isaac, and asked them why they had approached the police. They threatened and beat the Pastors badly, grievously injuring them. The pastors were later admitted to the Coimbatore Government Hospital. An FIR was later filed against the attackers.

On 20 April in village Manur village under Tiruppur taluka in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, Pastor Ezekiah was stopped by the police from conducting worship services. Earlier, the pastor had opposed the local Hindu community from organizing programs right in front of the church building. In retaliation, a large group of

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE



villagers complained against the Church at the police station. Hence, the police instructed the pastor to get permission for conducting church services from the district collector in order to avoid law and order issue and to not conduct any Church worship services inside the Church till such permission is obtained.

On 30 April in Vijayapuram village in Salem district of Tamil Nadu, a Christian prayer meeting was attacked by Hindu radicals reportedly belonging to the RSS. Around twelve Christians had gathered for a prayer meeting on the occasion of a birthday celebration of one of the Christian's daughter, at whose house they were all present. Around 5:30 PM, 9 RSS activists and 3 villagers came and beat up the Christians. Pastor Stalin Kumar and his son were badly thrashed. The pastor sustained grievous injuries on his shoulder. The Christians were taken to a nearby government hospital at Attur. Later that night at about 10:30 pm and the next day at 7:00 pm police sub-inspector Dhanlakshmi from Gangavalli police station, took the statements. However, no FIR was filed by the police, instead they tried to settle the matter through a compromise between both the parties whereas, the Christians sought to file a complaint and pursue this matter. The police continued to act under the influence and pressure from local political leaders and avoided taking any action against the attackers.

On 3 May in Attipatu village, Chidambaram, Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu, a church building was burnt down by Hindutva activists. Pastor John Muller has been ministering in the village for the past 4 years and conducts services at the Daivasabha Church. The incident took place at night, when the pastor and his wife were away for some church related works at another place. Upon return, they saw the church in ashes. In earlier instances, the pastor had received threats regarding the church programs and was fearful that such an incident might transpire soon. The pastor later filed an FIR and the case was registered at the Kumarachi Police station.

On 3 May in Thennampalayam, Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, a group of Hindutva activists beat

Christians inside a church. The Miracle Life Assembly of God Church was conducting a Vacation Bible School (VBS) from May 1 - 3. On 3 May, a group of Hindutva activists barged in the church and started beating the Christian who had brought their children for the VBS program. The attackers kept on beating the Christians even in front of the police officers who were busy capturing videos of the happenings. The attackers demanded that they be shown the letter of permission for conducting such an event and kept sloganeering that India is a Hindu nation and that they won't allow others to live here. They abused the Christians with foul language, accused them of engaging in conversion activities and started pelting stones at the church building.

On 7 May in Thovalai village, Thovalai taluk of Kanyakumari district in Tamil Nadu, Veera Lexmi, a Christian woman, mysteriously vanished for around 10 days. Later, it came to be known that she had been raped and murdered. While on her way back from a prayer meeting, some unknown person had called her to come to their house for prayer. She was deceived and was taken to a deserted place where she was raped and murdered by smashing her skull with a stone.

On 7 May in Thennampalayam, Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, Hindutva activists disrupted the Sunday worship service of the Miracle Life Assembly of God Church. According to reports, as soon as the worship started, a photographer came to the church and started taking photos and making videos. Moments later, a group of attackers reached the spot and started to use abusive language against the Christians and stopped the service. Police arrived at the spot and somehow the service resumed. Later, an FIR was lodged. The SP promised the Christians that action will be taken against the attackers but so far, no arrests have been made.

On 14 May in Rail Nagar in Kanchipuram district of Tamil Nadu, Pastor Yesu Padam was opposed by Hindu fundamentalists while conducting a Christian program. The pastor had arranged a five-day Vacation Bible School for children. On its last day, around 6:30 pm, Hindu

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

fundamentalists barged in to the church and falsely accused him of carrying out forceful conversions. Later the pastor was taken to the local police station. Upon inquiry on the issue, the police let the pastor off without any complaint against him. However, they warned him saying that he needs to obtain permission from authorities while conducting such programs. The pastor is still getting threats of dire consequences if he does not stop prayer meetings. He has been ministering in the area for the last seven years as the pastor of the New Life Church.

On 24 May in Kariyapattinam, Nagapattinam district in Tamil Nadu, Pastor Prabhu was arrested while conducting a Christian prayer meeting. The pastor was conducting an evening prayer service in a small shed at his residence when his neighbours complained about the Christians to the police, who arrested the pastor and took him to the Kariyapattinam police station. This is the second incident with the pastor.

On 2 June under Bhavanisagar police station in Erode district of Tamil Nadu, Pastor Jebasing and his church believers were stopped from attending a prayer meeting. Inspector Ms T. Kalaiyarasi from Bhavanisagar police station, along with 15 police personnel and some Hindutva activists came to the village where the pastor's house church is built. They threatened the church members from entering the church and ordered them to return to their homes. A day earlier the same Inspector had compelled the pastor to sign an undertaking that henceforth he would not conduct the Sunday mass until he get a written permission from the District Collector. In order to show solidarity when some local Christian leaders approached the Bhavanisagar police station, the female inspector informed them that she was being pressurized by a Hindu group to act against the Christians. Pastor Jebasing has been ministering in the area for the past four years. Around 30-40 Christians gather regularly for the prayer meetings.

On 4 June in Solamur village of Katpadi taluk in Vellore district of Tamil Nadu, the construction work of a church compound wall was stopped by upper caste Hindu community. The church is built with tin sheets and mud walls and belongs to the Church of South India. Christians had planned to renovate the church with the village council's permission. However, upper caste community members along with Hindu right-wing activists started obstructing the construction work. Earlier in the month of April during the Lent season (where Christians observe 40 days of fasting) every Friday and Sunday whenever the church service was conducted, the upper caste community members would pelt stones at the church causing disruption to the programs. In response, on 7 April, Christians had filed a complaint and the police had arrested one of the accused. But recently, on 4 June at 9:30 am when the Christians were conducting Sunday worship

service, three persons broke down the church compound wall, making a way for lorry to enter in church land. When the Christians questioned this, the radicals responded that the Christians had no rights to conduct church in the village. The church members have the required legal documents to prove their ownership and the RDO had issued a notice stating that the property belonged to the CSI, and the construction is legally possible. However, the Christians have been ordered to get a no objection certificate from the Collector

On 15 June in Malingapuram Village of Podi Taluk of Theni district, Tamil Nadu, Pastor Edward pastoring a Seventh Day Adventist Church approached the Superintendent of Police in order to get permission to inaugurate a community hall for the Christians to gather. The pastor and the Christians had been facing opposition from local villagers with warnings that they cannot hold any Christian programs. The Christian community had decided to inaugurate the hall on 18 June but were being verbally abused and threatened by local anti-Christian elements. The SP heard their plea and informed them that they were free to hold programs at the community hall. After returning from the SP's office the Christians continued to have visitors from the police who approached them to inquire further about the Christian activities. Amid the threats and inquiries, the Christians were able to inaugurate the prayer hall in an inconspicuous inauguration program on 18 June.

