

Evangelical
Fellowship of India



Religious Liberty
Commission

HATE AND TARGETED VIOLENCE AGAINST **CHRISTIANS** **IN INDIA**



REPORT 2019

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION OF
THE EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF INDIA

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We would also like to thank the Christian Legal Association, Persecution Relief and Alliance Defending Freedom India.



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RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION OF
THE EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF INDIA

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Executive Summary and Analysis

A consummately organized hate campaign against India's Muslim population, beginning mid-December 2019, and erupting in a pogrom in mid-February 2020 against them in their “ilakas” (loosely translated as ghettos) in the North eastern suburbs of the Indian capital city New Delhi, has not only delayed the analysis of the persecution of Christians in the year gone by, but raised structural questions on the security of all religious minorities in the country, with questions for the Church and the Believers' community if they can ever think of a safe haven in their motherland where one group is so brutally targeted.

In the sectarian violence that was unleashed in Delhi, nine mosques were burnt to the ground, as were academic institutions and the small shops that were the economic stay of the Muslims. Thousands are homeless. At least 45 Muslims and 10 Hindus are dead. Many are still missing, with their families hoping that their young sons are in jail, and not rotting in one of the many local drains where ten or more bodies have been spotted so far.

Front-line lieutenants of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party called upon their followers to “Shoot the '@#\$*! %'”, a thinly veiled targeting of Muslims and activists protesting the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) passed by the government. The amended citizenship law, if implemented, along with the National Register of Citizens (NRC), can isolate and possibly disenfranchise the minorities, the Muslims in particular. It was because of this apprehension that the Church in India, in general, supported the citizen agitation against the CAA, particularly the protest at Shaheen Bagh, site of the first protest by women. The name now identifies over 250 similar agitations across the country by women and youth. Sikhs, Dalits, and Tribals have also joined the protest movement.

EFI puts on record the unity of the Church in the face of violence against religious minorities. Various initiatives are being taken on relief, rehabilitation and extension of legal services to victims. In addition, efforts have been made by many agencies for more comprehensive work in monitoring persecution and responding to the physical, spiritual and legal needs of the victims, whether individual, congregation, or village groups. This is an area where much more work needs to be done considering the vastness of the landscape and the intensity of the opposition to evangelization.

Apprehensions on the controversial citizenship laws and violence against religious minorities cut across communities as people recall sectarian slogans such as “Pehle Kasai Phir Isai” (First the Butcher,¹ then the Christian). According to the data available on the website www.dotodatabase.com, at least 65 persons from minority communities, mainly Muslims, have been murdered or lynched in over 25 incidents only in 2019. The Dotodatabase is not exhaustive and is based on secondary sources like published online news, newspaper clippings, and fact-finding reports.

As far as the recent Delhi violence is concerned, a three-day silence by the Union and state governments and the political leadership, eye witness accounts of the participation of policemen in the torture of young Muslim men, the failure of the officers to act on emergency calls by victims, and the lack of action against hate mongers have led civil society to draw parallels with the pogrom against Sikhs in 1984 following the assassination of Mrs. Indira

1. Kasai or Butcher is a derogatory reference for Muslims. It is a target phrase.

Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards, and then the Gujarat violence of 2002 targeting Muslims in the Ahmedabad region.

Even in the first two months of 2020, violence was reported against the Christian community, not from New Delhi, but elsewhere in the nation. The Religious Liberty Commission of the Evangelical Fellowship of India (RLC-EFI) has recorded over 40 such incidents in the first two months of 2020.

In the year 2019, the Christian community in India continued to face incidents of targeted violence and hate crimes. The RLC recorded 366 incidents where Christians have been targeted using violence, intimidation or harassment.

Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state of India, and indicted in the recent shooting down of Muslim protestors, maintained its position as the worst offender in the persecution of Christians. The state is led by Chief Minister Mr. Ajay Singh Bisht, also known as Yogi Adityanath, the high priest of the Gorakhnath temple in the state. He is also the founder of the Hindu YuvaVahini, a Hindu youth militia that has been involved in communal violence and in targeting religious minorities.

Compared to the 2018 figure of 132 incidents, anti-Christian violence in Uttar Pradesh reduced somewhat to 86 incidents with the focus shifting from the eastern districts around Jaunpur which had been targeted in the past.

Disturbingly the state's Law Commission, in November 2019, drafted a controversial report recommending heavy penalties of up to seven years in prison to persons deemed to be violating a proposed new law against conversions.

The cover page graphic and illustrations of the 268 paged report are taken from www.hindujagruti.org, the website of Hindu Janajagruti Samiti, whose explicit goal is to establish a Hindu Rashtra.

The anti-Christian violence in Tamil Nadu, which stands second with 60 incidents, is traced to caste supremacist attitudes in villages and their linkages with political elements currently positioning themselves for power in the state which goes for elections soon. The lack of empathy from the police forces is also rooted in the fact that recruitment to the constabulary is largely from a particular politically dominant caste whose leadership has been largely opposed to the work of Christian evangelists.

In Chhattisgarh, now at number three from its earlier sixth position, the rise is attributed to Christians more willing to report violence in the Bastar region where there had been so far a blanket of fear of both underground militant Maoist forces and the armoured police. The state also saw Assembly Elections and the return of the Indian National Congress after 15 years of the Bhartiya Janata Party Rule.

The total number of incidents dipped in summer when the Election Commission of India had mobilized large scale police presence in rural areas leading up to the general elections in April and May 2019. The incidents peaked in November 2019 as congregations increased their prayer/religious activities prior to Christmas. The anticipated violence during the Christmas season, a reality in previous years, did not take place and was overtaken as it was by the protests around the changes in the citizenship laws.

In its letter to the Prime Minister then, the EFI had called on him to ensure the security of Christians during the Christmas season. “The Christian community wants to be able to pray in peace, to celebrate Christmas with joy in cities, towns and villages. We do understand that law and order is a state subject, but a directive from the PMO will ensure that law and order authorities are sensitive to the situation. That will also send a strong signal to criminal elements who may wish to vitiate the environment.”

On the positive side has been the spontaneous support for religious minorities from the civil society at large, consisting of students, youth, intellectuals, retired senior bureaucrats as also a section of former military officers. This is an important development in view of the seemingly unstoppable penetration of the Sangh Parivar in various campuses and institutions in the last five years.

It is, however, important to point out that the numbers of cases recorded by RLC or any other agency are only indicative, and the actual numbers may be much larger. The reasons for underreporting are - fear among the Christian community, a lack of legal literacy and the reluctance/refusal of police to register cases. Even in the cases registered with the police, most never come to court.



STATISTICS

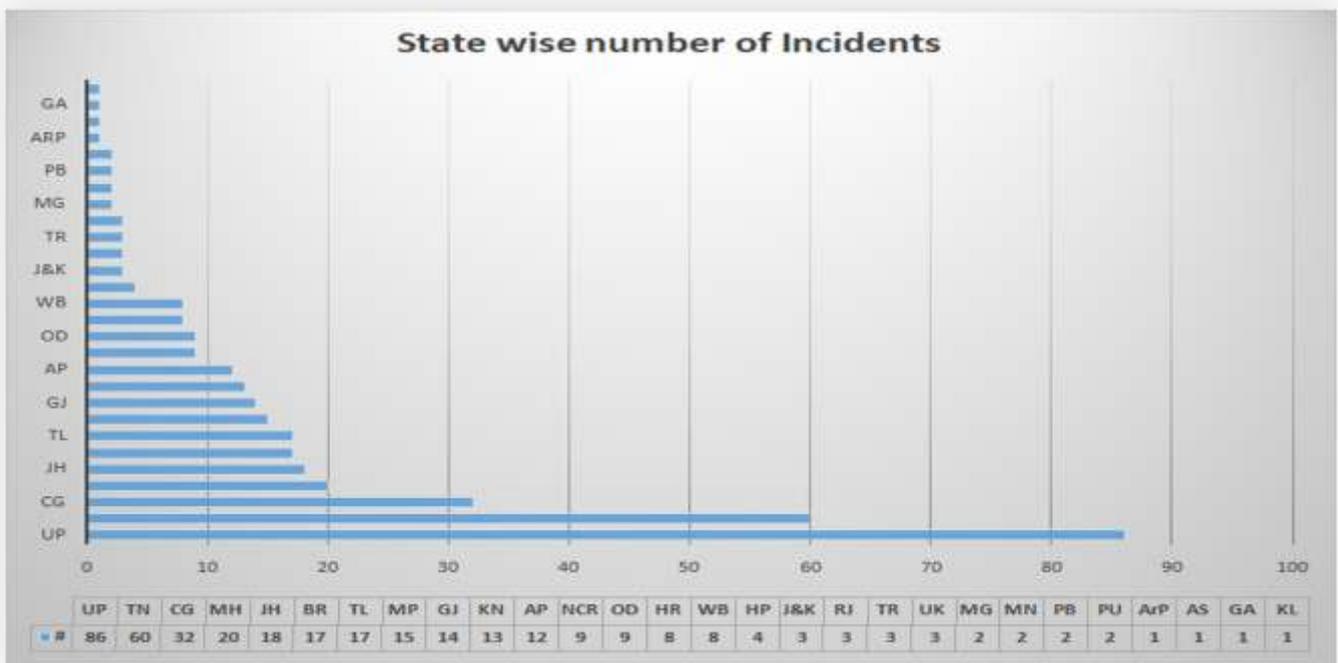
Number of Incidents across Months

State	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	G.Total
UP	10	6	5	7	4	3	8	13	10	7	10	3	86
TN	6	7	5	7	5	3	4	6	5	3	5	4	60
CG	2	2	7	2	1		3	3	2	6	4		32
MH	2	2	2	1	1		1	2	3	1	4	1	20
JH	2	3	4			1	1	1	5		1		18
BR	2	2		1		3		4	2	1	2		17
TL	1	1	3	3		1	2			4	1	1	17
MP		1		2					2	3	2	5	15
GJ	1	4	1			1				2	5		14
KN	2		1	2	1	2		1			3	1	13
AP	1	2			1			1		2	1	4	12
NCR		1			1	1	1	1	1		2	1	9
OD		1		2				2		2	1	1	9
HR	1	1			1	2	1		1	1			8
WB			1		1				1	2	1	2	8
HP	1	1						1		1			4
J&K	2									1			3
RJ	1	1				1							3
TR	1				1					1			3
UK		1									2		3
MG	1									1			2
MN				1							1		2
PB											2		2
PU					1		1						2
ArP			1										1
AS								1					1
GA	1												1
KL			1										1
Grand Total	37	36	31	28	18	18	22	36	32	38	47	23	366



State wise number of incidents

State	Incidents
UP	86
TN	60
CG	32
MH	20
JH	18
BR	17
TL	17
MP	15
GJ	14
KN	13
AP	12
NCR	9
OD	9
HR	8
WB	8
HP	4
J&K	3
RJ	3
TR	3
UK	3
MG	2
MN	2
PB	2
PU	2
ArP	1
AS	1
GA	1
KL	1
Grand Total	366



Monthly trend of incidents

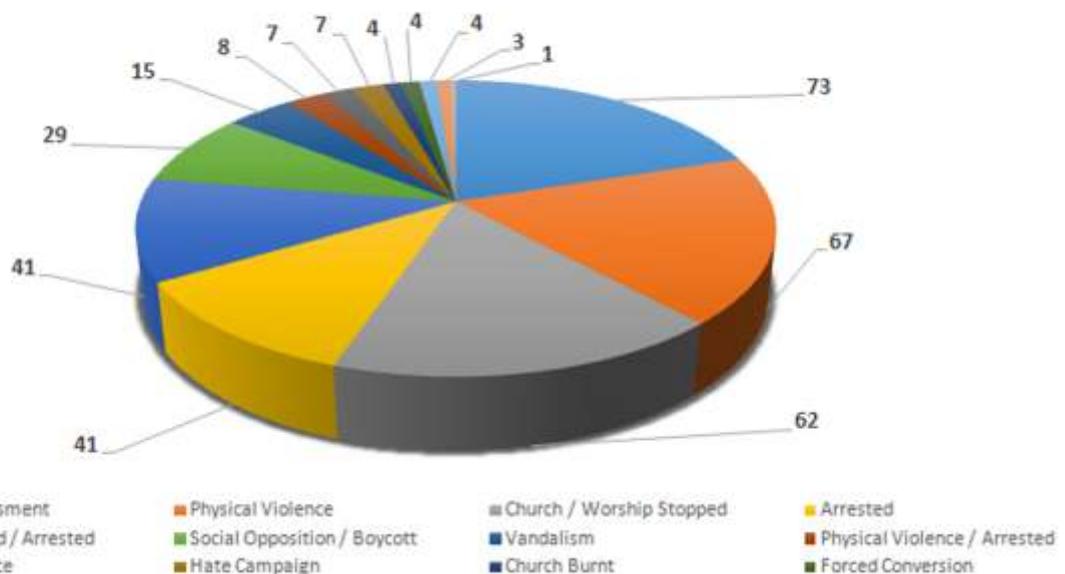
Month	Incidents
Jan	37
Feb	36
Mar	31
Apr	28
May	18
Jun	18
Jul	22
Aug	36
Sep	32
Oct	38
Nov	47
Dec	23
Grand Total	366



Types of Violence

Type of incident	Incident
Threat / Harassment	73
Physical Violence	67
Church / Worship Stopped	62
Arrested	41
Falsely Accused / Arrested	41
Social Opposition / Boycott	29
Vandalism	15
Physical Violence / Arrested	8
Gender Violence	7
Hate Campaign	7
Church Burnt	4
Forced Conversion	4
Murder	4
Demolition of Church	3
Theft	1
Grand Total	366

Types of Violence



RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

- a. Enact a comprehensive national legislation against targeted and communal violence.
- b. Enforce rule of law and arrest members of groups promoting sectarian hate, violence and involving in pre-orchestrated programs of levelling false accusations of conversions upon the Christian priests and missionaries in order to feed their political agenda.
- c. Ensure stringent action under criminal law against all those who channel hate speech with the intention of inciting violence and hatred against the Christian community and other minority groups.
- d. Advise the state governments, especially Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, to deal with right wing organizations operating in these states whose primary agenda is to create an atmosphere of fear among the Christian community and other religious minorities.
- e. Prosecute 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.
- f. Conduct sensitization programs for the police officials regarding laws on religious freedom as envisaged in the Indian Constitution and on laws related to human rights.
- g. Amend paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950 to include Christians and Muslims.
- h. 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.
- i. Prevent and pursue through the judicial process, all violent acts against religious and tribal minorities and Dalits.



Christians lynched by cow protectors in Jharkhand

Dr. John Dayal

Prakash Lakra is the third confirmed case of a Christian lynched in India since 2018 when mobs of self-styled GauRakshaks, or cow protectors, created an atmosphere of fear across vast tracts of the country, ambushing and killing cow traders, butchers and common people they suspected were slaughtering cows which the killers deemed to be holy. Many states in India have banned transport of cattle across state boundaries, as also the slaughter of cattle and transport of beef.

Several victims are Hindus, lynched on suspicion they were child-lifters or thieves. Others are Dalits, traditionally involved in the skin and leather trade. Most are Muslim men, whose traditional profession is the sale and purchase of poultry and animals. But at least three of the murdered men are Christians. One, Prakash Lakra, a Catholic of the Oraon tribe, was lynched in the summer of 2019 in the remote Jhumru village of Jharkhand.

The narrative is from an interview with Jeremina Lakra, the victim's widow, done by members of the Karawane Mohabbat, a fact-finding, justice and reconciliation movement. The writer is a member of this group. The murder took place on 9 April at the peak of the 2019 election campaign. A bullock of the herd owned by Zacharias Kujur had slipped on the steep slope leading to the local rivulet, got trapped in the mud, and died. As is the custom in the villages, Kujur asked his neighbours to skin the dead animal and take away what meat could be used by the families. Around 35 people

including many children, hastened to the spot where the dead animal lay, and they began to carve out its meat.

Four villagers, Prakash Lakda, Peter Kerketta, Zanerius Minj and Belesius Ttirkey were to take away the hide and sell it to a Dalit Ghasi family which made nagada, the traditional Oraon drums, from the cured hide. The driver of a auto rickshaw and some people of the upper-caste dominant trading Sahu community from the neighbouring village Jairagi spotted them carving the meat of the bull. Soon a throng of around 40 people from Jairagi village descended on the river bed where the dead animal lay. The men were armed with lathis, swords and sickles, and shouting militant slogans like "Jai Shri Ram", "Jai Hanuman" and "Bajrang Bali ki Jai".

The younger villagers and children managed to escape. The four Oraons were surrounded.

The mob fell upon the four, beat them up, dragging them to the road, all the while accusing them of slaughtering the bull. The men pleaded that the bull was already dead: no one had killed the animal for its meat and skin. When they reached Jairagi village a kilometre and a half away, more people gathered and joined the assault. The four were forced to sign blank sheets of paper, presumably confessing to the crime. When the now badly wounded men asked for water, one of the assailants deforced his mouth open, and urinated into it. This went on almost until

midnight. The four soon became unconscious.

Eventually a bus drove up to where they lay. The mob leaders stopped the bus, put the wounded men in it and drove them to the police station. The bus stopped a little short of the police station, and the four were off loaded. some distance from the police station. They struggled to reach he police station hoping for help. Four hours later, after sunrise, the policemen came to them. By then Prakash Lakra was dead.

The three injured men and the body of Prakash were taken to the government hospital in the district headquarters of Gumla.

The families of the men reached the hospital later that day. The police took them to the Dumri police station that afternoon, still refusing to give them the body of Jeremina's husband. Although Jeremina was distraught, no officer came to comfort her. They also did not allow any man to come to help them from the village, which remained blockaded. At 6 in the evening, they made them sign a sheaf of papers. They continue to sit on the benches of the Thana after night fell. At 3 in the morning, the policemen woke the two women and said that they would give them the body, but on the condition that they must bury him quietly that night itself. Back home finally, as the women bathed the body of Prakash Lakra to prepare for

his funeral, they wept as they saw the way many bones of his body were smashed. But what agonised them most was when they found that his penis had been mutilated.

It was four months later the three injured men returned home.

The civil society fact-finding team met the police officer Amit Kumar who leads the Dumra Police Station, just days after the lynching. "These tribal people must be taught to respect the sentiments of other [caste-Hindu] people," he said. They asked him how any disrespect was done when meat was being carved out of a dead animal. Also, no law had been broken because no live bovine had been killed. He replied, "How can I know that the bull was dead before they began to carve out its meat?"

Why did the crowd suddenly attack, and so brutally, when impoverished tribal (and indeed Dalit) communities have from times immemorial eaten the meat of dead cows and bulls? Most villagers traced this to the rise of aggressive Hindutva politics. Christian converts are increasingly stigmatised in local communities, and even the BJP Chief Minister publicly demonised Christian conversions. Hindu homes in the area, even of Dalits and tribal people who have not converted to Christianity, now fly triangular saffron flags of the Bajrang Dal.





DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

Andhra Pradesh

Guntur Guntur

On 9 January in Narnepadu village of Muppalla Mandal in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, an independent church led by Pastor Koteswara Rao was demolished by the tribal people living in the neighbourhood. The temporary building structure of the Jesus Prayer Church was on a piece of land that belonged to a Christian. According to reports, the tribal people were provoked by Hindutva activists who encouraged them to demolish the church building.

Guntur Threat/Harassment

On 10 February in Guntur city of Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh, Pastor P. John Chakravarthi reported of an incident which has been going on for over a year. He gives leadership to a Christian ministry called Promise of Victory in the district. Pastor Chakravarthi and his brother, who is also a pastor, own a land and have been trying to construct a double-storey structure at IPD Colony 9th line, Guntur. It is meant to serve as a Sunday prayer house and a residence for the pastor and his family. However, a man living in the same area who has close affiliations with RSS, made complaints on several occasions with local municipal office against the construction. Each time the construction work began, the man would complain to the municipal office that the primary purpose of the construction was to conduct church activities and carry out religious conversions. In his defence the pastor claims that he has requisite documents to prove his ownership of the land and he is being deliberately harassed.