On 20 June in Thirupullani village in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu, Christians were arrested by the police. Around 13 Christians were distributing Bible tracts when Hindutva activists accused Christians of carrying out religious conversions and took them to the police station for an inquiry. Pastor Arul along with 2-5 missionary were arrested and kept in the lock up until late evening. Upon intervention from other Christian community leaders the police released them at around 8.15 pm without filing any charges against them.

On 2 July in Sathyamangalam taluka, Erode district, Tamil Nadu, local police Inspector Kalaiyarasi along with 15 other police personnel and accompanied by Hindutva activists prevented people from attending worship services at the congregation led by Pastor Jebasing. The police inspector had made Jebasing sign a document a day before stating that he would not conduct Sunday worship services, which he has been holding for some years now. His congregation has 30-40 members along with his family and friends. On the day of the incident, the police and the Hindutva activists did not allow Jebasing's family members and friends to enter the village to attend the worship service and asked them to return to their respective homes.

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

On 19 July, in Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu, around four Hindutva activists brutally attacked a Pastor using wooden sticks as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>. The Hindutva activists were drunk when they came to the pastor's house and verbally abused him using vulgar language. When the pastor came out of his house, he was beaten up mercilessly with wooden sticks. When his wife and son came to rescue him, they too were beaten up and were injured. The three Christians had to be hospitalized as a result of the attack.

On 26 July in Kanchipuram district of Tamil Nadu, five Christians of the St. Therese of Child Jesus Mission were beaten up by anti-social elements, and were rushed to the hospital.

On August 17, in Kaveripakkam, Vellore District, Tamil Nadu, according to reports, a group of fundamentalists surrounded a Christian team from Young Men Evangelical Fellowship, harassed them and took them to the police station. The Christian team was led by Mr. Paranthaman and had 12 members. They were later released by the police.

On 3 September in Coimbatore city of Tamil Nadu, police officials, accompanied by some Hindutva extremists, confronted Pastor Charles during a church service. The Christians gather at the Rhema Church of Transformation, which is located in Coimbatore. The police ordered the pastor to get permission from the district collector to conduct the services. He was warned that if he did not comply, the pastor and the church member may have to face legal proceedings against them.

On 10 September in Tiruppur district of Tamil Nadu, Pastor V.J. Daniel who serves as a pastor of Indian Pentecostal Assembly faced severe opposition. On the morning of 10th, around 80-100 people gathered outside the church and started verbally abusing the church members and the pastor. Amidst the mayhem, the pastor called the police. The police was quick to arrive and disperse the unruly crowd away. The pastor was asked to visit the police station on the next day regarding the incident.

On 17 September, in Uthamapalayam taluk, Theni district, Tamil Nadu police officials disrupted an ongoing worship service at the Indian Pentecostal Church led by Pastor Peter. The pastor conducts Sunday prayer meetings at his house on a weekly basis. Reportedly, some Hindutva activists had filed a complaint against the pastor and the Christians who gathered at his house. Police has directed them to stop conducting the services henceforth.

On 23 October in Poompuhar village,

Nagapattinam district, Tamil Nadu, Santhosh and Sathish, two Christians were forced to abandon their homes along with their wives and children owing to their Christian faith. The village panchayat (council) warned them to never return to their homes and planned to auction their household belongings. The two families had no place to find shelter. The police on 27 October intervened and was successful in rehabilitating one family back to their own home, whereas Sathish and his family continue to live with his wife's parents in some other village. They continue to face pressure and opposition from the villagers.

On 4 November in Satyamangalam taluk of Erode district, Tamil Nadu, Pastor K. S. Jaisujanth of India Every Home Crusade was called at the Bangalaputhur police station based on a complaint filed by some RSS activists against him. The police cross questioned him for about an hour and ordered him to stop all Christian prayer services that he has been conducting in the area. The pastor feels that his freedom to profess and propagate his religious beliefs is being taken away.

On 4 November in Morappur village of Harur tehsil, Dharmapuri district, Tamil Nadu, police officials cross questioned Pastor Joseph Prabahakar of the Assembly of God Church. They took pictures of the Prayer Hall where the pastor conducts prayer services and in a threatening manner ordered him to visit the local police station to get permission to hold the prayer services. Such cases of police inquiry into Christian services and use of prayer halls are on the rise in Tamil Nadu.

On 26 November in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, police personnel from the Saibaba Kovil police station disrupted a prayer meeting organised by the King Tabernacle and told the Christians to stop conducting prayer meetings without the collectors permission. The Christians have been meeting in the hall for almost three years. When Christians told the police that they have been conducting prayer services without troubling anyone, the police told them that there was a complaint registered against the Christians by certain Hindu groups hence the police are forced to take action.

On 26 November in Palladam, Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, 10 Hindu extremists disrupted Church worship services at the India Gospel of Jesus Church and accused the Christians of carrying out religious conversions. They threatened Christians of grave consequences if they ever conducted worship again. The next day the Christians were called at the Palladam police station by Inspector Subratnam who stated that he has received complaint against the Church and that the worship services should be stopped until permission from Collector is obtained. He also said that unless the permission is taken and if the Christians are attacked, he will not be willing to help the

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

Christians. The Church has been present in the area for the last 8 years and have over 100 members.

On 3 December in Thoppampatti village of Palani Taluk in Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu, Pastor Seth of Paraloga Thiravu Kol Prayer House was beaten up by around 20 Hindu extremists. The mob barged into the church and physically and verbally assaulted the pastor and the Christians. They were denied all help by the District Superintendent of Police when they pleaded for justice.

On 3 December in Thoppampatti village of Palani Taluk in Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu, Pastor Solomon Raja was physically assaulted by about 50 Hindutva radicals who entered the church and hurled abuses at the Christian faith and the Christians present there. The Christians approached the local police authorities for help, but were denied all assistance.

On 4 December in Navinipatti village of Melur Taluk in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu, Pastor Prabhu Das was summoned by the Tehsildar (revenue officer), without prior information, to a meeting in the village and forced to sign an undertaking that he will not conduct regular Christian prayer meetings without the District Collector's permission. Prabhu Das has been facing opposition since 26 November when a few Hindutva radicals had disrupted his church during the Sunday prayers and distributed pamphlets related to re-conversions.

On 9 December in Kottai Pirivu of Mathampalayam area, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, according to media reports, a group of men, suspected to be supporters of various Hindu outfits, barged into the prayer hall and went on a rampage. "BJP workers threw chairs asking the group to stop the programme when they were distributing help to local people," an unidentified police officer told NDTV. At least three people were injured in the attack. The Tamil Nadu Police later arrested Bharatiya Janata Party leader Nandkumar and three others. The tahsildar had ordered the prayer hall to be closed after the local BJP unit objected to it. A case has been registered against the pastor also. Earlier, the Coimbatore district administration had asked about 30 prayer halls to be shut down after the BJP and other Hindu outfits complained. However, the Madras High Court had stayed the order in five cases.

On 10 December in Negamam locality in Pollachi Taluk of Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, Pastor Jacob Raj of Samadhan Bible AG Church was questioned by two policemen from the local police station regarding his church services. They said that they had received complaints about the prayer meetings and warned him that the hall he had constructed cannot be used for worship services without prior permission from the Deputy

Superintendent of Police. The pastor who has been conducting the prayer meetings for the last 22 years now feels insecure after the confrontation with the police.

On 10 December in Anamalai Police Station of Anaimalai village in Pollachi Tehsil of Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, twenty pastors were called by Police Inspector Subramaniam who ordered the pastors to stop conducting prayer meetings at their house Churches if they did not have prior permission from the District Collector. Pastor Babu who was one among the ones called says, "We have been conducting these prayer fellowships in our house for our friends and families for years."

On 18 December in Ganapathipalayam Panchayat in the Tirupur district a newly-built church was demolished as it was allegedly constructed without permission. However, the Christians claimed that they had obtained permission from the local body. Further, they alleged that the demolition was ordered mainly because of 'pressure' from a Hindu outfit. District administration authorities said the permission given by the local panchayat is invalid and hence it was demolished. The plan to provide an alternative land is now under consideration.

On 24 December from Thazudhalai village, in Vandavasi taluka of Tiruvannamalai district of Tamil Nadu, Pastor A.C. John Caleb of Faith Apostle Church reported that for the last few weeks they have been trying to get permission and police protection from district authorities to conduct a Christmas program which is to go on for 7 days on an alternate day basis from Dec 25th, 2017 but no action is being taken on their application despite repeated reminders, visits and phone calls to the SDM, DSP and other authorities. Christians alleged that a deliberate attempt was made to delay or not to approve the application.

On 26 December in Kottai Pirivu of Mathampalayam area of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, Pastor Vinoth Kumar reported that weeks have passed after the incident of 9 December and yet no solutions seem to emerge. FIRs have been filed for and against Christians. The place where the prayer meeting was being conducted belongs to a fellow Christian who had rented the place on a lease agreement to the Christian leaders for a registered trust activity which is operating for a year now. From 9 December the house has been locked till today and when the owner of housed visited the local police station to inquire as to when they can occupy the house, he was informed by Inspector Vetrivel that the RDO has ordered to lock the house and deploy four police personnel 24 hours until further orders. When the owner of the house approached the RDO Mr Chinnaswamy, he verbally validated police's report of house being locked. However, no written order to that effect has been handed over.

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

On 27 December in Chennimalai, Erode, Tamil Nadu, Hindu extremists stopped a Church worship service led by Pastor Sudhakar and threatened his life. Around 18 extremists disrupted the prayer service at the International Miracle Fellowship church and threatened the pastor with dire consequences if he continued to lead prayer services. According to the pastor, later on, he was summoned by the Revenue Inspector Mr. Periyasamy who also threatened the pastor. The International Miracle Fellowship church has been registered in the Panchayat as Christian community building since 1985.

On 31 December in Othakadai town, Tanjore district, Tamil Nadu, Christian worship was disrupted and stopped by the police on the complaint of Hindu groups. The RDO and Tehsildar, allegedly prompted by Hindutva extremists, had made a complaint to local police station stating that forceful religious conversions are happening at the Church. Hence the police came, stopped the worship and took Pastor M S John to the police station. It was also reported that the Pastor was beaten up by the police inspector as well.

Telangana

On 8 January in Hyderabad, Telangana, an unidentified man tore the flex board of the Eternal Life Worship Hall, after the Church worship service got over. The Church holds its worship services in a rented accommodation in the Saroor Nagar Mandal, Hyderabad, Telangana for the past 3 years and has about 200 members attending regular Sunday worship services. The flex board was placed outside the Church as a sign to give directions to the newcomers to locate the Church. The miscreant also threatened the children of the Church members who were around and warned them to close the Church and stop worship services. He warned that if Christians continue to conduct church service there, they would have to face dire consequences.

On 21 January in Hyderabad, Telangana, Hindutva extremists harassed and interrogated Dr. K. A. Swami, 47, as he was distributing free New Testaments. The extremists shot four video clips of the interrogation and released them on social media. The viral videos are a proof of the harassment and trauma that Swami faced. He was then taken to a police station and made to sit there for the entire day. The day long questioning that Dr. Swami faced resulted in a massive brain hemorrhage and a paralytic stroke while he was being escorted to his house from the police station. The right side of his body suffered paralysis and he lost his speech and eyesight.

On 29 January in Sasila Guda, Adarsh Nagar,

Ranga Reddy district, Telangana, according to reports received, Hindu fundamentalists disrupted a Church service at the Olive Grace Church. The Church has been in the locality for over 20 years and has about 120 members, however for the last two months, due to reported pressure of Hindu groups, the police and neighbours have been putting pressure on the Church to close down Sunday worship services alleging noise pollution. Even though police personnel have come and inspected the services twice and have cleared the Church of the charge, still the fundamentalist disputed the service on 29 January and since that time the Church has not been able to conduct any worship.

On 10 February in LB Nagar, Hyderabad, T e l a n g a n a , a s r e p o r t e d b y <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, the construction work of a church was opposed by the locals and Hindutva activists claiming that the church did not have permissions from local municipal corporations.

On 15 March in Shamirpet village of Medchal District, Telangana, Pastor P Raju was threatened by the village council at the behest of the local RSS group to stop all Christian activities. He has been conducting prayer meetings at his house under the name Ubeho Calvary Pratayakshya for the past seven year in that village with a regular membership of around 40 people. Adjacent to pastor's house stays one Mr Kishore Yadav who happens to be a local president of RSS as well as the head of Village Council (Sarpanch). On 15 March morning while at his home the pastor received a call from Mr Yadav informing that he needs to participate in the village council meeting. When the pastor reached there, he noticed around 200 youth activists of RSS present there along with other village council members including Mr. Yadav. During the meeting he was verbally abused with demands to stop all church activities. He was told that since Jesus is a foreign God, and particularly not of the village and hence Christian activities need to cease with immediate effect, otherwise there would be dire consequences.

On 3 April in Madina area, Charminar Zone old city in Hyderabad, Telangana, a Christian worship service of the Hebron Church was affected due to the police intervention. Mr. Israel and few other Christians gather every week in a house for prayer. While the prayer was in progress, a neighbour went to the police station and filed a complaint against them. The officials called Israel and enquired about his activities.

On 25 April in Timapur village, Medchal District, Telangana, a Christian prayer meeting was disrupted by Hindu radicals belonging to the RSS. Christians in village had organized a prayer meeting and had planned to watch a short Christian movie as well. While the prayer was going

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE



on, an assistant of the Sarpanch (Village Council Head) along with RSS activists, stormed into the meeting. They disrupted the meeting and made verbal threats saying that Christians cannot conduct prayer meeting in the village and will not be allowed to do so again. No complaint was filed at the police station.