East Godavari Church/Worship Stopped

On 10 February in China Sankarlapudi village near Yeleswaram town in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh, religious radicals barged into a prayer meeting, disrupted the service and threatened Pastor Jeevarathnam to stop all church activities. The pastor went to the police station in Yaleswaram to register a complaint, but the police asked him to come after two or three

weeks, and in the meanwhile, stop holding the prayer meetings.

Guntur Church Burnt

On 24 May in Nallapadu neighbourhood of Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh, religious extremists razed down a church building at midnight. Pastor Kalimala Purushotam ministers at "Holy Spirit Foundation Church", for the past five years, and around 500 Christians gather regularly for the Sunday prayer meeting. The church members gather at a thatched-roof infrastructure for prayers. On Friday, 24 May, around mid-night, religious extremists allegedly trespassed into the property, set the thatched roof of the church on fire, and completely razed it to the ground. All the church materials like copies of the Holy Bible, chairs, musical instruments and the pulpit, were reduced to ashes.

West Godavari Church/Worship Stopped

On 3 August in Narasapuram mandal of West Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh, religious fanatics severely opposed Pastor Jayakumar. The pastor has been running a church for the past 20 years in a land gifted by a Hindu man. On the day of the incident, some religious extremists came together and opposed the pastor for conducting church services. Eventually, prayer services had to be suspended temporarily. The Pastors' Association in his village made a representation to the local MLA, however, no action was taken.

Vishakhapatnam Threat/Harassment

On 10 October in Parawada suburb of Vishakhapatnam city in Vishakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh, Christians were threatened and warned by locals to stop propagating their faith. The incident occurred when Mr. Kishore, who is associated with an organization called Gospel for All, along with a group of Christians, was peacefully distributing Christian literature in the suburb. Even though no nuisance was created to public order, some locals confronted and obstructed the Christian group. They warned them to desist from any evangelical activity in the future. Fortunately, Christians were not

physically assaulted.

East Godavari

Physical Violence

On 12 October in Gollakunta village in Jaggampet mandal of East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh, Pastor John Prasanna and his church members, about 20 of them, were propagating their faith, when 30 fanatics belonging to Shivashakti, an organization involved in Hindu activism, stopped them. They verbally and physically assaulted them and broke some of their mobile phones. The pastor dialled 100 and sought for police help, who immediately arrived at the spot. Police sent both parties away but asked to them to report at police station later.

Kurnool

Threat / Harassment

On 27 November in Velugodu mandal of Kurnool District in Andhra Pradesh, Christians were opposed and threatened by religious radicals. The incident occurred when Christians from the Hebron Church had gone for a street evangelistic ministry. The church members were led by Pastor Tallari Yesudas. Confrontational opposition from the radicals forced the group to bring their ministry to a halt. Fortunately, there was no physical assault on the Christians. The church also chose not to pursue the matter legally.

East Godavari

Church / Worship Stopped

On 6 December in Gurrappalem village in Jaggampeta mandal in Peddapuram division of East Godavari district, a Christian prayer meeting was disrupted by Hindu hardliners. Pastor Daniel Babu has been conducting prayer meetings in the village regularly. Of late some radical Hindu youths had been opposing the prayers meetings and evangelical activities of the church. On an earlier occasion on 6 November they had barged into the church and manhandled the pastor and threatened him to stop the prayers. Similarly, on 6 December they barged into the prayer meeting again, verbally assaulted the pastor using a foul language and threatened him to stop the regular meetings.

YSR (Kadapa)

Church / Worship Stopped

On 7 December in Yendapalli village in Rayachoti mandal of Kadapa division in Y.S.R. (Kadapa) district of Andhra Pradesh, anti-social elements disrupted a prayer meeting and surrounded the church building. The incident occurred while Pastor K. Vijaykumar was in the middle of a prayer meeting; a boy entered the place and started to record a video of the program. When the pastor questioned him, he called the others. Soon a large mob arrived on jeeps and bikes and surrounded the church. Another Christian pastor who was in the program, rushed up to the roof and called the United Christian Forum Helpline. He was advised to immediately call the police. Meanwhile, the Helpline volunteers spoke to the District Superintendent of Police. This prompted a quick movement of the local police, who rushed to the spot. Seeing the development, the large mob dispersed immediately. The police assured the Christians of their safety and appropriate action against the assailants.

YSR (Kadapa)

Threat / Harassment

On 14 December in Goturu village of Vallur mandal in Kadapa division of YSR district in Andhra Pradesh, Christians were opposed for their evangelical activities. Some Christians, led by Pastor P. Dayarathnam, were sharing the Christian gospel and doing evangelical activities, when some people confronted and opposed them. Later the Christians were able to return safely to their homes. No complaints were filed with the police.

Srisailam

Threat / Harassment

On 27 December in the temple town of Srisailam in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, four men were nabbed by the police for reading the Bible at a park close to the Mallikarjuna temple. The four Christians - Peter, Timothy, Praveen and Joshua - were brought to the Srisailam Town police station by the temple security staff, police said.



Arunachal Pradesh

Itanagar Vandalism

On 31 March in two separate incidents, two Marian grottoes were vandalized. The grottoes belong to Itanagar and Miao, the two dioceses of the state. Statues of Mother Mary were found missing from both places. In Tezu parish of Miao diocese in Arunachal Pradesh, a statue from the grotto was found missing by Father Thomas Mani, one of the parish priests, at 6 a.m. when he went to light candles. The parish is about 375 kilometres from Itanagar, the state's capital. The other grotto is under Doimukh parish of Itanagar diocese, some 30 km northeast of Itanagar, and the vandalism was first noticed by the parish catechist. The Miao diocesan priests say both the incidents are "strikingly similar" on many counts. The Church in Arunachal Pradesh expressed shock and anguish over the vandalism of Marian grottoes.



Assam

Nalbari Threat/Harassment

On night of 25 August in Balitara village in Barigog Banbhag tehsil in Nalbari district of Assam, Pompei Bhaisya and her family were politely threatened by the village chief and some religious fanatics allegedly belonging to Bajrang Dal. They told her family to renounce their newfound faith in Christ and return to her old religion. They further threatened that if they did not oblige, they would burn down their house. No FIR was lodged in the matter.



Bihar

Patna Physical Violence

On 16 January in Fatuha block in Patna district of Bihar, four unidentified men brutally beat a Pastor and robbed him of his personal bag containing cash and a copy of the Bible. Pastor Dharmendra Kumar has been ministering with the Indian Pentecostal Assembly for the past 5 years. On the day of the incident, the pastor was out in the marketplace where he met an elderly Christian lady, an acquaintance. While the two were having a discussion, a few young men, who had been trying to be privy to their conversation, grabbed the pastor and manhandled him. They accused him of converting the woman, threatened him, punched his face and snatched his bag. Though a crowd had gathered no one rushed to his aid. Later the pastor was taken to a nearby medical clinic for first aid. No police complaint seems to have been registered.

West Champaran Church/Worship Stopped

On 18 January in Ugrashen Tola village of Chanpatia block in West Champaran District of Bihar, a Christian pastor reported that he has been forced to stop Christian prayer meeting at the village for more than a month. The pastor conducts Christian prayers regularly since the year 2000 and about 15 Christian families gather regularly. Until recently he had not faced any problem. The incident took place when some Hindutva extremists, along with few villagers, disrupted the daily prayers, and forcefully stopped the service. They warned the pastor to cease from coming into the village again.

Siwan Threat/Harassment

On 24 February in village Basantpur at Siwan District of Bihar, an extremist, trespassed into the church of Gospel Echoing Missionary Society (GEMS), shouting anti-Christian slogans and threats. Church is ministered by Gyan Chand Prasad for the past 6 years. Around 60 members had gathered for worship service which commenced at 10 a.m. In what appeared to be a pre-meditated attack, the extremist, a

lone member of a hard-line right-wing religious fanatic, stormed the church sanctuary and began sloganeering. Shouting slogans of 'jai sri ram' and anti-Christian slogans, he demanded that the worship service be stopped, accusing the pastor of conversion activities. The church elders managed to gently lead him out of the church building. Believing that they were rid of the belligerent fanatic, the worship service resumed. However, the emboldened youth returned, chanting, yelling and screaming, intimidating and threatening the congregation. Again, he was led out of the church by the elders. When the assailant repeated the attack for the third time the pastor stopped the service and tried to calm him down. He explained to him that no conversion activities were taking place. The assailant left the place visibly angry and shaken.

West Champaran

Threat / Harassment

On 26 February in Bettiah city of Pashchim Champaran district in Bihar, Christian were brutally assaulted by Hindutva radicals. D. Joseph, a Christian missionary from Gospel Echoing Missionary Society, was traveling along with thirteen church members from Bagaha town to Bettiah. While on the bus, one of the passengers picked up an argument with the team on the selection of seats. The passenger had affiliation with an extremist group, and hence started shouting and yelling at the Christians alleging that they were involved in conversion activities. Meanwhile the irate passenger alerted members of his organization. When the bus arrived at the Bettiah bus station, a huge mob of fanatics lay in wait for them. When the Christians got out of the bus, the confrontational mob started questioning and abusing them. Soon they cornered Joseph and another Christian named Baldev and beat them brutally. Eventually police arrived at the spot and got the situation under control. Joseph and Baldev were rushed to a nearby hospital and their statements recorded. Police refused to file a FIR. However, an MLC (Medico Legal Case) was led against unknown people. No arrests have been made.

Bhojpur

Vandalism

On 20 April in Bhojpur district of Bihar, religious extremists barged into the Holy

Saviour Church, burnt copies of the Bible and other Christian literature, and wrote "Jai Shri Ram" on the entrance door of the church. On Easter Sunday morning when the pastor arrived at the church, he noticed that the Bibles and literature had been burnt to ashes and religious graffiti had been written on the door. Subsequently an FIR was registered at the local police station.

Siwan

Church / Worship Stopped

On 9 June in Maharajganj block of Siwan District in Bihar, a Christian worship service was disrupted. The incident occurred when Pastor Markandey Prasad was conducting the service at a private school (run in a rented building). The owner of the building barged into the program with some local people and stopped the service by force. They accused the pastor of carrying out religious conversion.

Jamui

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 19 June in Tola Bharathpur village in Sono block of Jamui district in Bihar, the family of Anand Kumar Das and ten other Christian families were socially ostracised. The Christians had refused to contribute for the village 'Puja'. Angered by this refusal, the villagers threatened the Christians of dire consequences and called a meeting wherein it was decided that none of the villagers would interact or talk to the Christian families. During the meeting village elders also suggested that their ration cards be cancelled as a punitive measure.

Sheohar

Physical Violence

On 23 June on Patna-Sitamarhi Road in Sheohar District of Bihar, the saffron-clad religious extremists (Bajrang Dal) attacked Pastor Viswanathan. They were trailing him on motorcycles and pushed him off his scooter. The 46-year-old pastor was distributing gospel tracts in Sheohar district unaware that the members of the Bajrang Dal, youth wing of the religious extremist group Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council), were stalking him. As soon as pastor noticed Bajrang Dal members, he slowed down the scooter, moved it to the other end of the road and pulled away,

but they pushed him with such great force that he fell on the road. There were eight men on four motorcycles. One of them grabbed the pastor from behind his neck and started to beat.

Siwan

Physical Violence

On 12 August in Harpur village of Goriakothi block in Siwan District of Bihar, a man identified as Bablu attacked Pastor Chandra Shekhar Singh, 60 years, with a knife injuring him on his abdomen. The attack took place when pastor Singh was leading a prayer service on Monday morning. Bablu, 22 years old, is a neighbour of Pastor Singh and is in the habit of disrupting worship services at Pastor Singh's church by playing loud music and Hindu hymns whenever the worship is on. On the day of the attack, Pastor Singh and the church members were disturbed by very loud music. Hence, the pastor requested Bablu to turn down the volume a bit. Infuriated by this, Bablu took out a knife and attacked pastor Singh injuring him in the process. Fortunately, pastor Singh caught his hand in time otherwise the injury could have been fatal. Pastor Singh filed a FIR against Bablu at the Goriakothi Police Station. Consequently, some right-wing organizations began spreading a propaganda against the pastor claiming that he is involved in conversions. The church has been meeting at the place for the last 13 years and has around 75 members.

Siwan

Physical Violence

On 23 August in Kodail village of Andar block in Siwan district of Bihar, Pastor Arjun Das and his team were violently persecuted. The team were showing the 'Jesus' film when a huge mob rose against them to beat them. They were immediately rushed to a secure location by the team's well-wishers. The mob in their anger broke the window glasses of the vehicle in which the team had arrived.

Bhagalpur

Threat / Harassment

On 25 August in Maheshpur village of Sunhola block in Bhagalpur district of Bihar, a Christian family was targeted by religious radicals. The radicals surrounded their house, cut off the

electricity supply and intended to beat up family members. The family has been facing threats from the same group of radicals for a long time and have been violently harassed. The incident was sparked off when the radicals asked the Christian family to donate some money for their 'puja' (a Hindu religious worship). Upon denying such a donation the radicals turned violent. Despite complaints to the police, no security has been provided to the Christians.

Patna

Hate Campaign

On 28 August in Sikaria village of Dehri tehsil in Rohtas district, anti-Christian elements instigated students to create ruckus in a Gospel Echoing Missionary Society School, after the tragic death of one of the students. Aditya, a 10th standard hostel student of GEMS English School, Sikaria, passed away on 28 August due to a poisonous insect bite. When his condition was reported, he was immediately admitted in GEMS Hospital for treatment and his parents were informed immediately. An ambulance (with ventilator facility) was also arranged to take him to Patna. The GEMS hospital team worked tirelessly for 45 hours to save the boy. Seeing the efforts of the school management, Aditya's parents conveyed to them, in the presence of police officials, that they wanted to take their son's body and had no complaints against the school. However, some troublemakers used the media to propagate false allegations against the school administration. They also instigated many students to organize a march. They planned to gather more than 300 students and to create ruckus in the school and to burn the school buses in the days to come.

Patna

Church / Worship Stopped

On 16 September in Oiara village of Dhanarua block of Patna district in Bihar, a church was shut down by local extremists. Jayaram Kumar, a church member, reported at the United Christian Forum helpline that their church, under Redeem India charitable trust and run by Pastor Sebastian Joseph, was forcefully shut down. The extremists charged the Christians with the allegation that their church was a hub of religious conversions done through force and allurements. They threatened the Christians to

stop all prayer services. Around 30-35 Christians used to gather regularly for the past two years.

Siwan

Church / Worship Stopped

On 22 September in Parasia village of Darauli block in Siwan district of Bihar, a church service was disrupted by religious radicals. Natha Bhagat, along with his family and other Christians, used to gather at their house and conduct Christian prayers every Sunday. On the day of the incident, while around 40 Christians were singing songs and praying, a mob of 40 to 45 people surrounded his house and started hurling insults. When none of the church members responded, they installed a loudspeaker system near the house in order to disturb the service. Realizing that this turned futile too, they then barged into the house and began abusing and threatening the Christians and alleged that the pastor was converting people by means of allurements. The pastor responded that he was only preaching the good news of the Christian faith and that the Constitution of India allowed him the right to propagate his faith. The miscreants then left the place after issuing a warning to the Christians to stop conducting any more prayers in the future. No police complaint was filed.

Vaishali

Vandalism

On 28 October at around 2:00 a.m. in Hajipur of Vaishali district in Bihar, ten to fifteen religious extremists strategically attacked Pastor Johnson and his family. The assailants were organized in their movement and spoke to each other in code language, referring to each group as Section A, B, C and D. They tried to break open the main door but failed to do so. They smashed the window glasses of the pastor's car, broke open the roof and tried to enter the house, shouting slogans and threatening to kill the pastor and his family. When the pastor called the police, there was no response. Hence, he called his neighbors who came for help but by then the assailants ran away.

Samastipur

Physical Violence

On 21 November in Chak Salem village of Patori

tehsil in Samastipur district of Bihar, a group of four religious extremists physically assaulted a Christian pastor. Pastor Pappu Kumar works with India Mission and conducts regular prayers in the village. A few days ago, while the pastor and his wife were standing outside their house, four men came out of a car and assaulted the pastor. "We have been searching you for a while, why are you converting people? We will kill you!" said one of the men, in a fury. The pastor started screaming for help, which caught the attention of the neighbors. When people began to gather the men got into the car and sped away. In the past few weeks, the couple have been facing many such harassments and threats, however, none of the nearby police stations agreed to file an FIR. After much effort, a complaint was finally registered at the Patori police station.

Sitamarhi

Physical Violence

On 24 November in Riga block of Sitamarhi district in Bihar, Pastor Ramnivas Kumar got severely beaten up by anti-Christian elements. Ramnivas is physically handicapped and has only one leg. He was repeatedly struck on his leg with bricks.



Chhattisgarh

Balrampur

Physical Violence

On 27 January in Balrampur district of Chhattisgarh, Pastor Ajay Kumar Ravi, who is ministering at Calvary Gospel Ministries Church, was brutally beaten up. Every Sunday, the worship service takes place at the residence of Anil Singh. On 27 January the service started around 8.00 am. About 30 believers had gathered. Barely 45 minutes into the meeting, more than two dozen religious fanatics brandishing lathis, barged into the house church, shouting slogans and began beating the Christians. The pastor was isolated and brutally beaten up. The fanatics assaulted the

men and women with their fists and sticks. “There was no conversation, but they abruptly barged into the prayer house and ruthlessly attacked us,” said Pastor Ravi Kumar. “It was a one-sided attack” added the pastor. The pastor’s motorbike was also vandalized and damaged.

Kondagaon

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 29 January in Bade Dhemli of Keshkal taluk in Kondagaon district in Chhattisgarh, a village council gave an ultimatum to the family of Mr Jageshwar Markam to leave the village because he had put his faith in Jesus Christ. Village council members, Ashman Vatti, Birju Netam, Maniram and Sukhlal Markam called up a village meeting to excommunicate this family. The family was called to the meeting and was demanded of them to disown Christ or leave the village with immediate effect. The Council threatened them with dire consequences if they entered the village again.

Narayanpur

Murder

On 17 February in Kohkameta village in Orchha tehsil of Narayanpur district in Chhattisgarh, Naxalites killed a Christian businessman, Munglu Ram Nureti. Pastor Prem Sagar while reporting the incident strongly voiced his suspicion that Munglu was killed on account of his evangelical activities which had led to the conversion of some locals to Christianity. Local extremists had opposed him on several occasions and made false allegations of forceful conversion. Villagers were angry at the Christians for converting and is believed to have influenced Maoist guerrillas to kill the Christians. They also falsely alleged and informed the Naxalite leaders that Munglu was an informer to the police.

Bastar

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 19 February in Gumadpal village in Darbha tehsil in Bastar district of Chhattisgarh, a village council called a meeting and decided to boycott Christians from the village. They warned the Christians to renounce their faith in Christ and to worship the Hindu deities. They

further decided not to allow the Christians to take water from public tap/well or daily ration, dispossess them of their caste and residence certificate and stop any cultivation on any of the fields. They decided to take off their names from the village register and take away all benefits and privileges. Subsequently, Narayanpur police station registered an FIR against unknown persons under the following sections - 147,148, 149, 452,506,323 and 302 of IPC and 13(1),38(2) and 39(2&3) UAPA.

Kondagaon

Threat / Harassment

On 9 March in Dhanora village in Keshal panchayat of Kondagaon district in Chhattisgarh, religious extremists threatened a house owner for renting out his place to Christians, and demanded that he evict them, or face dire consequences. The extremists approached the landlord along with other villagers. Subsequently the village council had a meeting to keep a daily check on the Christians and ensure that they do not preach the gospel in the village. One of the Christian victim's name is Manosan Bagh.