On 21 May in village Godamakunt, Keesara, Hyderabad, Telangana, an angry crowd of about 100 people devastated and vandalized the church of Our Lady of Fatima. The assailants, led by the village leader, destroyed the crucifix and broke the statue of the Virgin. The incident occurred at around 9.30am. The religious building had been blessed and inaugurated just a week ago. A case was recorded against 10 aggressors based on sections of the Indian Penal Code 448 (Domestic Violation), 427 (damage), 323 (voluntary injuries), 506 (criminal intimidation), 153 (provocation with the criminal code intent on causing an uprising).

On 2 July in Dharpally area of Nizamabad district of Telangana, 70 – 8- villagers led by the village Sarpanch (Headman) trespassed into and disrupted worship at the house Church pastored by Pastor M B Paul. Pastor Paul has been leading the Church in the area since last eight years. The incident took place when the Sunday worship was going on. At about 11 am the mob led by the Sarpanch came to the house Church and forced the Christians to stop the worship service. The mob also burnt Bibles as well as the equipment and music systems etc. kept in the Church. Then they proceeded to mark each of the Christians with a 'Bottu' or 'Tilaka' on their foreheads and then left the church. The entire violent episode went on for about two hours. The Christians in the area gathered together and approached the Dharapally police station and filed a complaint. The police promised that action will be taken in two days. When nothing happened the Christians decided to seek help from the Commissioner of Police, who in turn directed them to the Additional Commissioner of Police. The Additional CP wasn't any eager to help and rebuked the Christians for conducting Christian services. Amidst the threats and the inaction of the police, Pastor Paul decided to stop all Christian services in the village.

On 24 August in Shamirpet Mandal in Medchal District of Telangana, a church inauguration ceremony was disrupted by Hindu radicals. Pastor Samuel of Bethsaida Ministry had recently constructed a prayer hall for his fellowship which comprises of around 70 members. On 24 August the church hall was to be inaugurated. During the program around 25 people barged in to the venue and started abusing and threatening the pastor and the Christian believers not to carry out any religious activity in the prayer hall. The police soon arrived and calmed the verbal scuffle that had ensued.

On the evening of 3 September in Jaishankar district, Telangana, fire crackers were hurled inside the Zion City Church. The miscreants belonged to a religious group that had taken out a religious procession and were passing by the church. Pastor Rony and the church members, alarmed at the action, made a video recording of the incident. Later they lodged a complaint at the nearby Pasra police station. The officials promised action. However the miscreants confronted the pastor later and threatened him of dire consequences if he continued to resort to police help.

On 17 September in B G Kere village of Molakalmuru taluk in Chitradurga district of Karnataka, the Shalom Assembly of God which is led by Pastor Vaddar Nagaraj was attacked by extremists. The pastor used to conduct Christian worship services in a rented place for 15 years. On the night of 17 September, a few Hindu extremists barged into the place of worship and burnt religious books, instruments, and other equipment in the Church. An FIR has been filed at the local police station.

On 26 November in Ghatkesar suburb of Ghatkesar mandal in Medchal district of Telangana, Pastor Keshav Kumar of Philadelphia Church was threatened by the police, at the behest of Hindutva groups, to stop the construction of a new church building. The Church has been working in the area since 1988 and had a small building which was now being enlarged after obtaining due permissions.

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

On 10 December in Singareni Colony in Champapet of Hyderabad district in Telangana, local Hindu radicals threatened Pastor E. Srinivas John and Pastor Motilal to stop gathering at the Christian prayer house in the colony. Around 30 people of this slum area gather every Sunday for regular Christian prayer meetings. For the past one month the pastors and Christians have been facing threats and abuses from the local Hindu radicals. When they approached the local police, Sub Inspector Rajender Naik denied any help and asked them to get permission to assemble and worship from local administrative authorities.

Uttar Pradesh

On 28 January in Ganjanpura village, Pinahat block of Agra district, Uttar Pradesh, police stopped a Christian convention and arrested two evangelists Vijay Singh and Roop Singh. According to report published by Jagaran, a local newspaper, Chandrashekhar Chauhan, district coordinator of the Bajrang Dal (Hindu group), Daya Shankar Parihar, and Pawan Parihar reported to the office of the District Superintendent of Police (DSP) that "conversion" is taking place at the convention. The DSP Devendra Singh along with police staff reached the location and arrested the two evangelists on the basis of 'disrupting peace'. Speaking to the media later, the DSP said, "no proof of forceful conversion was found." In spite of this statement, the evangelists were sent to jail and later released on bail.

On 22 February in Tiwaripur village, Chowbepur Thana, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, unidentified people looted the Vishwa Vani Prathana Bhawan Church near midnight. Pastor Kamlesh Kumar, 30, reported that several items from inside the Church went missing after the theft such as the consecrated vessels used for Holy Communion, the sound systems, fan, the donation box, carpet, solar light battery, chairs etc. Kumar informed that there was a collection of about six thousand rupees in the donation box, which was collected during the Christmas season, and the same went missing along with the rest of the money. The Church was built in the year 2013 and has a congregation of about 100 members. Kumar, who is ministering in the village since 2011 resides in Munari Bazar - which is around 2 kilometers from the Church, along with his wife and three children. Kumar registered a complaint at the Chowbepur Police Station on 23 February.

On 12 March in Hetimpur village of Kushinagar district of Uttar Pradesh, the Sunday worship service of Himalaya Evangelical Mission Church was stopped by 3 police officials, who came from Kushinagar Police station after receiving complain from the members of Hindu

extremists group "Hindu Vahini" who falsely alleged that conversion is taking place in the Church. The police officials reached at the Church at 9am when Pastor Dilip Kumar Paul was about to start the worship service. The police officers were insisting that the Pastor show the permission letter from the current District Magistrate of Kushinagar in order to prove whether he was allowed to conduct Christian worship services. When the pastor showed them the approval letter received from the previous DM, they denied accepting that. They then took him to the Kushinagar police station. The members of the Hindu Vahini group were already present there. They started demanding strict action against the pastor. The police in charge also asked the Pastor to get the permission letter and then start the Church activities. The pastor was then allowed to let go from the police station. Since then the Church services are stopped completely.

On 12 March in Kasia town of Kushinagar district of Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Mohan Lal was asked to stop the Christian services by the local police. He had been receiving threats from the local police and members of the Hindu Yuva Vahini, for many days. The pastor conducts the Sunday Worship service in a rented accommodation for the last two years. Around 300 members regularly attend the services. The pastor reports that this is his seventh rented accommodation because threats from Hindutva group had compelled his previous landlords to make him vacate the place.

On 12 March in Sahtah Village, Hazipur town of Vaishali district in Uttar Pradesh, as per reports from Pastor Arvind Kumar of Deeper Life Bible Church, nearly 60-70 extremists came inside his house Church premises, started taking video of the people and threatening them not to come for the services ever again. The incident took place at about 10:30 am as the Sunday worship service was going on. As they left the extremists took the sound system along with them. Pastor Arvind has been conducting Church services for the past nine years at his residence. After the incident the pastor went to the Mukhiya (head of the village) to inform him about the incident, but there was no positive response from him. The Mukhiya instead said that he will call a meeting of both parties on 14 March and pass a decision that no church services should be conducted in that place again. If the pastor didn't oblige he would have to leave the village. Two days later, on 14 March he approached the Superintendent of Police (SP) and the District Collector of Hazipur, but to no avail. While he was away a mob of fanatics along with local media gathered around pastor's house and tried to breakdown the main gate and the boundary wall around his house. They kept shouting, "We won't let him live here." Fearing for their lives, the pastor and his family vacated their house. On 17 March the local police station asked him to appear at the local police station. On alleged instructions of the SP the

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

Police Station-in-charge took him to the BDO (Block Development Officer). At the BDO's office Hindu extremists were waiting for him. In this hostile environment the BDO asked the pastor to sign an undertaking stating that he will stop all Christian activities, and in case he didn't oblige he would be ready for any consequences. Threatened and fearful the pastor and family have now left the village.

On 13 March in Puran Patti village of Varanasi district in Uttar Pradesh, Ms. Sarita Devi (28), wife of Pastor Ramesh Kumar (33) was attacked by her neighbours while she was doing household works and her husband was not present at home. Two neighbours Mr. Sanjay Vishwakarma and Ms. Bharati Vishwakarma attacked the Pastor's wife fracturing her left hand. The pastor refused to file an FIR fearing that his house owner would ask him to vacate the house. Pastor Ramesh Kumar is a pastor with Vishwa Vani Church for the last 7 years. Around 100-150 members attend the Sunday worship service.

On 19 March 2017, in Krishna Nagar Colony of Hardoi town, Pastor Manoj Kumar (30) was threatened by two members of the RSS in the presence of two local media person. The RSS members told him that they will not allow him to conduct worship services from 26 March 2017 onwards and if he did not stop there will be dire consequences for him.

On 26 March in Lakhimpur, Kheri, Uttar Pradesh, as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, around 50 Hindutva activists accompanied by the police, disrupted the Sunday worship service as they barged in the Church. The pastor and one other Christian were arrested by the police and taken to the local police station from where they were later released.

On 29 March in Shamshabad, Agra, Uttar Pradesh, 4 Christians including a pastor were attacked and beaten up by a large group of Hindutva activists. The incident took place around 1 pm, when Pastor Mahesh Chand of Life Worship Centre Agra was leading a prayer meeting at a private household who had invited him to pray for them. Suddenly the Hindutva group trespassed into the home, shouted anti-Christian slogans, abused the Christians and the Christian faith and beat them up. They took the Christians to the local police station and filed a complaint against them.

On 29 March in Ghosi, Mau District, Uttar Pradesh, Hindutva activists accompanied by villagers disrupted a Christian prayer meeting and severely beat up the Christians present including Pastor Harbans Ram. The police intervened and took into custody the Pastor and one other Christian. Since the Christians were injured they

were admitted in the hospital. They were later released on bail the following day after Christian leaders intervened.

On 30 March in Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh, according to reports received, Hindutva activists beat up Pastor Paulraj. The pastor was later arrested by the police and taken into custody. He was later released.



On 2 April in Biswan village, Muzaffarnagar district, Uttar Pradesh, police arrested an evangelist, Subhash Singh on charges of conversion after a group of Hindu activists filed a complaint against him. The evangelist was accused by one Rajendra Prasad from Biswan who accused Subhash of forced conversion and had forcibly detained him till the police arrived. Subhash denies the charges.

On 7 April in Maharajganj church in Maharajganj district of Uttar Pradesh, police accompanied by member of the Hindu extremist group, Hindu Yuva Vahini, stormed the 100 year old historical Catholic Church, stopped the worship and questioned the faithful present to establish charges of conversions against the Priest. Around 150 Christians including 9 people from USA were detained and questioned by the police and were harassed by the members of the Yuva Vahini, who made allegations of conversions. The SHO of Kothibhar Police station, Anand Kumar Gupta, informed media that police questioned every individual about the conversion to check if there was any such activity being carried out at the time, but everyone refused.

On 9 April in village Jahanpur, Post Dullahpur, district Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh a local mob beat up Pastor Krishna Paul and handed him over to the police. Pastor Krishna Paul is serving with the Believer's Church in the area and belongs to Kolkata. The mob responsible for beating him is thought to be the local liquor mafia, who held him responsible for the on-going agitation by local women against liquor shops in the area. He was released after local Christian leaders intervened in the situation and spoke to the police.

On 12 April in Jaunpur district of Uttar Pradesh, Hindu right wing members filed a complaint at the SDM office against Pastors Ashok Rajbhar and Rajendra Chouhan. Pastor Ashok Rajbhar works in Saraiya village of Mariahu tehsil in Jaunpur district and Pastor Rajendra Chouhan holds church services in Kuddupur village in Jaunpur tehsil of Jaunpur district. Both the pastors had been receiving threats from local Hindu right wing groups.

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

The radicals had sought permission from the SDM to hold a rally against the two pastors, which was denied by the SDM. The pastors in response requested the local police to provide them protection to conduct church services.

On 13 April in Khesraha village in Bansi tehsil of Siddharthnagar district, Uttar Pradesh, members of Hindu right-wing groups disrupted a prayer meeting. According to media reports, the district-in-charge of the Vishwa Hindu Mahasangh, Jaishankar Mishra, led a mob of activists to a private home where they alleged that the Bible was being read out. The household had invited Mr. Shivshankar Verma to conduct prayers and to teach them the Bible. But the Hindu right-wing mob trespassed into the house, stopped the prayers and called the police, who then arrested Mr. Ravishankar Verma and his hosts Ms. Gudiya, Mr. Vishwanath and Ms. Phulmati and took them to the police station.

On 14 April in village Ardauna, Mau district, Uttar Pradesh, it was reported that members of Hindu fundamentalist groups beat up Christians grievously injuring them. The attackers were provoked that the Christians did not contribute for the Navratri donations and so entered Christian homes in the village late in the night and beat up entire Christian families including women and children including a pregnant woman. Pastor Shivpal Sharma leads the Church in the local area.

On 15 April in Ramdayalganj, Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh, local police raided Pastor Rajendra Chauhan's home wanting to take him into custody so that he would not be able to lead his Church on Easter Sunday. Pastor Rajendra Chauhan had been receiving threats both from the police and Hindu extremists for the past week. He leads a Church at Kuudupur and hundreds of people attend the worship service. At the intervention of the local Christian leaders, the pastor was then given security to conduct Easter services at the Church.

On 21 April in Balrampur tehsil of Balrampur district in Uttar Pradesh, Hindu extremists beat up a group of Christians including a pastor on false allegations of conversions. A group of Hindutva activists along with a few villagers barged in to the prayer meeting which was conducted at a Christian's home and started to beat the pastor and the Christians present alleging that they are performing forceful conversions. Five Christians were injured severely. Due to the severe beatings, all Christians ran towards the forest and stayed there till midnight for their safety. Subsequently, the same night all the Christians returned to their homes. Next day on 22 April 22, the Hindu radicals came again in the morning and beat two other Christians. A complaint was later registered at the police station.