Balrampur

Physical Violence / Arrested

On 10 March in Bhairampur village of Balrampur tehsil in Surguja district of Chhattisgarh, a Christian named Sarju Kujur was severely beaten up by religious extremists and was later arrested by the police on false allegations. The extremists alleged that he broke an idol of one of their deities. Kujur had earlier denied their demand to construct a path through his land since he had already cultivated some crops. The extremists had wanted to build a path to the village temple. As a result, the extremists beat him severely and forced him to worship their deity. Later the police arrested and sent him to jail under the section of 295A of the Indian Penal Code.

Kondagaon

Physical Violence

On 18 March in Pharasgaon town in Kondagaon district of Chhattisgarh, a Christian, Som Lal, was severely beaten up by religious extremists on the account of his faith in Christ.

The assault was so brutal that his relatives had to rush him to a nearby hospital.

Kondagaon

Threat / Harassment

On 19 March in Karmari village in Bade Rajpur block of Kondagaon district in Chhattisgarh, religious extremists threatened Pastor Rupesh Kumar Salam to leave his Christian faith or face severe consequences. The pastor and his family, along with his co-pastors Sagram Salam and Sunaram, are involved in Christian ministry in the three villages of Mari, Dhanora and Keshkal. A huge mob from 22 surrounding villages gathered and threatened the pastor to renounce his faith in Christ and worship their deities. But when the pastor denied bowing down before their deities, the extremists along with villagers forcefully asked the pastor's wife to resign from her job at the Anganwadi (a type of rural child-care centre in India). The mob also threatened the pastor with severe consequences if he did not leave his Christian faith.

Bijapur

Threat / Harassment

On 24 March in Farsegarh village of Bhairamgarh block in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh, a mob of 120 religious extremists barged into a prayer meeting, attacked Pastor Sudru and warned him with dire consequences. The extremists had gathered from ten villages. They assaulted the pastor and Christians for conducting prayer meetings in the village and told them to stop the meetings or face dire consequences.

Bilaspur

Threat / Harassment

On 24 March in Sipat village of Masturi tehsil in Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh, religious extremists surrounded the house of a Christian pastor, created a ruckus, threatened the pastor with dire consequence, and demanded that he leave the village. The extremists surrounded the house when a prayer meeting was going on. They shouted anti-Christian slogans and called the pastor out of the house. Though the Christians called up the police for help, they were met with a cold response from them. The

pastor reeling under serious threats had to leave the village along with his family.

Dhamtari

Forced Conversion

On 30 March in Dargahan village, in Dhamtari district of Chhattisgarh, villagers along with religious extremists decided to boycott eight Christians families from the village and forced them to convert to Hinduism causing serious mental trauma to the Christians.

Dantewada

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 6 April in Pondum village in Dantewada tehsil in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh, religious extremists asked a Christian couple to leave the village owing to their faith. If they did not oblige, they could be killed. The couple had recently accepted the Christian faith and used to go for worship in the nearby village which is around 12 kilometres away. They never hosted any prayer meeting at their house out of fear of the extremists.

Janjgir

Threat / Harassment

On 11 April in Janjgir district of Chhattisgarh, Christians were threatened with physical assault and social boycott if they did not worship Hindu deities. A village council summoned Chhedi Lal and other Christians and demanded them to worship their deities and also bear the cost of an upcoming religious event. Some extremists went to the extent of forcing Christians to bow down and worship Hindu deities.

Sukma

Vandalism

On 23 May in Bondiguda village in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh, religious extremists, along with some villagers, vandalized the houses of Christians, and forced them to leave the village. Sariyam Mangi, Puram Nande, Pamda Joji and other Christians - including children and elderly folks - were persecuted and beaten up. Consequently, Christians drafted a complaint and submitted to the District Collector. The Collector assured that

necessary action would be taken. Later the Superintendent of Police and District Collector visited the place of the incident. Eventually, one of the seven houses were rebuilt by the villagers.

Bastar

Threat / Harassment

On 7 July in Tetarkhuti locality of Jagdalpur city in Bastar district of Chhattisgarh, a mob consisting of Bajrang Dal members, led by Ms. Mina and Dilip, gathered at a church led by Pastor Eshahak Das, where a Sunday worship service was in progress. The mob pressurized the Christians to stop the prayer services and shouted Hindu slogans like "Jai Shree Ram". They also threatened the pastor that if the prayer services continued to take place, they would beat him up. The pastor called the Police helpline to report about the incident. Thereafter, the police came and dispersed the mob.

Bastar

Threat / Harassment

On 21 July in Kilepal village of Bastanar tehsil of Bastar district in Chhattisgarh, a mob of around one hundred religious fanatics, carrying weapons, surrounded a church where Christians, had gathered for prayer. They tried to forcefully break into the prayer house. The mob demanded that the prayer meeting be stopped and that Christians recant their Christian faith.

Kondagaon

Threat / Harassment

On 27 July in Odargaon village of Makdi tehsil in Bastar district of Chhattisgarh, Christians, Dhamsay and others, were threatened by a Village Sarpanch (head) owing to their Christian faith. The men had approached the Village Council to get their birth certificates, but instead of helping them the Sarpanch abused them. He told them that since they had converted to Christianity, they cannot avail the benefits of being members of the scheduled tribe. He also threatened them that if they visited the Panchayat again, he would kill them.

Dantewada

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 10 August in Badekameli village of Dantewada tehsil in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh, a mob of villagers led by village council head and member of Adhivasi Maha Sabha gathered together and demanded fifteen Christian families to either leave their faith in Jesus Christ and practice the Adivasi culture or leave the village immediately.

Kondagaon Social Opposition / Boycott

On 24 August in Bishrampuri village of Kondagaon district in Chhattisgarh, the village council opposed the burial of a Christian pastor's father owing to their Christian beliefs. The pastor sought the protection of the police, who in turn helped the pastor bury his father in a private land owned by him.

Bastar

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 29 August in Tirathgarh village in Darbha tehsil of Bastar district in Chhattisgarh, the villagers stopped the burial plans of a Christian family. The family had lost a family member, Salmu, due to poor health conditions. When they tried to bury his body, the villagers stopped the family to do so in the village. A complaint was filed at the nearby police station. Consequently, police mediated for a truce and helped in the burial of the dead boy in a place allotted by the village council.

Bastar

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 6 September in Chindbahar village in Darbha tehsil of Bastar district in Chhattisgarh, a meeting was called where Christian families of Manjuli Kashyap and others were asked to either leave their faith in Christ or leave the village. Consequently, they were ostracized from the community.

Bilaspur

Physical Violence

On 23 September in Ghanapara village in Takhatpur tehsil of Bilaspur district in Chhattisgarh, Pramila Bai Bhargav and her son Umesh Bhargav were brutally beaten up by religious radicals. The incident occurred after

the two had returned home from a Sunday worship service. Radicals surrounded their house and asked them to come out. When they did, they pounced on them and grievously injured them, demanding that they renounce their faith in Jesus Christ. Around 10 Christian families live in the village. Most of these Christian families have been discriminated and boycotted from all social activities in the village. They have been under unimaginable pressure and duress from local religious fanatics, making daily life very difficult, coercing them to come back to their original faith of Hinduism. These families gather in a Christian home for worship.

Jagdalpur

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 5 October in Jagdalpur district of Chhattisgarh, three Christian families were threatened and ostracized from their community because of their faith in Jesus Christ. The opposing villagers also misbehaved with the Christian women. Eventually, the three families, consisting of 24 members, were forced to leave the village.

Durg

Threat / Harassment

On 8 October in Balod village of Balod tehsil in Durg district of Chhattisgarh, religious radicals threatened Christians for their faith. Kishore, a Christian, had invited Pastor Pramod Chatri to his house to pray for his family. While the pastor was talking to the family, around a dozen radicals unexpectedly gathered outside Kishore's house and asked the pastor to come out. Sensing foul play, the Christians did not allow the pastor to go out. Kishore and his family somehow managed to convince the fanatics to leave and brought the situation under control. After the fanatics left, the pastor safely returned home only to later find out that a larger number of religious fanatics had returned to Kishore's house and threatened them because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Subsequently, Christians complained about the matter to local police; the pastor lodged a complaint at Old Bhilai 3 Police station too. Police assured that issues like this would be stringently dealt.

Bijapur

Threat / Harassment

On 13 October in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh, religious extremists confronted and opposed a group of pastors who were propagating the Christian faith. A team of pastors from Telangana were preaching the Gospel and distributing tracts in Bijapur district when some extremists rebuked them and informed the police. The police took them into custody.

Kondagaon

Forced Conversion

On 19 October in Bafana village of Kondagaon taluk in Kondagaon district of Chhattisgarh, a meeting was called by the villagers to harass Christians by forcing them to convert back to their former religion ('Gharwapsi' or 'homecoming') or leave the village.

Bastar

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 25 October in Bastar district of Chhattisgarh, villagers did not allow a pastor to bury his deceased mother. Although the police tried to intervene, villagers asked for ten years of contribution money for the village deity.

Bastar

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 27 October in Ulnar village in Bastar district of Chhattisgarh, villagers opposed the burial of a young girl, Suman Nag, daughter of a Christian named Mohan Nag. A mob of 1500 villagers had gathered to oppose the burial. Some religious extremists pressurized the police who reached there to help the family of the deceased.

Sukma

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 7 November in Gadiras (Turrepal) village of Gadi Ras panchayat in Sukma block of Sukma district in Chhattisgarh, some villagers threatened Christians, Sodi Joga and others, to either worship Hindu gods or leave the village. To oust the Christians from the village, they

barged into their house and threw out some of their belongings and threatened to kill them if they entered the village again. The victims, since recently, have been forced to drink water from the public pond because they had been deprived of accessing water from the government facility at the village.

Kanker

Physical Violence

On 7 November in Patharri village of Kanker tehsil in Kanker district of Chhattisgarh, villagers verbally abused a Christians, Kameshwar Duggar and others, and severely assaulted them when they refused to heed to their threats and demands of worshipping Hindu gods.

Narayanpur

Threat / Harassment

On 19 November in Orchha village of Orchha tehsil in Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh, the Patwari (land records officer) of the village denied issuing a Scheduled Tribe certificate in favour of a Christian person, Divya Nurely, who belongs to a Scheduled Tribe. The Patwari threatened the Christians that he would cancel all the Tribe certificates issued in their favour, if they did not renounce their Christian faith.

Bijapur

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 26 November in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh, a group of villagers led by some religious extremists opposed the burial of a Christian's, Anjali Kadi, mortal remains. The assailants were very aggressive and insisted that the family of the deceased should convert back to their previous religion.

Goa

South Goa

Threat / Harassment

On 5 January in Cuncolim city of South Goa

district in Goa a Christian, Mrs Anita Naik, was threatened by Narayan Desai, a leader at the nearby temple, and others for putting a decorative star on her house for Christmas in Cuncolim. Anita Naik and her family conduct worship in their house and are Hindu converts. Their house is near the temple and authorities noticed that family had put up the Christmas star. The temple authorities threatened them that they would demolish their house if the family did not oblige.

Gujarat

Navsari

Hate Campaign

On 29 January in Gandeva village of Navsari district in Gujarat, Indian Express, a mainstream secular media outlet, covered the following article – "Banners and boards have sprung up in Navsari district's Gandeva village, dominated by tribal, announcing a "ban on entry of outsider Christians". Local tribal Hindus, who put up the banners, said that the "ban" was to prevent "outsiders from coming to the village and converting tribal Hindus". Written in Gujarati, a banner at the village entry point, Haripura street, read: "Christi dharm parnara tamam bhai-behano Gandeva Haripura faliya ma baharno koipan vyakti e faliya ma pravesh karvo nahi (All the outsider brothers-sisters of Christian religion, should not enter into Haripura street)."

Navsari

Arrested

On 8 February in Gandeva village of Gandevi village in Navsari district of Gujarat, a Christian pastor was put in custody for over 24 hours at the Gandevi police station. Mohan Bhai Chagan bhai Patel is a pastor of Harvest Church in India and has been in Christian service for the past 15 years. Around 150-200 Christians gather at his church regularly. Opposition towards the pastor began about a month ago when a funeral of a Christian was taking place. Some villagers forcefully stopped the funeral and insisted that the rituals be done as per Hindu customs. Recently, posters and banners came up in the village opposing the entry of

Christians in the village, to which the Christians had complained to the government officials. Hence, on 8 February morning, at around 10:30 am, police came to the pastor's house and took him to the Gandevi police station. There they kept him behind bars for more than 24 hours. He was released on bail on 9 February. The pastor further reported to our sources that some villagers are planning to disrupt Christian prayers that are being held in a neighbouring village called Kevadiya, where around 100-150 Christians gather regularly.

Navsari

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 9 February in Navsari district of Gujarat, religious radicals barged into the house of a Christian and verbally abused the family. Pastor Ankit Bhai Raman Bhai Rathod of Emmanuel Fellowship Church conducts worship in the house of Rakesh Bhai Vinu Bhai Patel's house for the past three years. Around 15 people gather for the prayers. On the day of the incident, about 8pm at night, 20-30 villagers barged into Rakesh's house and threatened him to stop the services. Rakesh told them to come on the next day. Hence on 10 February, Sunday, at around 10am, about 30-40 people came and forced the pastor to stop the worship. They again returned an hour later and reprimanded Rakesh for allowing Christians from outside the village to enter. They then demanded that he leave his Christian faith and return to his ancestral religion. They also intended to remove the Cross from his house but were unable to do so. Despite the opposition Rakesh stood firm on his Christian convictions. Seeing the determination of Christians, the villagers decided to ostracize Rakesh's family from the village. No police complaint was filed.

Navsari

Church / Worship Stopped

On 10 February in Gandeva village of Gandevi village in Navsari district of Gujarat, villagers disrupted a Sunday worship service. Shakti Bhai Mangan Bhai Nayaka is in Christian ministry with Voice of Krupasanam Ministries and has been conducting prayers in Gandeva village for the past three years. On 10 February, while worship was going on with 35-40 believers, (they hold prayer meeting in a Christian house in the past 3 years) around

10:30am, 30-40 people of the local village came and threatened the Christians. They demanded that until the worship is stopped, they would not leave the place. The pastor decided to give in to their demands fearing the safety of the women and children in the church. No police complaint was made by either party.

Ahmedabad

Church / Worship Stopped

On 23rd February in Ahmedabad city of Gujarat, religious extremists disrupted a worship service and threatened the Christians with dire consequences. Pastor Edwin conducts Bible studies and worship service on a regular basis. During the prayer meeting few extremists barged into the meeting, stopped the believers from praying, and threatened them not to continue any church activities.

Valsad

Physical Violence

On 18 March in Vapi city of Valsad district in Gujarat, the Christian Brethren Church had to go through a violent attack from religious fanatics. A day earlier two women claiming to be from Uttar Pradesh had come to the Church when Sunday worship service was going on. They had asked for some Christian booklets, which the pastor happily did. Pastor Josh Dally had never seen the women before. In the evening some neighbours reported that the 2 women had come along with 3 children and were seen putting some materials, used for religious rituals, on the road near the parking lot of the church. On 18 March, the next day, more than 300 religious fanatics surrounded Pastor Dally. They threatened to kill him and said that they would demolish the Church and build a temple in its place unless the pastor writes an apology for hurting religious sentiments of Hindus. The attackers alleged that the pastor has been converting people in the area and threatened a mass violence. The pastor, to save his life, was forced to write an apology, which was later shared widely on news, print and digital media. These spates of harassment are not new to the pastor. He had earlier been summoned to a nearby police station.

Bahruch

Threat / Harassment

On 4 June in Hansot taluk of Bahruch district in

Gujarat, Christians - Jagdish, Kamlesh and Vijay - were threatened by extremists on account of their faith. One of the local pastors, Mukesh Bhagat, who also gets involved in social activism for Christian community, helped the affected Christians. They visited the local police station and collector's office with application seeking protection and arrest of culprits. Eventually, with the intervention of administrative authorities, prayers were resumed soon.

Navsari

Church / Worship Stopped

On 6 October in Ashtagam village in Navsari tehsil of Navsari district in Gujarat, a mob of 100 people disrupted prayer services at a house church. The pastor, Umesh Halpati, filed a police complaint following the incident and police promised to provide protection, but no action was taken to that effect. Thereafter, the next week again a mob of 60 to 70 people gathered at their house and threatened them to stop the prayer services.

Dahod

Physical Violence

On 22 October in Fatehpura tehsil of Dahod district in Gujarat, Pastor Ramesh Pargi and other Christians, including a woman, were severely beaten up. Pastor Pargi is regular to a village for prayer meetings in Fatehpura tehsil. Around 35-40 people gather for the weekly prayers every Tuesday. As usual, after concluding the meeting, when the Pastor was leaving the place, some anti-Christians elements showed up and strongly protested the prayers. They labeled the prayers to be a religious conversion activity. Their hatred was so much that in the fit of rage they attacked the pastor and other Christians, outraged the modesty of the women, and continually kept beating the pastor with sticks and iron objects until he fell unconscious. Thinking that the Pastor was dead the attackers left the spot quickly. The pastor bled profusely and lost about 1.5 litres blood.

Kheda

Threat / Harassment

On 3 November in Kheda District of Gujarat, Pastor Rajnikant was summoned at the Limbos Police Station. When he reached there, the

officer showed him some Bible tracts and asked, "Is this yours? Is your name printed on this? Is this your mobile number?" Recognizing the tract, the Pastor immediately replied, "Yes". The policeman whose name is still unknown to the Pastor said, "Why are you converting people by distributing this tract? we have received a complaint from Mr. Ratan Singh about you!" Subsequently the pastor was detained at the station for some time. The officer asked him to sign a letter of undertaking affirming that the tracts were written by him and that he would desist from distributing those tracts in the future. However, the pastor refused. The Policemen did not insist and allowed the pastor to go with a warning to stop distributing tracts.

Dahod

Physical Violence / Arrested

On 11 November in Dahod District in Gujarat, several Christians were beaten up and abused while they had gathered for a prayer meeting. Subsequently, four Christians went to the Garbada police station, but they were detained for 24 hours and were threatened before being released. Seemingly the local villagers had been meeting and planning strategies to stop the Christians from gathering in worship services. Prayer meeting is led by Pastor Kanu Amaliya

Navsari

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 17 November reports came in from Ashtagam village in Navsari tehsil of Navsari district in Gujarat, about continuous trouble from local villagers in conducting Christian prayers. Pastor Umesh regularly conducts Christian prayers in the village. However, of late, there have been repeated disruptions during the prayer meetings on Sundays, for the past one month. Villagers from Ashtagam and surrounding villages have kept coming at the prayer meeting site, disrupting the Sunday services and manhandled church members. They have issued warnings of horrific consequences if the Sunday meetings were not stopped completely. In response, Christians approached the police station at Munsad with their complaints, but were scolded and chased away, instead.

Mehsagar

Threat / Harassment

On 25 November in Vankdi village in Santrampur taluk in Mahisagar district of Gujarat, police harassed and threatened the Christians. Pastor Ramanbhai Babhor leads the Vishwa Vani Church in the village. Local police confronted the Christians and told them that a criminal case had been filed against the pastor. However, police were not willing to divulge any detail about the nature of the complaint. Later it came to be known that the Sarpanch (village head) of village had filed a complaint.

Navsari

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 28 November in Ashtagam village in Navsari tehsil of Navsari district in Gujarat, villagers erected a 'No Entry' display hoarding for Christians at the main entry passage into the village. Furthermore, they created pressure on the Christians who live in the village to renounce their Christian faith. Subsequently 34 Christian members complained to the District Collector against the village council leaders for the social boycott and harassment.