On 25 April in Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh, a pastor was threatened by a Hindu right-wing activist. Mr. Timothy lives in Mirzapur with his family and serves with GEMS mission. On the date of the incident, Mr. Ashok Kumar Bharti, who is also Block Secretary in Chandauli district, was collecting money from the villagers of Khajural. Mr. Bharti disrupted a prayer meeting that Mr. Timothy was leading and threatened the Christians present with dire consequences. He told Mr. Timothy to leave the place and to stop conducting prayers in the future. It was reported that later on Mr. Bharti visited other Christian households in the village as well and threatened them.

On 29 April in village Jalalabad, Ghazipur district, Uttar Pradesh – Hindu extremists led an entire village as they attacked a small Christian community in the village led by a lady Pastor. The 20 Christian families were threatened and verbally abused while the crowd beat up and attempted to outrage the modesty of Pushpa, the lady Pastor who leads the Christians. When she approached the police to file a complaint, the police arranged for a compromise and insisted that Pushpa stop Christian meetings in the village.

On 7 May in Sirkoni block in Jaunpur district of Uttar Pradesh, police arrested a Christian woman named Sunita Maurya who works as a missionary and conducts Sunday church services in Sirkoni, attended by around 100 people regularly. On the day of the incident, local police from Jalalpur Police Station barged into the Sunday service, disrupted the meeting and took Sunita to the police station. When two other Christians, Mr. Deenanath Chauhan and Mr. Dashrath requested the police for her release, they informed them that certain Hindu high caste people from the same village had given a written application against Sunita to the police. The police later released Sunita and asked her to provide legal documents of her Christian organization if she wanted to continue holding the Christian prayer meetings.

On 9 May in Mau district of Uttar Pradesh, six Christians including a pastor were arrested and presented before the local court. Pastor Balalakhandar and 4 more leaders were conducting a prayer meeting at the house of one Mr. Nandlal. Members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad complained against the meeting at the local police station, and got the Christians arrested. When they were presented before the Judge, the lawyer representing the Hindutva activists couldn't give a satisfactory evidence to support their case that the Christians were involved in forceful conversions. All the six were released on bail.

On 14 May in Ghaziabad district of Uttar Pradesh, Hindu extremists beat up Christian men while they were participating in the Sunday service of a house Church. Pastor John E Dawson, a retired government official, Asha

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

Prakash and his son Arun Prakash and three other men sustained internal injuries in the assault. The attack took place around 10am in the morning after the regular worship service began. Two strangers around 19 and 17-year-old came and joined the service and stated texting on their phone. Minutes later, a man barged into the worship, disrupting the service and blaming the Christians of carrying out forceful conversion. When Arun Prakash, the owner of the house tried to reason with the man who had now gone outside, a crowd that was waiting and armed with lathis (long bamboo sticks) and a hand gun attacked him. The crowd then entered the Church and beat up all the men present till they were unable to even walk. The attackers threw the holy sacrament on the floor and vandalized the place.

On 19 May under Aurai police station in Bhadohi district of Uttar Pradesh, Hindutva activists threatened pastor Abraham and pressured him to discontinue church activities. Around 30 members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, gathered around Pastor Abraham's house and started raising anti-Christian slogans. They told the pastor's family to go back to South India and warned that they will destroy the church building. The police intervened and arrested the pastor and kept him in the lock up. On the intervention of other Christian leaders, the police assured that they would release the pastor once the violent mob dispersed.

On 2 June in Baraut village, Hanida Tehsil, Allahabad district, Uttar Pradesh, a prayer meeting of Bethel Mission Church was disrupted by members of Hindu extremist groups. Pastor Sanjay Choudhari conducts the Prayer meeting at a rented accommodation in Baraut for the last 5 years where around 100-150 Christians gather for worship. The Hindu extremists recorded the proceedings of the worship service and also threatened Pastor Sanjay Choudhari to stop the Christian activities in the area or else be prepared to face the consequences.

On 2 June in Safipur town of Unnao district in Uttar Pradesh Pastor Sahdev Prasad was threatened by a police official from Safipur police station to stop all Christian activities. According to police the local Hindu extremists had complained to the local SDM that Pastor Sahdev was involved in conversion activities in the area. After receiving the complaint, a police official came to meet Pastor Sahdev at his house, but the pastor was not home. Later the pastor went to the police station where the Station In-charge threatened him and asked him to stop all Christian activities. Pastor Sahdev Prasad has been ministering in Unnao for the past 15 years and had registered the Church in the name of Love of God Ministry Trust' in the year 2011. Around 400-500 Christians gather every Sunday for worship service.

On 11 June under Chandwak police station in Jaunpur district, Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Durga Yadav was taken to the police station for questioning regarding allegations of religious conversions leveled against him. The pastor has been ministering to the Christians through the Jeevan Jyoti Seva Ashram for the last five years and a strong congregation of about 4000 people gather every week on Sundays. The police questioned him in the police station from evening 5pm till 12am, threatened and beaten him. They told him to get a letter of permission from the SDM if he wanted to continue with the church programs. When he went to meet the SDM, he was denied any permission, and was told to leave the village.

On 25 June in Bairia town of Ballia district in Uttar Pradesh, around 30 members of the Hindu Yuva Vahini disrupted a Christian Prayer meeting and assaulted the Christians present. After assaulting the Christians, the attackers forcefully took Pastor Vijay Ram of New Life League Church and two other Christians (Anil Kumar Yadav and Gopal Ram) in their vehicle to the Bairia Police station. The Christians were beaten and slapped on the way to the police station as well. The police locked up the Christians on the complaint of the attackers. On conducting an investigation, the police found no evidence of conversions taking place. However according to local Christian leaders, the Christians were arrested because of pressure from the local MLA. Pastor Vijay from New Life League Church has been conducting prayer meetings in the Bairia town for the past three years and around 100 Christians gather for regular services.

On 25 June in Hafiz Ganj village in Nawabganj Tehsil of Bareilly district in Uttar Pradesh, Hindutva activists disrupted a Christian prayer meeting accusing Christians of indulging in conversions. The police intervened in the matter and attempted to settle the matter between the two parties. However, the Hindutva members threatened violence at which point the Christians left the police station.

On 25 June in Mishrikh village in Sitapur district of Uttar Pradesh, four policemen disrupted an ongoing Sunday worship service. They threatened the worshipers who had assembled there and ordered them not to come for worship services anymore. Using abusive words, they warned Evangelist Vishwanath and Paragilal to discontinue the worship or else they would be charged with forceful conversions under the relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code.

On 25 June in Itha village of Bahraich district in Uttar Pradesh, local police disrupted a church service and warned the Christians to discontinue services with immediate effect. A team of police personnel stormed the Christian fellowship in the village where 12-15 women

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE



were meeting to worship, and the service was being conducted by a Church leader only identified as Gurudeen. The husbands of the women were away attending worship service in their regular Church in village Pujaripurva which was established 3 years ago. “The police strictly warned the women to disperse and to not to gather in the future or they would be arrested. Christian worship is a crime, the police stated,” said Ajay Masih of Global Action India. According to Masih the women stood up for themselves and told the police that before they accepted Christianity they had been troubled with sickness and demon possession and the police did not help them. They said: “Now that we are set free of our troubles and live a peaceful life, you come and interfere in our lives and stop us from worshipping the One who set us free?” Masih said that the police threatened the women with arrest if they gathered for worship again. According to local Christians, the police acted at the complaint of Hindu extremists belonging to the Hindu Yuva Vahini (HYV).