Haryana

Fatehabad

Threat / Harassment

On 7 January in Ratia city of Fatehabad district in the state of Haryana, a man accused his wife, sister-in-law and brother-in-law of forcefully converting him. He approached the local police station alleging that he was receiving life-threats from the three as they were pressuring him to convert to Christianity. Sources informed that a Bajrang Dal leader had misled the man into approaching the police with false allegations and led him to accuse Pastor Chhinder Pal of Muktidwar Satsang Bhawan as well. The three have been attending Pastor Pal's church for the last 4-months. Some church members who went to meet the SHO, brought back the news that the police have indicated that they would arrest Pastor Chhinder Pal under IPC section 120B unless he

resorts to some preventive measures.

Panchkula

Physical Violence

On 17 February in Barwala tehsil of Panchkula district in Haryana, a Christian pastor and congregation members were manhandled during a Sunday Worship service, in a religiously motivated attack involving a mob of 20 thugs. A gang of "extremists" attacked Pastor Sister Baljit Kaur and mainly the female congregation of around 100 people. The alleged assailants accused Pastor Baljit of actively being involved in converting people to Christianity, a charge which she vehemently denied. The attack was again orchestrated in a similar manner on Sunday 24 February despite the presence of the local police. Pastor Baljit Kaur runs a charitable organization called Prabhu Marg Charitable Trust and conducts prayer services at her residence.

Faridabad

Threat / Harassment

On 11 May in Dabua Colony of Faridabad district in Haryana, a Christian pastor, named K.G. Mathew of Rehoboth Fellowship, reported that he was getting frequent abusive calls threatening him to stop the church activities in Dabua Colony.

Karnal

Arrested

On 8 June in Kachhwa village located of Karnal tehsil in Karnal district of Haryana, two brothers - Ajmer Singh and Lakhim Chand - were arrested on the basis of a complaint filed by a villager named Pirthi who alleged that they forcefully tried to convert him to Christianity. Pirthi also mentioned in the complaint that the Christians abused his religion. The police registered an FIR under section 295-A, 298, 323 and 506, I.P.C. against the Christians.

Jind

Physical Violence

On 23 June in Jind district of Haryana, the General Secretary, North Regional Secretary, and a few other Christians from India Evangelical Mission were taken to a police station after a Sunday worship service was abruptly and forcefully stopped by the police.

Himachal Pradesh

Kangra

Threat / Harassment

On 28 January in Dehra village of Kangra tehsil in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh, sword-bearing extremists barged into a house where Christians were studying the Bible and threatened them of dire consequences. The mob of about 200 villagers came with swords and threatened the Christians to stop the prayers. They tried to force Christians gathered there to bow to a statue of a Hindu deity and consume their prasada (a Hindu food offering). There are only 20 Christians in the village. After the incident most of them are scared and gather for prayers in small groups.

Solan

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 11 February in Baddi town of Solan district in Himachal Pradesh, a complaint was lodged against a Christian woman named Archana Jaswal by a Hindu woman blaming her of trying to allure her to convert to Christianity. Archana had converted from Hinduism to Christianity many years ago and had faced severe opposition. A First Information Report was registered, and Archana had to procure a bail. Religious extremists got on the streets on 15 February, demanding strict action against Archana from the police authorities and her dismissal from the government (Education Department) job that she is in. To please the protestors, Archana was transferred from Nalagarh to Dharamshala. But the protestors expressed their displeasure at the decision of transfer and demanded that she be dismissed. On 17 February, a mob of religious extremists prepared a Yajna (in Hinduism the ritual done in front of a sacred fire, often with mantras) outside Archana's house and they were constantly calling upon her to come and join the ritual. The mob said that they will reconvert her to Hinduism, apply coal on her face (to disgrace her) and shouted several other threats. Archana was terrified and somehow managed to leave her house and disappear. Archana's husband, who is a high official in the police, started to live separate (though not

Police along with a few villagers had barged into the program and took the Christians into custody. One of the Christians, Lemguat Vaiphei, a missionary, was made to kneel and was beaten with lathis. The missionary was also pressurized to confess to having involved in forceful conversions. But repeated telephone calls from Christian advocacy groups made the police personnel to soften their cruel approach and compelled them to release the Christians, unconditionally.

Bhiwani

Church / Worship Stopped

On 28 July in Mundhal Khurd village of Bhiwani tehsil in Bhiwani district of Haryana, two police personnel disrupted an ongoing service at Pastor Ramesh Chandra's church. They ordered the service to be stopped and took the pastor and two of his church members to the nearby police station. Later the three Christians were released from the police station without any charges levelled against them.

Gurugram

Physical Violence

On 22 September in Gurugram city of Delhi-NCR, a mob of 30 to 40 religious extremists attacked Rev. Patra Mangla, a retired priest of the Church of North India, and his family. Rev. Mangla is in charge of a residential school in the city. The mob attacked them using bricks and spades lying in the compound, meant for some construction work at the school. The priest's son was severely injured by the mob and ended losing four of his front teeth in the incident.

Kaithal

Church / Worship Stopped

On 8 October at Agarwal Marriage Palace in Kaithal District of Haryana, a youth camp organized by Assemblies of God (AG) Church, was disrupted by extremists in a foul manner. Police arrived at the spot and took pastors - John Wesley, John Parmeshwaran, Priyan and Kingsley into custody at Kaithal police station of sector 21.



legally separated) and took their kids along with him, as she had become a Christian. "She is paying a heavy cost for her faith," said a pastor who visited her today.

Shimla

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 29 August in Nerwa village in Chaupal tehsil of Shimla district in Himachal Pradesh, Pastor Emmanuel Sangeetha and his wife were taken into custody by the local police. They questioned him about his identity, his objectives in coming to Nerwa, and falsely accused him of involving in forceful conversion activities. They told the couple that they were acting on a complaint filed by the villagers. Pastor Emmanuel and his wife were later released with a severe warning. Upon returning to their home, the locals gathered around their house, screaming and ranting abuses. Scared and shocked they decided to leave the village and moved to a nearby town.

Rehlu

Arrested

On 8 October in Rehlu district of Himachal Pradesh, a pastor Madan was put in jail on false allegations by an individual, who formerly was a Christian and had turned hostile. He alleged that the pastor had failed to cure his ailing son.

Shepherd Church. The Christian prayer service was being held at the house of a Christian named Anand Ram. Around 65 believers had gathered for the program.

Jammu

Physical Violence

On 25 January in Jammu city of Jammu and Kashmir, religious extremists disrupted a prayer meeting and beat up the pastor brutally. The pastor was conducting the meeting and around 30 believers had gathered for prayer. A stranger came in during the meeting and started taking pictures. Later he called up his associates, who took the pastor out and brutally beat him up. The local Christians called up the police, but by the time the extremists had run away from the spot.

Domana

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 6 October in Domana town in Jammu district of Jammu and Kashmir, a group of religious extremists forcefully took a Christian pastor, Packiyaraj, serving with Assembly of God church, to the Domana police station and levelled false allegations of misbehaving with women.

Jammu and Kashmir

Jammu city

Physical Violence

On 20 January in Jammu city of Jammu and Kashmir, while Pastor Sunil Sontra was leading a Sunday worship service, a youth who was attending the worship service pulled the pastor out of the room. Waiting outside was a mob of around 50 religious fanatics, who physically assaulted and beat up the pastor, alleging him of indulging in religious conversion activities. The incident took place at 11.30 am at Good

Jharkhand

Pakud

Arrested

On 15 January in Sonajori village in Pakaur block of Pakur district in Jharkhand, Krishna Kumar and Dawood Malto were arrested during a prayer meeting that was taking place at the house of Santosh, a Christian. Police took Krishna and Dawood to the local police station nearby. Sussana Marandi, the village head, Govind Ravidas, a member of a religious extremist organization, and a few others accompanied them to the police station. They fiercely alleged the Christians of involving in conversion activities, instigated the police against them, demanded that the men be arrested, a FIR (First Information Report) be filed, and they be remanded in prison.

Chaibasa

Physical Violence

On 29 January in Chaibasa district of Jharkhand, many Christians were forced to leave their village after a series of attacks against them by local villagers. On the day of the incident a mob of local villagers closed all the exit points of the village and attacked the Christians with iron rods, cane, axe, arrow and sharp weapons. Rev. Rajendra Babu, a local missionary of the Friends Missionary Prayer Band, was attacked with iron rods, while he was trying to leave the village, which broke the helmet he was wearing. Members of the mob also beat up three other Christians identified only as Madan Muduiya, Sunil and Vinod. The mob continued their rampage, breaking doors, windows and destroying the furniture and crockery in the house of a Christian. The mob also dragged some the Christians including children inside the room and locked it from outside and attempted to set the room ablaze.

Palamu

Threat / Harassment

On 6 February in Palamu district of Jharkhand, eight Christian families facing a lot of pressure from Hindu right wing groups to convert to Hinduism finally filed a complaint with the police asking for protection. The Christians have been threatened throughout the month of January by a group led by Bimal Chandarvansi and Uma Singh.

Ranchi

Threat / Harassment

On 10 February at Bodeya-Kanke area in Ranchi city of Jharkhand, Kendriya Yuva Sarna Vikas Samiti organized a meeting chaired by Jaimangal Oraon under the banner of Sarna Sanatan Surkasha Manch. The meeting particularly discussed and strategized on how to obstruct Christian evangelical activities so that nobody accepts the Christian faith. They further decided that Christians preachers be prohibited from entering the village. They resolved that those that had accepted Christianity would be brought back by 'Ghar wapasi' (reconversion or 'home coming') to Sarna Sanatan faith.

Ranchi

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 18 February in Khunti district of Jharkhand, a Christian man, who denied giving donation for a Hindu festival, was threatened by the religious extremists. Villagers demanded that the man and his family renounce their faith in Jesus Christ because they had denied giving donation for a Hindu puja (ritual). The extremists threatened the family with dire consequences and warned that they would be boycotted from any access to the village.

Khunti

Arrested

On 4 March in Masko village of Karra tehsil in Khunti district of Jharkhand, religious extremists lodged a false allegation of forceful religious conversion and arrested many Christians. Every year villagers demand goods and valuables from the Christians for the Hindu festivals or Hindu idols. This year they demanded Rs. 1,100 which the Christians were unable to donate. Annoyed by this, the extremists approached the State forest department and falsely alleged that the Christians frequently stole wood from the nearby forest, in order to get them arrested.

Hazaribagh

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 10 March in Pandana Tand village of Sewa Tand panchayat in Chalkusha block of Hazaribagh District in Jharkhand, some religious extremists beat up Christians on the false allegation of forceful religious conversions. Local villagers practicing the Sarna religion, mixed with Hindu elements of worship, had begun collecting funds for puja (a Hindu prayer ritual). They announced in the village that Christians are deprived of all rights, and that if they did not contribute to pujas, they must be cast out of the village. When Christians refused to contribute on 8 March, two days later the villagers surrounded the wife of a Christian, Belu Ganjo, as she went to draw water from a well at 9 p.m. The entire village surrounded her and had decided to tie her with a rope and drown her in the well. She screamed and her husband came running to rescue her. Meanwhile the women in the mob attacked her and the men attacked Ganjo. They beat them

up with lathis, a bamboo stick bound with iron, and kicked them.

Chatra

Physical Violence

On 20 March in Kalyanpur village of Tandwa block in Chatra district of Jharkhand, religious extremists beat up few Christian believers for their Christian convictions. Further, the extremists threatened the Christians living in that area. Seemingly, this has been an ongoing issue wherein Christians have been frequently threatened and physically abused.

Ranchi

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 30 March in Nagda Toli locality in Ranchi district of Jharkhand, two Christian women, Christina Oraon and Sukro Munda, were falsely accused of carrying out religious conversion work. The incident happened under the jurisdiction of Lalpur Police station and they were handed over to police Sujit Oran who is the husband of Councilor Roshni Khalkho. Women were brought to Magistrate Shahshi Nilima Dungdung on the next day. In the examination report of Magistrate, it emerged that accusations were baseless and false.

Gumla

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 14 June in Mahuatoli village of Gumla District in Jharkhand, 12 Christian families fled from the village owing to their faith. They had been reeling under constant threats by the villagers that if they did not return to the tribal Sarna religion they would be ostracized. A meeting that took place on 12 June, village leaders of Mahuatoli summoned the 12 Christian families for a public hearing and an announcement regarding their excommunication from the village. In front of the villagers, they declared Christians as 'polluted' and that the village should be cleansed from Christianity. The village leader read out orders for villagers to refrain from mingling with Christians, exclude them from family and social gatherings, and to refrain from speaking with them, buying from or selling to them, or having any communication with them. Threatened with death, most of the Christian families fled the village.

West Singhbhum

Physical Violence

On 14 July in Baliaposi village in Majhgaon Tehsil of Pashchimi Singhbhum district in Jharkhand, Christians were seriously injured in an attack launched by religious radicals. The incident took place when eight Christian families refused to recant their Christian Faith when threatened. At the expense of their faith, five of them were seriously injured. A mob of more than 100 radicals along with several villagers attacked the Christians during their worship service on Sunday. The mob beat up the Christians mercilessly displaying anger over their presence in the village. Later when the Christians gave a formal complaint, requesting to file a First Information Report (FIR), the police refused to file it for them. They were instead told that the police will go to the village the next morning to investigate the matter. The next day, after their investigation, police officials confirmed the attacks on the Christians but did not reprimand the villagers. Instead, they highlighted that the main reason for the attacks was the number of people converting to Christianity in the community. Subsequently, police forced the Christians to come to a written compromise with the villagers by accepting that they will no longer convert people to Christianity within the village and in neighbouring villages.

Ranchi

Murder

On 27 August in the remote village of Lukujhariya, 28 miles from Ranchi in Jharkhand, a Christian woman was murdered by her in-laws. There are only five other Christian families in Lukujhariya village, including Rohit Oraon's family. His uncle Phulchand, was the first to put his faith in Christ (as all villagers bear the surname of their tribe, Oraon, they are identified by first name). On 27 August, Rohit's wife, Parvati Devi, 23-year-old, was killed by his brother and father. They disapproved of him marrying out of his tribe and becoming a Christian, and he knew they were jealous of his prosperity and the fellowship he found among Christians even though they had tried to leave him desolate by shunning him. Losing his wife to an axe-blow in front of his 3-year-old daughter, Rohit Oraon believes that the murder was planned, not spontaneous, and that his relatives also meant to kill him and his child. A

FIR was lodged against the brothers on charges of murder.

Koderma

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 1 September in Koderma district of Jharkhand, two Christians were physically assaulted and accused of religious conversion by a group of young men. Pastor Varnwal and his church member, Ashok Mehta, were returning to Domchanch from Punadi at about 8 p.m. on a scooter when a group of young men stopped them. "A group of seven youths stopped our motorbike, nabbed us by the neck and took away the keys," They accused the Christians of kidnapping infants from the village and demanded to see their ID cards. The pastor said that he is physically handicapped and there was no way that he could involve in such crimes. However, they started beating the two, and upon finding copies of the Bible in their motorbike, started accusing them of converting people fraudulently. The two were taken to Nawalsahi police station.

Sahibganj

Vandalism

On 3 September in Tinpahar village of Rajmahal Tehsil in Sahibganj district of Jharkhand, the St. John Berchmans Inter College located at Mundli was destroyed and raided by a crowd of 500 people. The college is run by the Jesuits of the Dumka-Raiganj province of the Catholic Church. According to Fr. Thomas Kuzhively, secretary of the institute, unleashing the fury of religious activists would have been a quarrel between some students living in the adjacent hostel, which is home to tribal youth. The secretary said the crowd showed up at the college armed with sticks, chains, iron clubs, knives and guns. Then they selected the tribal students of the Loyola Adivasi Hostel and beat them fiercely. Two of them suffered serious injuries and were saved only thanks to the intervention of the sisters who came between the attacked and the criminals. The crowd also tried to block the ambulance called to transport the injured to the hospital. After the violent attack, the college remained shut even a week after it was vandalized, and no arrests were made. The hoodlums were allegedly 'activists' of some RSS affiliated group. "We cannot open the college. Everything has been destroyed," Father

Kuzhively told a Catholic media organization. On 11 September, the college authorities emailed appeals to the governor and chief minister of Jharkhand state, the chairpersons of the National Human Rights Commission and National Commission for Minorities and legal authorities in the country requesting immediate action against the attackers.

Godda

Arrested

On 6 September in Godda district of Jharkhand, Father Binoy of Rajdah Mission and Mr. Munna Hansdak were arrested and sent to judicial custody. Around 8 a.m., the Station In-charge (S.I.) of Deodard police station along with a few policemen arrived at the Mission, which falls under Bhagalpur Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church. They said that they had come to take Fr. Binoy to the Superintendent of Police (S.P.) in Godda at his specific direction. Despite the insistence of Father Arun Vincent and Father Binoy that the S.I. show a written letter from the S.P., the officer continued his demand that they go along with him. Hence the two fathers got into their church vehicle and followed the S.I.'s car. However instead of taking the clerics to the S.P. they drove them to the Deodard police station. They were then told that a FIR had been lodged against them alleging that they were involved in forcible conversion of locals and illegal occupation of tribal land. The FIR also mentioned the name of Munna Hansdak, a parishioner at the Rajdah Mission church, who had already been taken into custody. On Saturday 7 September at about 3 p. m., Father Arun was released from police custody. However, Father Binoy and Mr. Munna were taken to the S.P. at Godda. Thereafter the SP called a press conference and publicly interrogated the two in the presence of media persons. During the press conference, they were made to wear a black face mask. Subsequently, they were produced before a local court and after the usual formalities and interrogation, the judge remanded them to judicial custody in Godda Jail.

Koderma

Physical Violence / Arrested

On 8 September in Domchanch village of Koderma district in Jharkhand, 40 to 50 Bajrang Dal (BD) members attacked Pastor Manohar

Prasad Varnwal's house-church worship at about 9:30 a.m. Bajrang Dal Koderma District Convener Shyam Sundar Yadav led the intrusion into the house, where at least 40 Christians had gathered for worship. At first only eight people barged inside and started shouting at Christians. They abused the Christians with filthy language and thrashed the pastor. His wife, Savita Devi, tried to stop them, but BD members pushed her away. Soon the rest of the mob showed up and forced them to leave the house; at least five of them seized Devi's hands, snatched away her bangle, earrings and gold chain worth 22,000 rupees and threatened that Christians will be sacrificed alive. They tore many copies of the Bible, seized a carton of Christian literature, damaged a wooden bench and took away the offering box. Christians were accused of converting the entire district and luring people with their healing tricks. Police from Domchanch police station arrived but instead of arresting the assailants, they ordered the pastor, his family and a few church members to crowd into a police Jeep. They then temporarily locked up and threatened pastor Manohar Prasad Varnwal – whose ability to walk is impaired by polio – along with his wife, children and some church members.

Khunti Murder

On 22 September in Khunti district of Jharkhand, a mob severely injured three tribal Christians, one of whom died on the spot. They were targeted on the assumption that they were about to kill a restricted animal.

Garhwa Physical Violence

On 12 November in Parihara village of Garhwa tehsil in Garhwa district of Jharkhand, the members of a small house church were attacked and severely beaten by radical Hindu nationalists. Pastor Basant Kumar Paul, his son, and wife were all severely injured as a result. The attack took place as members of the Evangelical Church of the Calvary Gospel Ministry met for a prayer meeting in Parihara village, located in the Garhwa district of Jharkhand. The pastor was leading the prayer meeting when eight or nine Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)

extremists attacked. According to witnesses, the extremists beat everyone present, including Pastor Paul's elderly mother. Following the attack, Pastor Paul was severely injured, but was able to report the incident to the local police station. However, once there, Pastor Paul fainted. Police took Pastor Paul, his son, and his wife to the local hospital. Pastor Paul's son suffered a broken leg and his wife remains in a coma as a result of the attack.



Karnataka

Banglore Physical Violence

On 2 January in Tumkur district of Karnataka, Pastor Devaraj was brutally beaten up by the religious extremists and left with severe injuries. The pastor was on his bike for a visit when a few extremists stopped his bike, hit him on the head and brutally beat him up with an iron rod. They left him with severe injuries on his head. He was falsely accused of carrying religious conversion work.

Bangalore Church / Worship Stopped

On 27 January in Nagadevanahalli locality of Bangalore Urban district of Karnataka, religious extremists stopped a prayer meeting. The incident occurred when a few extremists barged in during the program and started to question whether they had a valid permission to conduct the meeting. They further abused pastor Dinesh Joseph and the Christians who had gathered. The affected Christians went to the Jnanabharathi police station to lodge a complaint but the police denied the complaint stating that the church had no permission to conduct such prayer meetings.

Chitradurga Gender Violence

On 15 March in Chennayyanahatti village of

Chitradurga district in Karnataka, two enraged local women, ganged up against a pastor's family and brutally assaulted the family members. Pastor Venkatesh has been holding Christians prayers in a temporary building structure on his private property. Around 30 Christians gather regularly on Sundays at the Hope Prayer House. The regular prayers had badly irked the local right-wing religious radicals. On the day of the incident, two women from the neighbourhood barged into his house, while he was away. They initially attacked his wife Nirmala who was under treatment for a heart ailment. While they kicked on her chest, her mother in law and her two children – a 19-year-old son and a 17-year-old daughter – rushed to her aid. The women overpowered and injured them too. While Nirmala was left unconscious, the two women rushed to a nearby police station and filed a FIR alleging that the pastor's family had assaulted them. Nirmala, in a critical condition, was later rushed to a hospital.

Mysore

Gender Violence

On 7 April in Bettadapur town near Piriapatna in Mysore district of Karnataka, a Christian believer named Kiran and his mother were beaten up by religious extremists during a Sunday worship service. Consequently, Kiran had to be admitted at a hospital.

Kolar

Church / Worship Stopped

On 7 April in Kolar district of Karnataka, Bhagyashree, a Christian was verbally abused and threatened. The incident happened when she, along with other Christians, were gathered for the Sunday worship service. A mob of around 50 people from the same village barged into the building during church service, asked the Christians to stop the worship service, and snatched away the Bibles from them. They threatened her that if she did not stop the meetings completely they would demolish her house and cut her into pieces. Bhagyashree is afraid of filing a police complaint because the assaulters are rich and politically influential people.

Uttara Kannada

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 25 May in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka, police detained a team of Christian evangelists, led by Moses Aghamkhar, while they were distributing the religious tracts. They were taken to the Karwar police station and kept in custody. They were later released. A complaint was filed against them by a group of religious radicals, reportedly supported by a political party.

Bengaluru

Physical Violence

On 16 June in Bannerghatta locality of Bengaluru city in Karnataka, a group of twenty five religious radicals, allegedly belonging to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Bajrang Dal, barged into a prayer hall, stopped the Sunday prayer service, and demanded that the pastor show them an authorization letter issued by competent authorities that gave him the permission to conduct such prayer services. They also slapped the pastor of the church, Peerya Nayak, during the altercation.

Gadag

Physical Violence

On 20 June in Gadag district in Karnataka, 200 villagers barged into a Halesh Mallappa's (a Christian) house, searched it and seized two Bibles. Previously, the villagers had trespassed into the houses of five families belonging to the Lambani community in the village and beat them up. Two days prior to that, in a similar incident, the villagers forced a Christian believer and his family, who belong to the Kambara community, to either leave their faith in Christ or face consequences, including fine and confiscation of property. When the families refused to leave Christianity, the villagers beat them up. A Medico Legal Complaint was filed and in lieu of the same, and an FIR (bearing number: 78/2019 dated 20/06/2019) was registered at the Mundargi Police Station.

Bangalore

Threat / Harassment

in Byalamaradadoddi locality of Bannerghatta area in Bengaluru city, around 40 people barged into a Sunday worship service and warned the pastor to stop conducting prayer meeting there. The pastor leads the church in a Christian believer's house.

Bijapur

Threat / Harassment

On 2 November in Bijapur district of Karnataka, religious fanatics launched a protest against a Christian pastor for using the word 'banjara' for his religious programs. Pastor Teju has been ministering for 21 long years amongst a settlement of an itinerant community called the Banjaras. Pastor Teju gathers a church that mostly consists of around 200 believers from the same community, and hence he had named the gathering as 'Banjara Church.' He had also built a structure with a tin shed on his own property. Recently, the church members planned to conduct a Christmas program, and hence distributed invitation cards to everyone in the locality. Some religious fanatics hyped the issue to such an extent that they led a rally in front of the District Collector's (DC) office on 2 November to protest against the pastor and all the plans of the Banjara Church. During the protest, they took objection against the name of the Church saying that the word 'Banjara' should not be used and submitted a memorandum asking them to change the name of the Church and to remove the word 'Banjara' from the Christmas program poster and invitation. The DC also felt that the pastor was wrong in using the name 'Banjara' and asked him to change the name as soon as possible. As the news of the protest spread, a few media persons gathered outside the DC office. Reeling under tremendous pressure, the pastor agreed to remove the word 'Banjara' from the poster and the church board.

Bagalkot

Physical Violence

On 3 November in Navanagar town of Bagalkot district in Karnataka, a pastor and his wife were brutally assaulted by religious radicals. Pastor Tukaram Chavan from Zoe Ministries leads a congregation of about 40 Christian believers in the Sunday worship service. On the day of the incident, as usual, at 10:30am he began the Sunday Worship service, completely unprepared of the horrors he was going to encounter. A group of extremists stormed into the meeting, disrupted and shocked the Christian gathering. Bystanders watched the angry extremists beat Pastor Tukaram outside the church. Somehow the Christians got together and pulled pastor out of their clutches and rescued him. Gratified with

the damage, the extremists left, taking along the sound system, keyboard and few other musical instruments with them. Pastor Tukaram's wife, who had recently delivered a baby, was panic-struck. When she hurried to help her husband the radicals ruthlessly and brazenly kicked her on her abdomen. She fell to the ground in pain as the kick made a traumatic impact on the almost healed Caesarean surgery. The local pastors were informed and came swiftly to Pastor Tukaram's aid. They rushed him and his wife to a Government District Hospital nearby, where they were examined and admitted. The Christians approached the Superintendent of Police, Mr. Lokesh, who assured that he would immediately look into the matter. A First Information Report has been registered based on the complaint made by Christians.

Ballari

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 14 November in Bandritanda village of Harapanahalli taluk in Davanagere district, Christian families faced physical assault from the villagers and were eventually ostracized from the village. Pastor K. B. Rajkumar is involved in Christian priestly work through his organization called P.D.M. Church. Most of the members of his church were called to a village council meeting where they were told to renounce their faith or face dire consequences. Eventually, some of the families left the village in order to avoid further trouble. Many others are still in the village.

Dharwad

Physical Violence / Arrested

On 11 December in Garag village of Dharwad tehsil in Dharwad district of Karnataka, Christians were severely beaten while distributing tracts. The affected Christians serve with the Horeb Prayer Ministry. They had travelled in a Tata Magic vehicle to distribute Bible tracts. After starting early, at approximately 8:30 am, they were almost winding up and getting ready to leave when 3 extremists approached them on a motor bike and began beating the Christians, hurling insults and accusing them of conversion. Soon, more than 20 extremists arrived and joined the attack on the 10 helpless Christians. One of the victims, Joseph Goutam, was severely injured. He was kicked in sensitive areas of his body and

physically assaulted, while others were hit on their heads, stomach and legs. Subsequently, the Christians were taken to Garag Police station, while Joseph and few others who were injured, were taken to the local civil hospital and were admitted for quite a while as they had severe injuries. Eventually, the Christians filed an FIR (No.0144/2019) at the Garag Police Station. Later it came to light that extremists had also filed a complaint against the affected Christians under IPC 295A, 147, 143, 149.



Kerala

Ernakulam Threat / Harassment

On 30 March in Pallissery in Ernakulam district of Kerala, around 30 extremists threatened Pastor Ramesh Singh to stop a prayer service. The is pastor is doing ministry among the North Indian Hindi speaking people for the last three years. On the day of the incident, few religious extremists came to his house and threatened him to desist from conducting the prayer meetings, and not to run the church activities anymore in their area.



Madhya Pradesh

Barwani Physical Violence

On 14 February in Jhree Jamli village, Barwani district, Madhya Pradesh, around 60 Hindu radicals disrupted a family function and assaulted the family. Pastor Tarachand Senani's relatives had inaugurated and dedicated their new house on 13 February. Pastor Senani had preached at this function which was attended by the friends of the family and Church members. However, the next day, a large group of villagers including religious radicals led by the Village Pradhan (chief)

barged into the house and attacked the family. They violently beat the Pastor Senani's 14-year old son Arun and the women and children who were at home. Despite this brutal attack, the pastor declined to lodge a FIR with the police. The church has been in the locality for about 25 years, and around 100 Christians gather regularly for prayers.

Hoshangabad Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 12 April in Pipariya, Hoshangabad, Madhya Pradesh, the Sub Judicial Magistrate (SDM) and the Town Inspector (TI) identified as one Mr. Satish accompanied by a mob of Hindu right-wing radicals entered the Indian Evangelical Team College Campus at around 6 pm and disrupted the preparations for the graduation ceremony which was to be held the next day. They created a scene and haphazardly started questioning people. They accused IET of being involved in conversion activities. Later in the evening the SDM and TI came back to the college and again questioned the college authorities. They asked for a list of all in the college campus by 10 am the next day.

Indore Physical Violence

On 19 April in Sanwer, Indore district, Madhya Pradesh, religious fanatics beat up a Christian and disrupted Good Friday prayers at the Anugrah Aaradhna Bhavan. Bharat, a regular at the Church had stepped out of the Church premises to receive a phone call when he was accosted and beaten up by Hindu right-wing zealots who were accompanied by a media crew who were live streaming the attack. They beat him up, terrorized him and forced him to say on live TV that the Pastor of the Church – Karan, had made him insult the Hindu religion. Soon a mob stormed into the Church and disrupted the worship service and forced people to leave. The pastor called the police who then intervened and dispersed the attackers. No FIR was filed.

Shahdol Arrested

On 7 September in Beohari town in Shahdol district of Madhya Pradesh, Pastor Mogra was arrested on a false accusation of orchestrating forced conversions. The pastor was conducting

a prayer at a Christian home, when Hindu radicals, allegedly belonging to Bajrang Dal and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), entered the house, stopped the prayer, called the police and got him arrested. He was kept in the lock up the entire night. On the evening of the next day, the police released him after making him write an undertaking that he would not conduct prayers in others' houses.

Dhar

Church / Worship Stopped

On 10 September in Ambedi village, Sardarpur Tehsil, Dhar district, Madhya Pradesh, according to reports received, religious fundamentalists disrupted a prayer meeting and attacked the pastor leading it as well as few of the Christians present. The meeting was being held at the house of a Christian identified as Romal Bhai. The attackers stormed into the meeting and threatened the people present and alleged that conversions were going on. They shoved the pastor and hit another Christian with their hands and a brick. The landlord of the rented house finally came to the rescue of the Christians and he made the attackers leave his property. Later on, the extremists again attempted to beat up the pastor.

Chhindwara

Church / Worship Stopped

On 3 October in Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh, religious radicals barged into a prayer meeting, hurling insults and threats at those that had gathered. Pastor Kamlesh Choure was conducting a prayer meeting in the home of a Christian named Sriram. The meeting started at around 7:00pm, and after a couple of hours when the pastor was about to bring it to a close, the Christians suddenly heard the noise of some people banging and kicking on the front door that was locked. When they opened the door, they were shocked to see a dozen angry people. The group of people then started shouting and hurling insults, accusing the Christians of religious conversions. They demanded to see the Pastor and all the other people who were attending the prayer meeting. Meanwhile, Pastor Kamlesh dialled 100 to call the Police, who arrived after a while. The policemen tried to bring the situation under control, but the fanatics were very aggressive. Somehow, the police managed to take Pastor

Kamlesh to the Kotwali Police station. After interrogating Pastor Kamlesh, the police let him go. The Patrika newspaper 4 October covered this story, and in the article, it was reported that the 'Hindu Jagran Manch' leaders were the ones to incite the angry group of people.

Rewa

Church / Worship Stopped

On 18 October in Nehru Nagar locality of Rewa tehsil of Rewa district in Madhya Pradesh, some members of a Hindutva extremist group disrupted a prayer service attended by 45 people being held at the house of a Christian lady (Chandrakali) and called the police. Police came and confiscated some religious items, including Bibles and Holy Communion glasses. All the attendees were then asked to report at Saman Tirhi police station where they were questioned till evening. The local media telecast regarding the incident was misleading and featured several disrespectful statements against Christianity.

Satna

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 19 October in Amarpatan tehsil of Satna district in Madhya Pradesh, a Christian pastor was accused of fraudulent conversion activities and summoned to the police station. Pastor Amar Singh conducts church services for a congregation of around 200 people for the last seven years. On the day of the incident, local police came to his home during his absence and informed his wife that someone had complained against him alleging that he was involved in fraudulent religious conversions.

Shahdol

Church / Worship Stopped

On 10 November in Gharaula Mohalla locality of Bhatnagar in Shahdol city of Madhya Pradesh, a Christian prayer was disrupted by police personnel. As per their weekly routine, Christians pitched a tent in the courtyard of Pastor Jitendra Vanshkaar's house and organized the Sunday prayer service. However, local police arrived at the spot and charged the Christians with violation of Section 144 imposed by District Collector. Police brought the Christians to the station along with the Pastor Jitendra.

Jabalpur

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 14 Nov 2019, in Jabalpur District of Madhya Pradesh, Pastor Braton Philip was stopped and questioned by a group of 15 men identified later by the media as belonging to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Pastor Philip had gone to the area to pray for a sick Church member and was walking back to his car when the incident took place. A police inspector soon arrived, and he took the pastor to the Ranjhi police station from where he was let go after some time. Some people from among the attackers had approached the police after watching the pastor visit the house of the sick man, alleging that forced conversions were going on. The police investigated and found the claim false.

Jhabua

Physical Violence / Arrested

On 2 December in Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh, a group of Hindu radicals physically and verbally assaulted a Christian pastor and took him to the local police station. The incident occurred at around 7pm when Pastor Rahul Baria along with his wife, 3 children, and a Christian woman named Kanta, arrived home after conducting a thanksgiving prayer at a Christian's home. When he arrived at his house, he saw a group of 60 odd religious radicals waiting for him. As soon as he got down from his vehicle the fanatics, who were already hurling abuses at him, caught hold of him and started accusing him of religious conversions. Not at all concerned about the trauma they were putting his family through, they then dragged him to the Para Outpost where the police took him into custody.

Khargone

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 13 December in Jhiranya village of Jhirnya block in Khargone district of Madhya Pradesh, villagers opposed the burial of a Christian woman's mortal remains. A young Christian woman from village by the name of Alka had passed away. When the family tried to give her body a Christian burial, the villagers raised a protest. Consequently, the family had to cremate her body. Alka was married to a Christian, and both sides of the family - hers and her in-laws' - are followers of Christ.

Alirajpur

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 16 December in Alirajpur district of Madhya Pradesh, three Christians – Nanliya, Mukam and Lal Singh, were arrested. These Christians are evangelists who also pray for people according to their needs and for those who request prayers for their health-related issues. Since police could not find a way to book them on charges for conversion activities, they charged them for unauthorized practice of medicine without a professional license.

Jabalpur

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 23 December in Jabalpur city, Madhya Pradesh, Pastor Ebenezer who serves with the Assembly of God Church was taken to the Khamaria police station while he was having a carol service with his Church members. He was later let go.

Alirajpur

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 27 December in Mathwad village in Sondwa Tehsil in Alirajpur district of Madhya Pradesh, Hindu activists falsely alleged that Christian missionaries were converting the villagers. While the prayer meetings were going on, some of the Hindu tribe activists happened to pass by and got inquisitive about the gathering. They enquired from a person, named Govind, who after answering their questions invited them to join in the prayer meeting, if they wished. The Hindu activists then approached the local police and got some of the Christians summoned to the Bakhatgarh Police station.



Maharashtra

Mumbai

Physical Violence

On 20 January in Kalyan city of Thane district in Maharashtra, a pastor was brutally attacked

by a mob of around two dozen religious extremists. Pastor Moorthy Selvam from the Bombay Baptist Church was leading a prayer meeting in a house Church in a chawl in Ambernath when the attack took place. The attackers trespassed into the private home, shouted slogans, abused and threatened people and alleged that the Christians were indulging in forcible conversions. The attackers then beat up the pastor till he lost consciousness. The host who had organized the meeting in his house was also beaten up. The pastor was later taken to the hospital for treatment. A FIR was filed by the host at the Hill line police station.

Kolhapur

Vandalism

On 22 January in Kolhapur city in Kolhapur district of Maharashtra, activists of Yuva Sena – a youth wing of Shiv Sena - vandalized the office of a convent school for girls at Kolhapur. The incident occurred at Holy Cross High School, a girls' convent school in Kolhapur city in southern Maharashtra. According to the management of the school, located at Nagala Park area of Kolhapur city, the incident occurred at around 1.30 pm, during the school hours. The vandals damaged furniture, computers, etc. After a police complaint was lodged at Shahupuri police station that evening, the Kolhapur police arrested two persons, while the other 18 are absconding.

Palghar

Physical Violence

On 24 February in Virar East of Palghar district in Maharashtra, religious extremists barged into a prayer meeting, brutally beat up the members of the church and misbehaved with the women. They stopped the entire service and they created fear among the believers. Christians went to the police station to register a complaint, but great number of religious extremists were present there. In order to quell the situation, police spoke to the extremists and to the Christians. Subsequently, Christians filed a complaint against the extremists (FIR No. 0180; dated 24 February 2019) at Virar East Police Station.

Sindhudurg

Threat / Harassment

On 26 February in Vengurla town in Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra, a political leader allegedly belonging to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) barged into the house of Eliza Fernandes, where a Christian prayer meeting was underway. About 30 people had gathered inside. The politician accused the Christians of engaging in forceful religious conversions. Eliza Fernandes approached the nearby police station and filed a complaint. Police assured her that she could carry on the prayer services.

Palghar

Arrested

On 3 March in Manor town in Palghar district of Maharashtra, religious extremists levelled a allegations of forceful religious conversions against Christians, viz. Santaram Dhodade, Sapna Santaram Dhodade, Rama Santaram Dhodade, Manoj Ananta Dumada, Mangesh Ananta Dumada, Vilash Ganpat Padosa, Mahima Mangesh Dumada, and Naresh Ganpat Padosa. Police arrested the Christians and kept them in detention at the Manor police station.

Sindhudurg

Church / Worship Stopped

On 20th March in Vengurla town of Sindhudurg district in Maharashtra, religious extremists disrupted a prayer meeting made false allegations of forceful religious conversions against Christians. A group of 30 extremists barged into the prayer meeting, disrupted the service and started abusing Pastor Ashish Shiroda and accused him of forcefully converting people. Subsequently, the pastor filed a complaint in the local police station.

Virar

Hate Campaign

On 23 April in Gadgapada, Chandansar Road, Virar (East), Maharashtra, according to media reports a Church-run school in Virar was attacked by a Hindu right wing outfit that accused the management of trying to convert students. The attack on Christ Primary School took place on Tuesday after which the House of Prayer's Church that runs the institute filed an application. While the police have acknowledged the application, no case was

registered in connection with the attack. Members of the International Hindu Parishad targetted the school alleging that students were pressurised to convert to Christianity. The outfit put up a banner outside the school asking people not to send their children to the school alleging forced conversions. The school has divisions from Class I to V and is affiliated to the Maharashtra state board. It was established in 2014. Prayers in the school had earlier been attacked in February as well.