On 25 June in Pujaripurva village in Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh, police disrupted a Christian service. About 150 Christians gather there for worship regularly. Pastor Aasaram Sahni conducts the service. Police confiscated all the bibles and Christian literature present in the Church and instructed the Pastor to report to the Nanpara police station on Tuesday (Monday being a national holiday for Eid). When Pastor Aasaram Sahni along with five Christian leaders went to the Nanpara police station on 27 June, police arrested them and charged them with “disrupting the peace by joining an assembly which has been commanded to disperse.” Pastor Aasaram Sahni, 45, Lal Bihari Verma, 35, Gurudeen, 35, his brother Badkau, 32, Gobrey Nishad, 45, and Chotelal, 45 were arrested and put in jail. Pastor Sahni and Chotelal were granted bail later on but were only released on 4 June 2017. The other four Christians were released on 5 June 2017.

On 30 June and 2 July in Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh, seven Christian families from two separate villages allegedly faced extortion at the hands of the local police who first disrupted their Church services, arrested six Christians along with a pastor and later threatened the

rest, with arrest if they did not pay up. The alleged extortion took place on 30 June and 2 July 2017.

On 30 July in village Grem, Police station Hafeezganj, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad disrupted a Church worship service being led by Pastor Mahendra Pal and caused the worship service to close down. Local police accompanying the VHP members took pastor Mahendra into custody and took him to the Hafeezganj police station where he was charged with performing forceful conversions. This was the second incident in a month where in the same Church members of the VHP disrupted worship and the police arrested Christians. The pastor has been serving in the area for the last 10 years.

On 26 August in Badlapur tehsil in Jaunpur district of Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Kuvar Singh Chouhan was called by the police for inquiry. On the previous day the pastor had visited a Christian home and handed over some Christian literature to the family. Some Hindu radicals had come to know about this and filed a complaint against the Christian family. The police arrested the head of the family and took him to the police station. When the police was going through the literature that was seized they found Pastor Kuvar's name on it, hence he was called to the police station.

On 27 August in Garhwar village in Ballia Tehsil of Ballia district in Uttar Pradesh, according to reports received, Pastor Anil was arrested at around 10 am while he was conducting worship service at his church. A group of religious fanatics, accompanied by the local police, stormed into the church, disrupted the worship service, arrested him and took him to Garhwar police station.

On 6 September in Madhobari Harijan colony of Bareilly city in Uttar Pradesh, according to reports received, a false complaint of conversion by means of allurements was filed by Mrs. Saroj Devi against Pastor Mahesh Chandra. The woman alleged that she was allured to convert and her conversion took place in the Madhobari church. Acting on the allegation the local police filed a case

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

of hurting religious sentiments against the pastor, his daughter Rajkumari and his son Mukul Samuel. The Christian family is going through severe mental trauma owing to the media attention and fear of Hindutva groups.

On 24 September in Biswan, Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh, a group of Hindutva activists severely beat up pastor Abhay Sagar so much so that the Pastor was left bleeding from his mouth and lost hearing in one of his ears. The pastor was also arrested on charges of conversion.

On 21 October at Sarvodaya Nagar, Raebareilly district, Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Jitendra Kumar of Grace Church was threatened by Hindu activists saying that they will attack his Church, if he did not stop conducting worship services. Kumar and his congregation have been facing series of threats in the past and despite their application to the authorities requesting protection, no action has been taken by the local police and no protection granted.

On 28 October in Dudhi, Sonbhadra district, Uttar Pradesh, a fasting and prayer event organized by GEMS was interrupted on the third day by members of Hindu right-wing groups accompanied by the police. Over 1400 people from all parts of India had gathered to participate in the 3-day fasting and prayer and had taken the necessary permissions from authorities. Around 40 Hindutva activists led by RSS Leader Advocate Dilip Pandey and accompanied by the police entered the venue and the police stopped the meeting saying that they have received complaints that conversions are happening in the prayer meeting. Later the police and the Hindutva activists also entered the GEMS English school Dudhi, where some of the guests participating in the meeting were staying. The Hindutva activists alleged that cow meat was being given to the participants whereas vegetarian lunch was being served. The police searched the premises without a warrant and 7 Christians were beaten and arrested by the police. The arrested Christians were falsely charged with cases under Section 151 and Section 107/116. They were later bailed out.

On 8 November in Bhuvanpuri, Modi Nagar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, as reported by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>, Hindutva activists barged into the house of an evangelist, vandalised the place and beat up the Christians present while verbally abusing them. The attackers damaged the vehicles of the guests present in the house. When Christians tried to reason with the attackers they raised anti-Christian slogans. Police reached the spot and took into custody three Christians and took them to the police station.

On 12 November in Ahladpur village of Chail tehsil, Kaushambi district, Uttar Pradesh, eight to nine

Hindu activists barged into a Christian prayer meeting where about 300 people had gathered for Sunday worship service. They threatened Sone Lal, a farmer who was leading the meeting, and demanded that the meeting be stopped immediately. They returned after 20 minutes accompanied by the police alleging that religious conversions were underway during the prayer meeting. The police arrested eight Christians under section 151 of the Indian Penal Code.

On 4 December in Surir town of Mant Tehsil in Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Stanley Jacob and six others were arrested by the Mathura police after being beaten up by a mob. They were booked under IPC Section 295A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings) on charges of hurting religious sentiments after Hindu extremists savagely beat them when they gathered to pray for a sick man at his home. The extremists, who were about 20 in number, were led by members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). They trespassed into the home and beat everyone who was present including women and children, injuring the 13-year-old girl of the man who was being prayed for. The police on arrival, took the Christians into custody. A Christian woman who was with the group was not arrested because of the absence of female police required for such arrests. The Christians were sent to judicial custody after their bail application was rejected. They were finally bailed out on 20 December.

On 17 December in Sareni town and tehsil in Rae Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh, a Christian Sunday worship service conducted by Pastor Ram Naresh at his house was stopped by the police. While they spoke to him, they slapped him and few other Christians who were around. They shoved him into the police van and took him to the police station where they registered a complaint against him under IPC Section 151.

On 17 December in Bhadohi district of Uttar Pradesh, Pastor David Amarnath (physically challenged) who serves with Zion Church was conducting a church service when five Hindu radicals barged in and ordered him to stop the service. Pastor Amarnath called the local police at the spot, but upon his arrival the SHO started abusing him in front of the mob. He told the radicals that they are free to do whatever they want with the pastor if they found him conducting the service again, and that he would not provide any protection to the Christians. He verbally abused the pastor and asked him to leave Bhadohi.

On 20 December it was reported by national media outlets like NDTV etc. that Fringe right-wing groups have threatened to disrupt Christmas and New Year celebrations in some Uttar Pradesh towns including Aligarh and Agra. In Aligarh, a group called the Hindu

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

Jagran Manch warned schools against celebrating Christmas, saying they could do so "at their own risk".