Palghar

Church / Worship Stopped

On 30 May in Palghar district of Maharashtra, a Christian prayer service was disrupted by a religious radical. Pastor Innocent Rajadurai, who leads house prayers in Palghar, was conducting the service in a house which has been leased out to him. One of the neighbors who lives about 150-200 feet away from the pastor's house, and has regularly incited people on a whatsapp group against the pastor and the Christians, barged into the service and verbally abused the pastor. Later the assailant approached the Panchayat and local police at the Satpati Police Station with a complaint. Consequently, the pastor was called at the Panchayat. It ordered him to obtain permission from the police to run the prayer service. Thereafter, the pastor was also called at the police station, which he visited along with the Christian woman who owns the worship hall premises. The Police Inspector verbally abused him in front of the complainant and threatened him that he must leave the district immediately. He further asked the pastor to obtain permission to run the home church from the Panchayat Committee.

Yavatmal

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 25 July in Yavatmal district of Maharashtra, three American Christian women - Alicia Spanick, Tabitha Heck, Mary Wagner, and an Indian pastor, Suhas Wandre, and a believer, Reshma Ramteke, were forcefully taken to the Babhulgaon Police Station by Bajrang Dal activists who accused the Christians that they were involved in carrying out forceful religious conversions.

Nagpur

Physical Violence

On 19 August in Heti (Surla) vilage of Saoner taluk in Nagpur district of Maharashtra, Pastor Mukesh Chandelkar and his wife were threatened by a visibly agitated lady after they had come out of a prayer meeting. The lady warned them to stop coming to the village. Later the woman and a few villagers razed down the wooden fence of a Christian woman's property and started physically and verbally abusing her. The villagers alleged that the Christians in the village were practising black magic. At the request of the Christians, the police have filed a complaint and the matter is under investigation.

Akola

Physical Violence

On 20 August in Anand Nagar of Akola city of Akola district in Maharashtra, Pastor Dilip Sardar and two other pastors were beaten up by a group of young people. The incident occurred when the three were standing in front of the Indian Friend Fellowship Church building. A group of youth threw a matchstick at them, to which the pastors objected. Soon enough the youth charged on the three and badly beat them. A phone call to the local police station fetched no result. The incidents of similar nature have been reported by other pastors in the past, and the police have not responded to any calls of help.

Mumbai

Church / Worship Stopped

On 1 September in Worli locality of Mumbai city in Maharashtra, a Christian prayer service was disrupted by religious radicals. The Christians had gathered in a classroom for prayer, when the radicals barged into the venue, stopped the service, and took the Pastor Awadesh and church members to the nearby police station on allegations of conversion. In response, the pastor filed a complaint against the miscreants too.

Nagpur

Physical Violence

On 15 September in Attoor town in Kanniyakumari district of Tamil Nadu, religious fanatics physically assaulted a Christian pastor. Vimala, a Christian, had invited Pastor Augustine of 'The Mountain of the Lord Prayer

House' to her home. Vimala had been sick for a few days and had wanted him to pray for her sickness and for her family members' wellbeing. While the pastor was praying for the family, all of a sudden, a mob of religious fanatics stormed into the house. Shouting slogans and abuses, they manhandled the pastor and physically assaulted him. They accused him of working as a missionary to attract the villagers to Christianity. Eventually, they left the house after warning him of dire consequences if he continued to preach and pray in homes. The pastor was grievously injured and had to be rushed to a nearby hospital for medical attention and treatment.

Nagpur

Threat / Harassment

On 18 September in Khapri village of Umred taluk in Nagpur district of Maharashtra, villagers threatened Madhu Solanki and his family of social ostracization owing to his Christian beliefs. People of his tribe were upset about his participation in a church and warned him that his children would not be allowed to go to school, that they would cut off the light and water connection and destroy his house. Solanki, his wife, two daughters and son are now living under constant threats and fear.

Nagpur

Hate Campaign

On 8 October in Nagpur, on the foundation day function of the Rastriya Swayam Sevak (RSS), its chief, Mohan Bhagwat, spoke at length about the phenomenon of mob lynching. "No one from the RSS gets into such acts, they in fact try to stop it. Claiming any association between Hinduism and lynching is "a conspiracy", Bhagwat said the word comes from an incident in the Bible. According to him, once Jesus Christ asked people to hit a woman with stones, but only if they had never committed any sin themselves". Christian bodies criticized the remark and pronounced that the uncalled-for reference between the Bible and lynching made by Bhagwat, was to "denigrate Christianity and malign the Christian community.

Palghar

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 12 November in Kolgaon village of Palghar

tehsil in Palghar district of Maharashtra, villagers at a Village Council meeting, summoned the Christians living in the village and threatened them to renounce their Christian faith or be banished from the village. Pastor Yogesh Baban Mhatre conducts Christian prayers in Kolgaon where ten Christian families gather regularly.

Mumbai

Threat / Harassment

On 20 November in Borivali suburb of Mumbai in Maharashtra, a Christian pastor was threatened by a group of people allegedly belonging to the Bajrang Dal. Pastor Jai Ram Pal was conducting a prayer meeting at a house when the radicals came in a group and threatened the pastor and Christians to stop the prayers. They levelled a false allegation that Christians were forcefully converting people. Police have registered it as a non-cognizable offence.

Jalgaon

Physical Violence

On 24 November in Thorgavhan village in Raver taluk of Jalgaon district in Maharashtra, a mob attacked Christians with sticks and rods. Pastor Praveen, his wife Manisha, Pastor Franklin, Pastor Chatterjee and team had gathered in the village for a prayer meeting. After they finished the prayers, a mob attacked them sticks and rods. The couple, Praveen and Manisha, had gone from Bhusawal to Thorgavhan for prayers. Subsequently, police intervened, noted their addresses and mobile number, and confiscated their mobile phones. They were later let go but police asked the couple to come to the Police Station the next day. Rights-based Christian advocacy groups connected with affected Christians and guided and explained to them on essentials of filing a complaint.

Thane

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 28 November in Kasa Kh. village of Dahanu taluka in Thane district of Maharashtra, a Christian pastor has been facing opposition over the Three members of a family in Kasa Village in Dahanu district in Maharashtra, including the mother and two brothers believed in Christianity. However, when their mother

passed away, one of the brothers wished to reconvert back to their previous faith and also forced his sibling to reconvert. The villagers have since then, been opposing the Pastor who wants to follow Christianity.

Thane

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 1 December in Anjurphata in Bhiwandi locality in Thane district of Maharashtra, a police complaint was filed by Niranjana Hegde, a resident of a housing society against three Christians. Hegde was chatting with friends Nikhil Shinde, Bharat Nikum and Rajesh Parihar outside his residential apartment building when three Christian men —Gajendra Devnoor, 26, Ajay Gautam, 40, and Amar Wadvan, 19—approached them. The Christians were propagating their Christian faith, but Hegde falsely alleged that they had made hurtful and insulting remarks. They were booked under sections 295-A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code. They were produced before a local court later, which remanded them in police custody. The police are probing if someone had told them to engage in conversions. "All angles will be probed," said Rajkumar Shinde, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Zone II.

action on six students a week ago. One of them took to social media to malign the school and insult the teacher who was in the class. The school then suspended the six for a month on 22 April. One of the girls, whose father is alleged to be a militant leader operating in Sugnu area, mobilized the Kuki Student Union (KSO), a student outfit based in Chandel to pressure the school to revoke the ban. The school refused to give in, and this led to burning down the school.

Imphal

East Social Opposition / Boycott

On 15 November in Yourabung village of Imphal East district in Manipur, the Itam Nungoi Village Development Committee reportedly notified its Christian villagers to give up their religion within a month and also banished a few Christians from the village.

As per a general body meeting of the committee, a resolution was taken against 11 people including their families, to banish them from the village. The resolution mentioned that those people who are banished from the village were not allowed to use the playground and pond water of the village. It was also resolved that they are not allowed to purchase things from shops and pharmacies."

Manipur

Chandel

Vandalism

On 25 April in Sugnu town of Kakching district in Manipur, a group of miscreants burned down the second oldest Catholic school in Manipur over disciplinary action taken against some students. St. Joseph Higher Secondary School at Sugnu lost all its files and records of the past 55 years after the miscreants set it on fire around 9 pm. Father Jacob Chapao, the director of the Manipur Catholic Youth Organisation, slammed the miscreants for the barbaric act. The school, which has some 1400 students in the current academic year, took disciplinary

Meghalaya

West Garo Hills

Theft

On 30 January in West Garo Hills district in Meghalaya, two senior priests sustained injuries when a group of masked men attacked them inside a church, ransacked the premises and escaped with Rs. 125,000 in cash, a senior police officer said. This was the fourth such instance of dacoity in Garo Hills churches in the past one month, and police suspect it to be the handiwork of one and the same gang. Superintendent of Police M.G.R. Kumar elaborated that around 1 a.m., the unidentified goons, around twenty in number, entered Dominic Savio Mission during a power cut, tied up Father Thomas John and Daniel M Sangma, and attacked them with iron rods; they then ransacked the church and fled with Rs. 125,000

in cash and two smartphones. A FIR has been filed in the case and a team of officers are investigating into the matter, he informed. According to the FIR filed by the authorities of the Dominic Savio Mission, John Mathias M Marak, another parish priest, sounded alarm when he saw the miscreants. Soon after, they fled the church. The SP also maintained that the modus operandi of the four recent attacks in the Garo Hills region looks “very similar”. Three cases of dacoity had earlier been reported from Dawagre in East Garo Hills, Chokpot in South Garo Hills and Dalu in the west.

Shillong

Hate Campaign

On 3 October in Shillong city of Meghalaya, a letter from a pro-Hindu group demanded of the state top officials “to immediately remove every copy of the Holy Bible placed near patients’ beds.” The Legal Rights Observatory, an activist group backed by prominent Hindutva group Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), petitioned the state’s top officials and police chief to remove the Bible from Shillong Civil Hospital. Their demand came after the state government on 29 September removed an idol of Hindu deity from the entrance of the National Institute of Technology in Shillong. The government acted under pressure from the Jaintia Students Union. Christian leaders called the effort to remove copies of Bible as a part of a plan to disturb the communal harmony in the state, where Christians form 75 percent of its some 3 million people.

New Delhi

Threat / Harassment

On 7 May near Parliament Street in New Delhi, few people created nuisance and threatened to burn down the church located in the area. The incident occurred when Pastor Timothy Shaw did not allow any vehicles to enter the church for security reasons. This provoked some illegal occupants residing within the premises of the church, and they started creating a nuisance, and threatened to burn down the church. A complaint was immediately registered at the local police station. The police in turn provided a 24 hour police protection, and the church services could continue without any hindrances.

North West Delhi

Church / Worship Stopped

On 23 June in Swatantra Nagar locality of Narela tehsil in North West Delhi district of National Capital Territory of Delhi, a mob of 150 religious extremists barged into a Sunday prayer meeting taking place in a church. They disrupted the prayer meeting and alleged that Pastor Suresh converts people to Christianity by alluring them with money. They further harassed the faithful by mocking them for their testimonies of being healed because of prayers and insisted that the prayer services should be shut down. After a few days, some religious fanatics went to the pastor again and inquired why he visits each house and holds prayers. They warned him that he had the freedom to be a Christian but that he had no right to convert anyone else to Christianity.

South West Delhi

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 11 July in Vasant Kunj locality of South West Delhi district in National Capital Territory of Delhi, an American citizen, Alexe Barnett, and an Indian Christian, Devendra, were detained at the Vasant Kunj Police Station. The Christians were handed over to the police by the local people who alleged that they were involved in fraudulent religious conversions.

Central Delhi

Physical Violence

On 24 August night in Patel Nagar in Delhi, some 12-15 unknown people came to Pastor



NCT of Delhi

South West Delhi

Threat / Harassment

On 12 February in Najafgarh in National Capital Territory of Delhi, a Christian school was locked up by Councillor Suman Dagar. The shocking incident took place while school children were still inside the school campus.

Jagjit Kumar's house, attacked him and his family and left them injured. The assailants did not heed to the family's cry for mercy. When the neighbours rushed to the spot, the assailants fled away.

North West Delhi

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 22 September in Rohini city in Delhi-NCR, around fifty people residing near a church complained to the police that the church members were causing noise pollution. The local police took Pastor Ashmit Arora to the police station at Rohini Sector 7 and later seized the sound equipment.

North West Delhi

Church / Worship Stopped

On 1 November at Swarup Nagar in North-west Delhi district of NCT of Delhi, while Pastor Ashish Jacob was conducting a fasting and prayer meeting, Bajrang Dal members came and disrupted the prayer meeting. They manhandled the Christians, but nobody was severely injured or attacked. Eventually the police were called. By the time the police reached, perpetrators had fled from the spot. Pastor was brought to the police station and made to sit for hours. Advocacy groups contacted the police station and requested for an unbiased probing in the matter. No complaints/FIR filed was filed against Pastor Ashish. Since Pastor does not want further trouble in his pastoral work, he is planning to move to another property.

East Delhi

Church / Worship Stopped

On 23 November in Trilokpuri locality in East Delhi district of National Capital Territory of Delhi, Hindutva extremists barged into a Christian prayer meeting, created a huge ruckus and disrupted the meeting. The Good Shepherd Church had organized a three-day prayer convention, and it was the second day of the meeting.

North West Delhi

Threat / Harassment

On 10 December in North West Delhi district of National Capital Territory of Delhi, Pastor Harchand Singh, who is from Delhi and

associated with Shalom Mission, was called at the Ranhola police station. Earlier police had visited his house when he was not at home and were looking for him. Later, when the pastor went to the police station, he was told that someone had complained against him. Police demanded that he show his license and papers of his ministerial work. In the meantime, Christian advocacy groups made regular calls to the police station and cited article 25 of the Constitution of India. Consequently, the pastor was let go.



Odisha

Nabarangapur

Murder

On 11 February in the village of Raigarh Tehsil, in the district of Nabarangapur, Orissa, Anant Ram Gand was beheaded in because of his Christian faith. He was 40 and was the father of five children. He had converted to Christianity nine months ago and had been baptized for only two months. His conversion had aroused the ire of the villagers, mostly religious extremists. On the day of the murder, Sukbati (38), wife of the victim, went to the nearby village together with her four daughters (aged 13, 11, 3 and 2), while Anant, in the company of Purno, his 6 year old son, had remained at home. Anant's body was found in the middle of a road, in broad daylight, beheaded. The skull had been smashed with a stone. The murderous fury was triggered by his conversion to Christianity nine months ago, followed by that of the whole family.

Mayurbhanj

Gender Violence

On 1 April under Bangriposi police station in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha, 60-year-old Sanpitha Majhi attacked Bale Murmu, a 28-year-old Christian mother he believed had "forcefully converted" his daughter and son-in-law. The old man was upset that his Adivasi relatives had left their traditional animistic Sarna religion to become Christians. The incident occurred while Bale Murmu was washing utensils in an outdoor area of her

home. She did not notice Majhi, her neighbour, coming toward her. Pastor Girish Chander Marandi, in whose church Murmu is a member, said, "Majhi with all his force pressed her breasts and pushed her to the floor. While he was kicking her on her stomach, his wife, Gouri Majhi, brought a wooden stick, and the couple beat her black and blue." When her husband, Jaata Murmu, heard her screams and came to rescue her, he too was beaten. Murmu suffered bruises all over her body and, her stomach and breasts were swollen.

Mayurbhanj

Threat / Harassment

On 5 April in Bagriposi village in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha, a village council held a meeting to devise a plan to attack Christians. This incident of persecution was a continuation of the previous incident on 1 April. Bale Murmu informed our sources that villagers were furious and accused Christians that they had Sanpitha Majhi sent to jail and so Christians must be punished for it. Majhi had been a regular troublemaker and a few months back he had barged into a prayer meeting and attacked Christians gathered for prayer. Again, on 7 April, Sunday, villagers blocked the route to the church to push Christians to put up a fight, but Christians quietly went their way and refused.

Sambalpur

Physical Violence

On 4 August in Maneswar block, Sambalpur district, Odisha, Hindutva radicals disrupted worship service and brutally beat up Evangelist Dickson Ranjan causing him major injuries. The attack took place at about 10 am when Ranjan was leading the worship service at the 'Jesus Mission'. Suddenly a mob of around 50 Hindutva radicals stormed into the venue shouting slogans. They pulled Ranjan outside and beat him up badly and pressured him to sign a declaration that he was involved in conversion activities. Then they called the police who took him to the Dhanupali Police Station. The mob pressurized the police to file a case against Evangelist Dickson Ranjan. In the late evening, after he was released from the police station at the intervention of local leaders, Ranjan came home only to have his landlord ask him to move out of the rental accommodation because the landlord was afraid of the mob.

Malkangiri

Physical Violence

On 26 August in Tangitang village under Serpalli police station in Malkangiri tehsil of Malkangiri district of Odisha, a Christian couple named Ungi Kobasi and Podia Kobasi were beaten up by villagers on account of their newfound Christian faith. Ungi Kobasi had suffered from demonic oppression for many years. She was cured after a local pastor (Kuma Kurami) prayed for her. Subsequently a few more families accepted Christ and started gathering for worship in small houses. Seeing this, a mob of religious radicals attacked and severely beat the couple and their family at night. With the help of local Christians and pastors, they were later admitted at a nearby hospital. A complaint was filed at the local police station late that night.

Nabarangpur

physical Violence

On 20 October in Khadenga village of Raigarh Tehsil in Nabarangpur district of Odisha, barged into a prayer house and started abusing the Christians gathered there, warning them to stop the worship service. Pastor Sunaj Suna who works with Indian Evangelical Team (IET) and leads the Beersheba Church of God in the village. As per regular schedule, on Sunday, 20 October when the pastor began the worship service with the reading of Bible passage from the book of Psalms, a few fanatics from the same village barged into the house. They started abusing the believers warning them to stop the worship service. Unafraid, the believers were reluctant to stop the worship. Intimidated by the courage of the Christians, the fanatics got some sticks and started beating the believers. The Pastor was pulled by the collar of his shirt and was thrown down and attacked with sticks. The fanatics left threatening the believers against holding any more meetings. They also warned them not to make a police complaint saying, "otherwise we will make sure that your dead bodies would not be traceable!"

Rayagada

Threat / Harassment

On 24 October, late evening, in Perigam village of Tadama gram panchayat in Rayagada district of Odisha, the chief of the village along

with other village members, forcefully barged into the homes of nine Christian families. They captured copies of the Bible and other Christian literature and torched them in front of a statue of a Hindu deity. Christians were falsely accused of carrying out religious conversion and practicing Blackmagic. Pastor Bhibudan Pradhan, who has been conducting Christian prayers regular in the village, was not present when the incident took place. On the next day, when he came to know about it, he requested help from several pastors ministering in neighbouring villages, but no one came forward fearing they they might be get falsely implicated in the case too.

Malkangiri

Physical Violence

On 1 November in Tekaguda-B of Kalimela block in Malkangiri district of Odisha, five Christians were beaten mercilessly with bamboo rods after they refused to recant their Christian faith. All five victims were recent converts to Christianity from Tekaguda-B. According to local reports, the five Christians were taken from their homes by a mob of angry Hindu villagers at around 4:00 a.m. on 1 November. The Christians were then told that they must “return” to Hinduism and recant their Christian faith. According to locals, the Christians were even threatened with death if they refused. Despite these threats, the five Christians refused to deny their newfound faith. In response, the new believers were severely beaten by members of the mob wielding bamboo rods.

Rayagada

Church Burnt

On 1 December in Perigaon village in Tadama panchayat of Rayagada block in Rayagada district of Odisha, a Christian pastor was threatened by religious extremists. When Pastor Pradhan was returning home after conducting a Sunday worship service, around 12 to 15 extremists blocked his way and threatened to kill him if he ever returned to the village. Later that day, at around 7 pm, the group of extremists set the church on fire. Pradhan, along with other Christians, filed a police complaint against the culprits. Thereafter, the police called the culprits to the police station but let them go after some time. Later, the culprits again threatened the pastor and the

Christians and forced them to withdraw the police complaint against them.



Puducherry

Karaikal

Physical Violence

On 31 May in Karaikal town of Puducherry, two Christians, R. Gunasekaran and K. Kumaravel, were physically assaulted. The duo had been distributing Christian gospel tracts for a period of ten days in the town. On the eleventh day, when they arrived at Murugaram Theatre Ground, a person named Appu confronted them and physically assaulted the two Christians. Appu was later identified as a habitual offender who had similarly assaulted Christians in the past.

Katterikuppam

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 9 July in Katterikuppam village of Mannadipet tehsil in Puducherry Union Territory, while Pastor Paul Timothy and a team of Christians from Kerala, were distributing Christian gospel tracts, allegedly some members of the Hindu Munnani group arrived at the spot and forcefully took one of the Christians to the Katterikuppam Police Station. The religious extremists wanted the police to register an FIR against the Christians, but the police did not oblige and let the Christians free.



Punjab

Firozpur

Church / Worship Stopped

On 15 November in Ratta Khera village of Ghall Khurd tehsil in Firozpur district of Punjab, the village Sarpanch (head) resorted to vandalism

in a pastor's house. Pastor Manjeet had been given a place in the village by the village Panchayat to live and conduct prayer meetings. Around 20-25 Christians gathered regularly. On November 15 the village Sarpanch (head) barged into the pastor's house, broke the household items and forced the pastor to vacate the place. Subsequently the Christians approached police and a First Information Report was registered against the Sarpanch.

Sangrur

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 24 November in Khanauri town in Sangrur district of Punjab, villagers stopped Christians from holding the Sunday worship service. Pastor Jagsher is doing Christian ministry from the past two and half years in the village. He had bought a place to live and was regularly conducting prayers in his house. Around eight days ago, some villagers had stopped the construction work that was happening at the pastor's house. They threatened the masons and laborers to stop the work. When the pastor went to the local police for help, he was verbally harassed and told to take permission for the construction. Consequently on 24 November, Christians were not allowed to gather for the Sunday prayers.



Rajasthan

Udaipur

Vandalism

On 26 January in Kotra tehsil of Udaipur district in Rajasthan, religious extremists surrounded a Christian house, threw stones and shouted anti-Christian slogans. A prayer meeting had been organized in the house of a local Christian, Gulzari Lal. Shocked by the sudden attack and stone pelting that ensued, the Christians managed to lock the house from inside. The extremists damaged parked vehicles and vandalized water taps, shouting obscenities at them when the Christians pleaded with them to stop. The extremists continued to falsely accuse Christians of religious conversions. Later, the Christians

registered a complaint in the police station. However, until the writing of this report, no action has been taken by the police.

Alwar

Threat / Harassment

On 22 February in Alwar district of Rajasthan, Pastor Suresh got a threat from local extremists owing to his Christian evangelical work in the region. He has been receiving repeated phone calls since 2016.

Ganganagar

Vandalism

On 29 June in Raisingh Nagar town in Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan, a group of religious fanatics wielding sticks and other weapons, barged into a prayer service underway in a Christian home. The radicals created a commotion in the house by threatening the Christians gathered there. They also stole a musical keyboard during the commotion. Meanwhile, the Christian, one of whom was Pastor Pankaj, were forced to lock themselves up in a room. Although the extremists tried to break in, one of the pastors had called the police by then. The police took the Christians into custody at Raisingh Nagar police station on the pretext of providing protection and released them the following day.



Tamil Nadu

Thiruvannamalai

Threat / Harassment

On 6 January in Veraiyur town of Thiruvannamalai district in Tamil Nadu, according to reports received from associate agencies, Religious extremists stopped a Christian pastor and his family on their way to the Church for Sunday worship and abused and threatened them. They falsely accused them of being involved in religious conversion and warned them of severe consequences if the pastor continued with evangelical activities.

Tirupur

Church / Worship Stopped

On 7 January in Udumalpet Taluk of Tirupur District in Tamil Nadu, religious extremists disrupted the Sunday worship service led by Pastor Swaminathan Daniel. They shouted slogans and intimidated the pastor and the members of the Church demanding that worship services be suspended. The pastor has been leading the Open Bible Church for the last 23 years. The Church which also houses the pastors residence is a registered organization since 1947. The pastor filed a complaint at the local police station and the next Sunday the service was held under police protection.

Virudhunagar

Church / Worship Stopped

On 13 January in Thiruthangal municipality in Virudhunagar district of Tamil Nadu, police prevented worshippers from congregating in Tamil Nadu. Around 10 Police personnel arrived at the Parisutham Zion Deva Sabha Church at around 5.00 am and blocked the entrance preventing worshippers from going inside. Pastor Jenson Prabhakar is leading the Church for the last 12 years and the congregation meets at a double storey house belonging to his mother Mrs. Rani Rubella. The pastor alleged that they have been targeted since the Christmas season by one Mr. Marimuthu who claimed noise pollution and had complained against the Church even when other neighbours did not have a problem.

Kanyakumari

Physical Violence

On 13 January Perumselvavilai town in Agastheeswaram taluk of Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu, religious extremists beat up Pastor Selvakumar and six other Christians all members of Full Gospel Pentecostal Church. The Christians were targeted when they were distributing Christian literature in the area. They were questioned by the attackers who told them that they are not welcome in a "Hindu majority area". The Christians were not only beaten up but were also forcibly applied the 'Vibhuti' (Scared Ash) and vermilion powder on their foreheads by the attackers who then destroyed all the Christian literature.

Ariyalur

Physical Violence

On 22 January in Ariyalur town in Ariyalur district of Tamil Nadu, three Christians were assaulted and threatened by local BJP office-bearers while they were distributing pamphlets about Christianity near a private bank. P Muthuvel, BJP's K. Poiyur Union President, K. Vairavel, Secretary of Kamraj Nagar BJP district office, and R. Ponselkar, a functionary of BJP's OBC (Other Backward Classes) wing entered into an altercation with the Christians and threatened and assaulted them. Then the Christians were taken to the Mariamman temple in Melatheru, Ariyalur where the attackers forced them to apply holy ash and vermilion on their heads. They filmed the Christians and spread it on social media. Later on the police on 2 February, booked a case and arrested the BJP office-bearers under several sections of the IPC including IPC 342, 365, and 295(A) IPC read with 66 (A) IT Act. They were later remanded.

Tirunelveli

Hate Campaign

On 25 January in Alangulam village near Tirunelveli district in Tamil Nadu, in a shocking development, mysterious hoardings came up which warned people against conducting religious preaching and entering the village. The hoardings suggest that no religious preaching would be allowed in the village and if instructions are violated, action will be taken against the violators by the villagers. Images of the hoardings were shared by the Hindu Munnani group on their official Twitter page and they called it their moment of awakening: "Awakened Hindu community... For the 36 years of Hindu Munnani". Religious preaching is a constitutional right and it cannot be curbed. The police are looking into the matter.

Tirunelveli

Threat / Harassment

On 4 February in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu, Hindutva extremists disturbed, abused and warned some Christian sisters from doing Christian ministry among poor children. These sisters are doing ministry among children for the past ten years in different localities. On the day of the incident, Hindutva extremists stopped them and warned them not to

continue the ministry. If they did not heed to the warnings, then they would take their pictures, and circulate around, threatened the extremists.

Trichy

Threat / Harassment

On 8 February in Musiri town of Tiruchirappalli district in Tamil Nadu, according to reports received, Hindu fundamentalists burnt an Assembly of God Church to ashes. Pastor Edwin Joseph, the leader of the church, had been under constant threats from the extremists. Consequently, Christians lodged a complaint in the Musiri police station.

Coimbatore Physical Violence On 10 February in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, around 30 religious extremists belonging to Hindu Munnani barged into a prayer meeting being conducted at the Glory to God prayer house. The attackers abused the Christians, stopped the service, demanded to see the permission letter that authorises them to hold Christian services, and later warned the Christians to stop all religious activities. Pastor Philip has been leading a Church for the past 13 years and regularly meets with around 30 Christians for prayer services. The pastor filed a complaint.

Kancheepuram

Threat / Harassment

On 13 February in Thiruneermalai area of Kancheepuram District, Tamil Nadu, according to media reports Hindu nationalist leader, Arjun Sampath who belongs to the Hindu Makkal Katchi (Hindu People's Party) instigated and sent a mob of 40 activists to a house Church led by Pastor Vetri and threatened him. They told him to stop Christian prayers and leave the area. The pastor has been leading the prayer at the location for the past 12 years. Later on the pastor received legal notices falsely claiming that the property belonged to a Hindu temple. The owner of the property gave into the pressure and the pastor had to move from the place. The Church services have been shifted to the Thiruneermalai now.

Chennai

Gender Violence

On 13 February in Tambaram locality of Chennai city in Tamil Nadu, according to reports

received, armed religious extremists stopped a van, carrying Christian children, on its way to a church. Mr. Richard has been working as a Christian educator in Tambaram for the past 13 years. On the day of the incident, while children were being brought to the church for a children's program, extremists stopped the van and slapped the female teachers who were with the children. The extremists were carrying knives.

Tiruchirappalli

Threat / Harassment

On 17 February in Vairichettipalayam village of Tiruchirappalli district in Tamil Nadu, a mob of more than 25 Hindu villagers led by area Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders burst into a Christian home during an evening Bible study and prayer time - where about 20 women and a pastor had gathered. Led by BJP leaders, identified only as Ramesh and Ramachandran, the intruders told the Christians and Pastor Raju that they must vacate the place. Asking who had given them permission to hold a Christian meeting, the BJP leaders and their aides told the Christians that the house would be locked, and they must leave immediately.

Trichy

Church Burnt

On 17 February in Koothur village in Manachanellur block in Tiruchirappalli district of Tamil Nadu, according to reports, religious fundamentalists burnt down the door of Grace IPA church and created panic among the Christian community. After the Sunday worship service, the attackers burnt down the church door and the Christians made a police complaint, but the authorities were not available to lodge the same. The church is led by Pastor Jesudass.

Thiruvarur

Physical Violence

On 3 March in Muthupettai town of Thiruvarur district in Tamil Nadu, religious extremists disrupted a prayer meeting and threatened and beat up Pastor Yesudoss and his family. When the pastor and members of the Church approached the police, the extremists pressurized the police personnel not to take any complaint from the Christians, instead the Christians were falsely accused of being

engaged in forceful religious conversions. According to reports, the Thiruvarur BJP secretary Karupu Murganatham threatened the Christians that if they filed a complaint they would be made to vacate their rental house and would be chased away from the area. The deputy Superintendent of police asked the pastor to obtain permission for conducting the prayer meetings.

Krishnagiri

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 19 March in Hosur taluk of Krishnagiri district in Tamil Nadu, Mr. Neethi Raja, a Christian missionary and other IEM (Indian Evangelical Mission) missionaries were severely beaten up by religious extremists. They burnt the Bibles and gospel tracts, physically abused the Christians, banged their heads against a wall, and used invective and abusive language. The extremists warned the Christians that they would break their legs, and even resort to killing them, if they entered the village again.

Tirupur

Church / Worship Stopped

On 24 March in Tirupur district of Tamil Nadu, Tamil Nadu police shut down a worship service. Just as the worship service was about to begin at 9:30 am, ten police officers came and refused to let the service take place. The Pastor Allen Gobi was taken to a police station where he was forced to sign a written admission that he had no permission to conduct prayer meetings in the property. The church members were later informed from local sources that the Hindu Munnani (Hindu Front) had submitted a petition to the police to take action against the church. The Church – Family of Jesus – had been meeting in the location since December 2018 and is a part of the Synod of Pentecostal Churches which has 38000 member Churches in the state.

Tirupur

Threat / Harassment

On 25 March in Udumalpet town in Tirupur district of Tamil Nadu, Hindutva activists, allegedly belonging to RSS threatened and physically assaulted Pastor Jitender. Earlier the pastor had prayed for a few students who were about to write their exams outside an

examination centre, and had distributed copies of the New Testament to them. Subsequently the activists confronted the pastor and warned him that if distributed any sort of Christian literature again they would kill him. Fearing for his life, the pastor along with some of his church members went to the nearby police station and filed a complaint. The police registered a CSR report (Community Service Register).

Kallakurichi

Vandalism

On 26 March in Chinnasalem, Kallakurichi district, Tamil Nadu, a mob of more than 200 people came on a truck and rampaged the Little Flower Higher Secondary School and beat up the Nuns present there after insulting them. The mob was allegedly instigated by the RSS after a 15 year old student committed suicide fearing her parents wrath as she feared she had not done well in her exams. As a result of the attack, Four Nuns and two members of the school staff were admitted to hospital for treatment of the injuries received. The parents allegedly had demanded money from the school and then had contacted the RSS. The school is run by Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Chinnasalem is around 260 km southwest of Chennai.

Nilgiris

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 6 April in Nilgiris district, Tamil Nadu, the police called Pastor Douglas from the Church of South India to the police station for questioning after he was falsely accused by the Hindu Munnani of being involved in forcible conversions. The allegations against the pastor were found untrue and so he was let go.

Tiruchirapalli

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 13 April in Tiruchirapalli district of Tamil Nadu, according to sources, a complaint was filed against pastor Johnson Dinakaran on false allegations of forceful religious conversion. The incident took place when the pastor was conducting a Vacation Bible School and had gathered children for the program. He had been organizing such event for the past five years. His landlord, who holds radical religious views, filed a complaint that the pastor is doing forceful religious conversion.

Coimbatore

Physical Violence

On 15 April in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, according to reports received, religious extremists brutally beat Christians for being involved in evangelistic activities. A group of extremists stopped the Christian evangelists and assaulted him. The extremists took them to the police station where the police officials warned the evangelists to stop all evangelistic works.

Thiruvannamalai

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 19 April in Thiruvannamalai district of Tamil Nadu, according to sources, Pastor Arun Ebinezar and a group of Christians were targeted by religious extremists. The incident took place when Pastor Arun and 20 plus Christians were distributing Gospel tracts. The extremists stopped the Christians and abused them and then burnt the tracts. They also warned that they would burn the pastor if he did not stop his activities. A complaint was filed against the Christians in the police station following which the Christians were called for an inquiry. The Christians later on filed a complaint as well.

Kanyakumari

Threat / Harassment

On 20 April in Kumarapuram town of Kanyakumari district in Tamil Nadu, around 50 hindutva extremists barged in to a prayer meeting, raised slogans, abused the Christians who had gathered there, and warned them of dire consequences if they did not stop the meetings. A pastor and three others were praying when the incident occurred. The Christians approached the local police for help, who in turn called both parties for a peaceful settlement. However, the pressure was upon the Christians to stop the prayer meetings at their homes.

Nilgiris

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 25 April in Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu, according to reports received, religious fundamentalists filed a false complaint of forceful religious conversion against a Christian

pastor. Police summoned the pastor to the police station and asked him to give an undertaking in writing that church services will no longer be conducted at his residence without prior permission from the police station.

Nilgiris

Church / Worship Stopped

On 26 April in Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu, according to reports received, religious radicals stopped a prayer meeting and warned the Christians of severe consequences. The extremists warned the Christians not to continue with Christian activities in the Hindu village or else they would be burnt alive. The Christian attempted to file a complaint twice, without any success. Earlier on Easter Sunday, 21 April, some people from the Criminal Investigation Department had come and clicked photographs of the Church. On 26 April Municipal Commission officers accompanied by around 20 policemen came and forced the Christians out of the Church and began to demolish the Church. When the Christians objected to it, they desisted but sealed the Church anyways.

Chennai

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 2 May in Mahalakshmi Nagar Selaiyur, Chennai city in Tamil Nadu, religious fundamentalists complained against a Church led by Ernest Durai. The incident took place when children were practicing for the Vacation Bible School inside the Church premises which also houses the Pastor's family. Fundamentalists came and switched off the music system and the Church members apologized for any inconvenience. The radicals still called the police who came and took photos and asked the pastor and his father to report to the police station.

Coimbatore

Gender Violence

On 3 May in Annur town of Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, a mob of around 30 extremists brutally attacked the Glory to God prayer house injuring Pastor Philip Rangasamy and other Christians. Two elderly people including a woman were seriously injured and were later hospitalised. This was the second attack on the

Church since February. The pastor filed a complaint at the nearby police station and an FIR was registered. The attackers were remanded. Pastor Philip leads the Praise the Lord Church in Kanjapalli.

Salem

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 5 May in Karipatti village in Vazhapadi tehsil of Salem district in Tamil Nadu, Christians were asked to remove a banner meant for promoting an upcoming Christian event. Christians were also falsely accused of breaking temple idols. Earlier, Christians had sought permission from the administration to conduct a convention for four days but the concerned authority had given permission only for a single day. Around 2,000 Christians attended the convention. Subsequently, the villagers caused hindrances to people wishing to attend the convention and falsely accused the Christians of breaking their temple's idols. The police, despite the permission, asked the organisers to remove the banner promoting the convention. On the next day, police summoned the pastor and members of hindutva extremist organization for a peace talk. The matter was finally resolved and the convention was successfully held for 4 days.

Chennai

Threat / Harassment

On 7 May in Vandalur town in Chennai city of Tamil Nadu, Hindutva extremists seized Christian religious tracts from a pastor and threatened him to leave the area immediately or face dire consequences.

Nagapattinam

Arrested

On 15 May in Kilvelur town in Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu, police arrested Pastor Aamos Asir based on a complaint by religious extremists. The pastor and his team were distributing tracts in the locality and a complaint was registered by hindu activists that forceful religious conversion was taking place. Police came and arrested the pastor. Later he was released from jail.

Udumalpet

Physical Violence / Arrested

On 8 June in Udumalpet district in Tamil Nadu, while some Christians were distributing the Gideon's Bible (on the occasion of Pentecostal Day), some Hindu Munnani functionaries stopped the Christians and beat a pastor's son. They threw copies of the Holy Bible on the street and tried to burn them. The incident occurred despite the fact that Christians had earlier obtained the required permissions to distribute Christian literature from the local police station in Udumalpet. Thereafter, some influential people who subscribe to the Hindutva ideology pressurized the police to register an FIR against the Christians under sections 294 (b) and 298 of the IPC.

Nagapattinam

Physical Violence

On 22 June in Konerirajapuram village near Thittacheri town of Nagapattinam district in Tamil Nadu, religious fanatics physically assaulted a Christian family. Thenkovan, his wife Vasanthi, and sons - Vasanthakovan and Samuel - had started following the Christian faith many years ago. However, they had to suffer extreme ostracization and discrimination in the village on a daily basis. On the day of the incident, when Thenkovan had gone out of station for some work, local villagers and religious fanatics assaulted Vasanthi and her children. Reportedly, the assailants barged into her home and attacked her family – beating her and her children, asking them to get out of the village. Terrified of the violence meted out to her and her young children, Vasanthi rushed to Thittacherry Police Station to lodge a complaint. But the belligerent Officers on duty, shouting at the top of their voices, humiliated and insulted Vasanthi and chased her away. Helpless and outraged at the injustice, Vasanthi along with her 2 sons, staged a protest in front of the District Collector's Office, threatening to immolate herself and her sons. She alleged that despite requests to the Police about the harassment from religious fanatics, Police had not taken any action so far. Vasanthi alleged that instead of investigating the charges, the Police were harassing her and her children. Drawing attention to the discrimination and injustice meted out to the family by the local Police and the village fanatics, Police Officials rushed to their aid, pouring water to remove the kerosene to safeguard them. Covering her face to avoid media attention, Vasanthi and her 2

sons were eventually taken to Nagoor Police Station to register a complaint.

Coimbatore

Church / Worship Stopped

On 23 June in the residential neighbourhood of Ganapathy in Coimbatore city of Tamil Nadu, according to reports received, a mob of about 100 people, claiming to be members of Hindu Munnani, a Hindu radical group, disrupted a Sunday service taking place in a house church. Subsequently, Christian advocacy groups intervened and spoke to one of the victims and suggested that a police complaint be filed by them. The victim assured that he would fetch the services of a lawyer soon. Meanwhile, the prayer services have resumed and continue as usual.