On 21 December in Paharpur village of Fatehpur tehsil in Fatehpur district of Uttar Pradesh, district police arrested Dinesh, Bubbly, Pratap and Sher Singh and put them in Fatehpur jail for conducting a Christmas program. Hindu radical groups have been moving around throughout the district and stopping all Christmas programs.

On 25 December in Sonbarsa village in Chunar tehsil of Mirzapur district in Uttar Pradesh a Christmas program was disrupted and brought to a halt by Hindu radicals. Pastor Vijay Kumar who is serving with New India Church of God, was conducting the program when a mob of 15-16 radicals barged in and started abusing the Christian believers. They went on a rampage, scattered everything, and threatened the pastor and believers of severe consequences. Christians allege that when the police arrived at the spot the officers were biased towards the assailants, took their personal details and ordered them to appear at the police station on the next day. The Christians feel afraid and insecure.

On 27 December in Nababganj, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, a group of Hindu extremists disrupted a prayer meeting, accused the pastor of carrying out conversions and took him to the Nababganj police station, as per reports by <https://speakoutagainsthate.crowdmap.com>. The Police did not register an FIR against the pastor but made him give in writing that he will not conduct any prayer meetings henceforth.

Uttarakhand

On 2 April in Tiparpur village which is in Vikasnagar district of Dehradun district, a Christian worship service was disrupted. Pastor Raj Kumar (42) has been ministering in this village in 2009. The church members gather regularly for worship every Sunday in a temporary structure which is built on his relative's land. On 2 April during the Sunday fellowship, a group of 5-6 people (from Hindu Jagran Manch) came and ordered Pastor Raj Kumar to stop all Christian activities in the village. They accused him of converting people in the village. Consequently, the pastor, fearing for his life, stopped the church services completely.

On 8 May in Haridwar district of Uttarakhand, a pastor was harassed by police and Hindutva activists. The pastor had come to attend a wedding ceremony at a Christian's house and had parked his car outside. A Hindutva activist complained at the local police station that conversion activities were going on in the house. The police acted on the complaint by taking away the car keys

from the pastor's wife and demanding that the pastor present himself at the police station for investigation.

On 4 July, in Haridwar, Uttarakhand, a Christian woman, mother of two, was repeatedly raped and nearly killed by two men, who abducted her from Sultanpur chowk while she was on her way to visit her father in Ajitpur in a shared car around 2 pm. After raping her, they dropped her home and warned her not to tell about her ordeal to anyone or they would kill her. Reportedly, the rape was in retaliation to an incident in which the lady had slapped one of the men who was harassing her because of her change of faith to Christianity. The lady and her husband approached the women's commission and the police, but the police directed her to the village elders stating that it was an 'internal matter'. The village elders offered her 10,000 Rupees and asked her to settle the matter with her rapists, threatening action against the couple if they again went to the police.

On 8 August morning in Mohanpur Village, Roorkee in Haridwar district of Uttarakhand while Pastor Amar Stephan was conducting a prayer meeting some villagers came from the surrounding area and took him to the Civil Line police station alleging that he is involved in religious conversions. While the pastor was being dragged to police station, he was manhandled and thrashed for a stretch of one kilometre by the villagers. The pastor was made sit in the police station for about 5 hours before letting go without any complaint being registered against him. When the pastor tried to file a complaint against his persecutors, the police denied any cooperation and ordered him to return home.

On 25 December in Haridwar district of Uttarakhand a Christmas program was disrupted by Hindu extremists. Pastor Rajesh who is working with Manna Ministries was conducting the Christmas program along with house-warming program in one of the Christian believer's house, when some extremists came inside and stopped the program. They took the pastor and three other believers to the police station and registered a complaint against them. Subsequently even the Christians, about 30 in number, sought to file a complaint at the police station, but it was rejected by the police. Pastor Rajesh was released on bail after two days. He had been regularly facing threats prior to this incident.

West Bengal

On the midnight of 25 January, in Hubli, West Bengal, a Christian family was targeted by anti-social elements. Three to four people who were drunk vandalized Sunil Das's home. They broke the window glass, tried to break the door by banging hard on it, and used abusive

DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

language against Das and his family. Early in the morning even as Das attempted to leave his house, the attackers surrounded him and would not let him leave. Somehow, he was able to reach the police station but his complain was not entertained. Das, 52 years, is a Christian worshipping at the Christashray Mahane-dan Fellowship Church in Hubli district. It has been five years since he embraced Christianity and since then has been facing opposition including life threats.

On 20 February in Supur village of Bankura district, West Bengal, the local police shut down an orphanage run by Pastor Chandra who also pastors the Crown of Life Ministries Church. This happened at the complaint of a couple, who had approached Pastor Chandra with a request to release a child who was related to them, from the orphanage, for some personal work of theirs. At Chandra's refusal, this couple was offended and allegedly filed a false complaint against Chandra of carrying out child trafficking and forceful conversion inside the orphanage home. They also informed the local Children Welfare NGO - "Sumangalam Home" about the alleged child trafficking and conversion activity. The Children Welfare committee along with the help of the local police took custody of all the 12 children living in Chandra's orphanage. Chandra denies the allegations and continues to struggle to cope up with the harassment he is facing in trying to prove that he is 'not guilty'. He has been running the orphanage since 2012.

On 12 March in West Midnapore, West Bengal, according to reports received, villagers alleging conversion activity beat up and threatened pastor Nepal Das. The incident took place while the Sunday worship

was going on at the Church. The pastor was told by the villagers to leave the village. The Church has been present in the village for the last 3 years and has around 35 members. The local police have taken the pastor's statement but the FIR has not been filed.

On 26 March in West Midnapore, West Bengal, according to reports received, Pastor Nepal Das, who was attacked on 12 March as well was taken by villagers for a meeting around 10 am onwards. There he was reportedly threatened and beaten up, made to sign documents forcibly and was kept against his will till late in the night. He was finally rescued by the police who intervened.

On 6 June in Ranaghat of Nadia district in West Bengal, unidentified miscreants vandalized a church in the early morning hours. The 127-year-old St. Luke's Church was found vandalized at 4:30 am by a Church worker. The miscreants stole old and precious religious items, damaged the Holy Sacrament and stole the cash. The church only 150 feet away from the convent of the Religious of Jesus and Mary where a 70-year-old Catholic nun was raped during a robbery in March 2015.

On 25 July in Bardhaman district of West Bengal, four Christian families were reportedly ostracized from their village because of their faith. They were forced to take shelter in Pastor Luka's church in the town.

On 16 August in Burdwan, West Bengal, a group of Hindutva activists ransacked pastor Deepu's house. The pastor was reportedly threatened over the phone and later his home was ransacked and searched.





EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF INDIA
805/ 92 Deepali Building
Nehru Place, New Delhi—110019 INDIA

Email: mail@efirc.org
Telephone: +91 11 66602434, 26431133, 26423726, 26423727 | Fax: +91 11 26285350
<http://www.efionline.org>