Chennai

Threat / Harassment

On 5 July in Muthapudupet city in Chennai Metropolitan Area of Tamil Nadu, a mob of 100 members of Viveka Hindu Movement, a new Hindu right group, led by an Advocate, filed a police complaint against churches in the area demanding that they be shut down. The mob also threatened the members of these churches and told them to put an end to the prayer services or face severe consequences. When the Christians went to the police station to file a complaint, more than 100 people allegedly belonging to the BJP and other Hindu right groups gathered at the police station and threatened the Christians in the presence of the police that they would destroy their churches if anyone apart from the family members joins the prayer services.

Nagapattinam

Physical Violence

On 19 July in Thyagaraja Nagar, in the Sirkali area of Nagapattinam District, Tamil Nadu, extremists belonging to Hindu Makkal Katchi attacked a father and son duo, both pastors in front of their Church. 28-year-old pastor Daniel Jebraj came back to his Church in the evening to find five men in front of the Church who were drinking, smoking and ridiculing Christianity. They attacked him as soon as he began to speak with them. They were carrying weapons. Seeing his son attacked, 61 year old Pastor Muniyandi Elangoan Jebraj came rushing to

protect him and he was also beaten up with sharp weapons. Both father and son had to be hospitalised due to severe injuries. The father even received injury on his brain tissue while the son's bruises had to be stitched. The police arrested two people, a Hindu and a Muslim who is a minor. The pastors deny that the muslim ever attacked them. They say that he instead came and tried to help them. Hindu Makkal Katchi is a Hindu right wing group with a history of hate speech and hate crimes against Christians.

Madurai

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 28 July in Sathyamoorthy Nagar near Samayanallur in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu, according to media reports, 30 Kattunaicker Christian families were excommunicated from the village following instigation by Hindu Munnani. Police said the tension in the nomadic tribe residing at Sathyamoorthy Nagar, Madurai was instigated by Hindus who did not belong to their village or their community. In all, 30 members of this community had embraced Christianity about 30 years ago and they had been living in harmony with the Hindu community members. That was till Hindu Munnani members came to their village in 2017 and hoisted their flag in front of the local temple. Hindu Munnani members had passed a resolution at the village council saying they would eradicate the 30 Christian families from the village. Samayanallur police have registered cases against N S Mani and Thangam Venkatesh under various sections of IPC as well as SC/ST Act.

Dindigul

Physical Violence

On 28 July in Kallupatti, Nillakottai taluka, in Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu, a group of religious radicals allegedly belonging to the RSS barged into a church and physically assaulted the Christians present there. The incident took place when a Sunday worship service was in progress. Just then, around 20 extremists entered the church and attacked the church members, out of which, five of them were severely beaten up. The names of the wounded are: Gopalan, Hariharanpadi, Thavasi Vattpaarai Aarivu Chelvan & Nattamai Raja. The attackers beat up the speaker and

destroyed his phone. Subsequently, the police from the Nillaikottai police station came and asked the pastor to obtain permission from higher authorities to conduct prayer meetings.

Vellore

Physical Violence

On 1 August in Arakkonam taluk in Vellore district, Tamil Nadu, three religious extremists barged into the Church of Christ, abused the Christians and the Christian faith and attempted to manhandle the Christians present. Two Christian men, Prabhudas and Rajshekhar were repairing a microphone inside their church when the incident took place. The Christian filed an FIR at the Arakkonam Town Police Station but the police did not register an FIR.

Dindigul

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 3 August in Thadikombu town in Dindigul district in Tamil Nadu, radicals belonging to the Hindu Munnani stopped and threatened two Christians from the Assembly of God Church. The name of one of the Christian is Duraisingam. The radicals took the Christians to the local police station and alleged that they were involved in forced conversions. The Christians were later released.

Coimbatore

Church / Worship Stopped

On 15 August in Othakalmandapam Town Panchayat of Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, a Christian prayer was stopped by some religious extremists accompanied by police. A pastor with his family and ten other church members had gathered for a child's naming ceremony in the pastor's house. Just then, some extremists accompanied by the Sub-Inspector of the local police station, Mr. Arul Prakash, came and stopped the prayers and told the pastor to obtain permission from the Collector.

Vellore

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 15 August in Bommikuppam village of Tirupattur block in Vellore district of Tamil Nadu, two Christians including a woman were arrested and taken into police custody while

they were distributing religious tracts. A mob of 30 people allegedly led by a BJP leader surrounded the van of Ms. Sheeba Gabriel and Pastor Gideon and threatened them and warned them against the propagation of the Christian message. Soon the police reached the spot but the mob had also increased. The police took the Christians into custody on the pretext of protection. They were questioned and later on released although their van was kept in custody of the police for some more time.

Velankani

Vandalism

On 18 August in Velankani, Tamil Nadu, religious fundamentalists attempted to stop a procession of a group of Christians who were on a pilgrimage at the shrine of Mother Mary at Velankani. The attackers broke the statue, hindered the procession and did not permit the pilgrims to wear the customary saffron attire. The Christians later on filed a police complaint.

Kadambur

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 18 August in Kadambur town in Kovilpatti taluk of Thoothukudi district in Tamil Nadu, village leaders and other villagers prevented Pastor Daniel and his wife to visit an elderly woman who was suffering from kidney problems. The woman had asked the pastor to pray for her. But the villagers called the police and complained against the pastor. The Sub-Inspector, Mr. Shanmugam came to the place of the incident and took him and his wife to the police station. The Christians were released later.

Erode

Social Opposition / Boycott

On 2 September in Nambiyur Taluk, Erode district, Tamil Nadu, according to reports received, Pastor Suresh who leads the Church of the Living God Prayer Hall was served a notice by the Namiyur police asking him to vacate the premises he has occupied for a decade. The Church services are held in the property that Pastor Suresh has leased and his landlord does not have any problems. However a man names Palani Samy who is associated with the Hindu Munnani filed a complaint against the pastor at the police station.

Vellore

Gender Violence

On 3 September in Arakonnam village in Vellore district of Tamil Nadu, Two Hindutva extremists hold a Ganpathy pooja in the vicinity of a church in Arakonnam village in Vellore, Tamil Nadu. Once when they raised their volume with the intention to interrupt the prayers at the church, one of the female congregants who is related to the Hindutva extremists, but practising the Christian faith complained to the police about the disturbance caused by her brothers in law. The police came to the spot of the incident and seized their sound equipment and warned the Hindutva extremists to keep the volume at a moderate level. Enraged by this, they threatened the woman and beat her daughter with an iron coil and chased her down the road. The young girl ran to the church for refuge. Their church pastor helped them file a police complaint against the perpetrators at the Nimili police station. An FIR has been registered.

Nilgiris

Threat / Harassment

On 16 September in Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, a group of religious extremists threatened a couple who were distributing tracts after due permission from authorities. The attackers verbally abused them, threatened them and forcibly applied the 'vibhuti' (Hindu sacred ash) on the forehead of the husband and forced him to apply the same on the forehead of his wife.

Cuddalore

Physical Violence

On 29 September in Thiruvanthipuram, Vanniyar Street, Cuddalore district, Tamil Nadu, 30 armed extremists belonging to Hindu Munnani beat up pastor Paul Thirunavukkarasu and 13 other Christians at a gathering which was being held to dedicate the new house of a person identified as Lakshmi Narayanan. According to the pastor the beating went on for about 2 hours and no one came to their rescue. All 14 Christians were admitted to a nearby hospital, and the police took their statements, but the First Information Report (FIR) that was registered the next day named only four of the 30 assailants, and a counter-FIR was also registered against the victims of the violence.

Viluppuram

Church Burnt

On 30 September in Radhapuram village, Villuppuram District, Tamil Nadu, a thatched-roof church building was burned down two months after the congregation received a threatening letter. Pastor Stephen Arputharaj who leads the Church said that only a month ago some young people threw a letter on the Church site which threatened the destruction of the Church property. The police refused to file a complaint.

Annuparpalayam

Church / Worship Stopped

On 6 October in Anupparpalayam town in Tirupur district of Tamil Nadu, some religious extremists accompanied by the police disrupted prayer services at a church led by Pastor J Amos. They asked the Christians to obtain permission from the District Collector before holding prayers and to desist holding prayers till then.

Annuparpalayam

Church / Worship Stopped

On 6 October in Anupparpalayam town in Tirupur district of Tamil Nadu, some religious extremists accompanied by the police disrupted prayer services at a church led by Pastor J Amos. They asked the Christians to obtain permission from the District Collector before holding prayers and to desist holding prayers till then.

Chennai

Threat / Harassment

On 6 October in Ashok Nagar locality of Chennai city in Tamil Nadu, pastor Joy Samuel and Christians with him were stopped by some radicals who later called the local police from R3 police station at Ashok Nagar. The policemen sternly told the Christians not to engage in Christian activities like preaching the Gospel.

Coimbatore

Threat / Harassment

On 20 October in Periyanaickenpalayam, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, religious extremists

came to a church, EL Bethel Prayer House, in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu and demanded that the church be shut down since none of the attendees belonged to their village and everyone who attended the church came from a neighbouring village.

Erode

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 2 November in Erode district of Tamil Nadu, police arrested a Christian pastor for screening a Christian movie. Mr. Paneerselvam works as a missionary of Akhila India Christva Valipar Iyakkam. On 2 November evening, Paneerselvam's team, headed by Joshua Stephen was screening a Christian movie at a village. Taking note of the activity, RSS allegedly called the local police from Perundurai station. When the police reached the spot led by an inspector, they stopped the screening and took Joshua Stephen to the police station. Advocacy groups intervened, contacted the police station and called for an unbiased probing. Joshua was let go without any complaint or First Information Report against him.

Coimbatore

Church / Worship Stopped

On 2 November in Periyanaickenpalayam suburb of Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, around four to five Hindutva extremists barged into the EL Bethel Prayer House, and demanded the Christians to stop the service. When the Christians complained at the local police station, police asked both the parties to come to the station. Christian advocacy groups contacted the police and demanded a fair probing on the issue. This is the second time extremists have come within a few months to disrupt the prayer meeting. The then Tehsildar (revenue officer) had colluded with extremists and sent a notice to the church to stop all its activities. However, the Christians had managed to get a stay from the High Court of Madras.

Coimbatore

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 2 November in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, Pastor John Britto, aged 53, was arrested based on an accusation that he had burned images of Hindu gods. The complaint was filed

with police by an activist from Hindu Munnani, a local Hindu nationalist group responsible for many attacks on Christians in Tamil Nadu near Coimbatore.

Erode

Church / Worship Stopped

On 3 November in Coolies Line Bhavanisagar in Sathyamangalam sub division of Erode district in Tamil Nadu, a CID officer barged into a church. He spoke harshly to a woman and her husband, who were holding the prayers, and asked them to report at the police station. When they went to the police station, they were asked to give in writing that they would not hold prayer services anymore.

Kanyakumari

Threat / Harassment

On 25 November in Pandaravilai village of Thackalai block in Kannyakumari district of Tamil Nadu, the Gethsemene Jebathottam Church was ordered by the Sub-Collector to stop all the prayer meetings. The church is led by pastor Andrew Godwin and the land where prayers were happening is owned by the pastor himself. The Sub-Collector made it mandatory for the Christians to first get the requisite permission from the Collector's office to conduct the prayers and until the permission was granted, the prayer meetings could not be organized. However, reportedly, the Christians had drafted and submitted a letter to avail permission from the Collector more than a year ago, but there was no response till date. Subsequently, several attempts of follow ups were made by the pastor and church leaders but that too did not yield any positive outcome. Meanwhile, few months back, a Hindu Munnani member had filed a case raising a false dispute of land ownership of the site where the prayer meetings take place. Presently, the matter is in Madurai High Court.

Erode

Physical Violence

On 19 December in Perumapalayam village of Modakurichi block in Erode District of Tamil Nadu, some Christians were physically assaulted by five persons. Pastor Joshua, who leads the Apostolic Fellowship Tabernacle, had gathered to celebrate Advent with ten others,

including his wife and children, aged 11 and four, in the rented house belonging to a couple from the church known as Ramesh and Sumathi. The program was disrupted by five men who physically assaulted the people present, including a 17-year-old boy.

Tirunelveli

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 23 December in Puliya Kuruchi village near Kalakad town of Tirunelveli district in Tamil Nadu, Mr. A. Vedamanickam, a Christian minister, was summoned to the Eruvadi police station. He has been a Christian minister for the past ten years. Around 30 church members make up his congregation. Earlier, local police personnel had visited his house when he was not at home and asked his family to send him to the station. They informed his family that they have received complaints regarding the prayer meetings.

Erode

Threat / Harassment

On 25 December in Perundururai of Erode district in Tamil Nadu, a pastor – Dhana Pal – was threatened by the local police and was told to stop conducting prayer services without permission. However, the pastor protested that he was only holding private prayers in his home. Pastor is associated with India Gospel Outreach.

Coimbatore

Church/Worship Stopped

On 01 December in othakkalmandapam suburb of Coimbatore city in Tamil Nadu, a Christian home prayer, run by Mr. Prem and his family, was disturbed by members of Hindu Munnani, a Hindu right wing militant group. The attackers barged into the house, shouting and abusing, and threatened the Christians to stop their home prayers or else face grave consequences.

Telangana

Hyderabad

Church / Worship Stopped

On 9 January in Nandyal town in Hyderabad district of Telangana, religious extremists stopped a prayer meeting and threatened Pastor D M Diwaker and his family with dire consequences. They warned the pastor not to conduct prayer meetings and stop all activities of the church.

Karim Nagar

Physical Violence

On 26 February in Karim Nagar district of Telangana, a Christian family was brutally beaten up by a mob of Hindu radicals. Pastor Kolapuri Prabhakar leads religious prayers at the Bethesda Prayer Healing House along with his father, Pastor Moses. On the day of the incident, while Pastor Prabhakar, along with his 50-year old father, mother, sister and brother were praying, a mob of religious fanatics saw the name of the church on a sign board, surrounded the prayer house and started shouting abuses demanding that the father and son come out. When the pastor did not respond, the fanatics illegally trespassed into the house and brutally beat up the pastor, his father and his brother, Emmanuel. A large boulder was thrown on his brother which caused a fracture on his leg. The women were also not spared as they were pushed and manhandled disgracefully by the radicals. After the intervention of Karim Nagar District Police, the family was treated at a local government hospital and a case was registered against the attackers.

Karimnagar

Demolition of Church

On 1 March in Ambatipalli village in Mahadevpur mandal in Karimnagar district of Telangana, a church building was set on fire by religious radicals. Pastor Samudralea Babu Rao has been working among a tribal community for many years. He holds regular prayers for the Christians in the village. Despite strained resources the pastor bought a piece of land and constructed a temporary shed for the Christians to gather regularly. Around 80



Christians would gather every Sunday for prayers. However, some religious radicals were unhappy about the developments and had started threatening the Christians from gathering for prayers since December 2018. On the day of the incident, around noontime, the radicals surrounded the church building and started vandalizing it. The pastor rushed to the spot and pleaded for mercy. Disregarding his pleas, the aggressive, merciless and hostile mob, razed the building to the ground. Tension prevailed in the area following the demolition of the church.

Hyderabad

Physical Violence / Arrested

On 10 March in Hyderabad city of Karnataka, Karthar Singh was beaten up on account of his Christian faith. Mr. Singh had earlier recorded his testimony on a video and circulated it online. In his testimony he had compared one of the Sikh Gurus with Jesus Christ. The video went viral and the Sikh community complained against him. Subsequently, he was called for a discussion in the local Gurudwara. When Singh and his wife entered the Gurudwara for a discussion, some community members manhandled him. However, the police arrived on time and took him under police custody to ensure his safety. He was later remanded to judicial custody for a period of 14 days.

Warangal

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 30 March in Kamalapur village in Kamalapur mandal of Warangal (urban) district in Telangana, a group of ten religious extremists took a Christian leader, Mr. Ramesh, to Kamalapur police station while he was distributing some Christian literature.

Medak

Physical Violence

On 9 April in Isnapur village of Patancheru tehsil of Medak district in Telangana, a group of 35 religious extremists barged into a cottage prayer meeting and manhandled the pastor and believers who were present there.

Gummadidala

Vandalism

On 17 April in Nasarpur Road in Gummadidala

mandal of Sangareddy district in Telangana, a group of 40 religious extremists entered the Indian Pentecostal Church ELIM church compound, burnt the entire mango plantation, removed the fence and attacked the pastor in charge. Out of fear the pastor and his family locked themselves inside a room.

Rengareddy

Church / Worship Stopped

On 25 April in Challapur village of Serilingampally subdivision in Rangareddy district of Telangana, religious extremists disrupted a baptismal service, threatened Pastor David Raju, forcefully applied tilak on his forehead and forced him to chant "Jai Sree Ram" (Long Live Lord Ram). Christians filed a FIR (No. 303/2019) on 27 February against the extremists under sections 352, 341, 506 and 295A IPC.

Medak

Gender Violence

On 23 June in Bollaram town in Medak district of Telangana, a group of five men attacked Christian worshipers who had gathered for a Sunday prayer service. The church is led by Pastor Prasad. The assailants physically abused the 19 women and one man, who were peacefully praying. Christian advocacy groups advised the pastor to file a police complaint. At present, the prayer services continue to be conducted there.

Hyderabad

Church / Worship Stopped

On 7 July in Kushaiguda suburb of Hyderabad city in Telangana, a Christian prayer service was disrupted by religious extremists. A Christian woman, Ms. Sreeja, runs a house church in the suburb and had organized a Sunday prayer service. While the program was underway, a mob of 40 religious extremists barged into the service, disrupted the prayers and started shouting slogans like "Jai Shri Ram". They also warned the Christians to stop the prayer services. Following the incident, the Christian woman complained to the police, but the police didn't register an FIR against the assailants. The police instead forced the Christians to enter a compromise with their assailants and warned them not to conduct the prayers anymore. The police also took a letter of

compromise from Ms. Sreeja.

Suryapet

Forced Conversion

On 22 July in Huzurnagar town of Suryapet district in Telangana, Christians were physically and verbally attacked by a group of Hindu radicals. A pastor and his team of around 20 people were distributing tracts and copies of the Bible at Huzurnagar. At that time, a mob of around 70 people allegedly belonging to the RSS, Bajrang Dal and Shivshakti surrounded them and asked them to stop distributing tracts. They alleged that the Christians were converting people to Christianity. The mob then forcefully applied tilak on their foreheads and called the police.

Yadadri

Bhuvanagiri Vandalism

On 2 October in Vasalamarri village of Turkapalli mandal in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district of Telangana, thirty extremists entered Pastor Steven's house and verbally abused and misbehaved with the people who had gathered there for a birthday celebration, including the women. They forced the Christians to chant "Jai Shri Ram" (Long Live Lord Ram), and vandalized household items.

Medchal-Malkajgiri

Demolition of Church

On 4 October in Quthbullapur mandal of Medchal-Malkajgiri district in Telangana, a notice for demolition of building was served to the Morya Prayer House. Pastor Daniel Alageshan runs a small church for the past 20 years. He had bought a 240 square yard land in the locality and had constructed a two-floor building. Since no formal permissions are required in the area, he did not bother to do it. However, a shop owner in the neighborhood approached the High Court, and got an order declaring the pastor's constructed building as illegal. Accordingly, the municipality issued a demolition notice two months back, with the deadline ending on 4 December 2019. Advocate Srikanth, a lawyer, has advised him to submit a joint complaint along with his church members against the shop owner challenging the construction of his house, and all others in the area, since most of them are done illegally.

Hyderabad

Church / Worship Stopped

On 15 October in R. B. Nagar of Shamsabad town in Hyderabad district of Telangana, some anti-Christian women disrupted a Christian prayer meeting. A Christian family had invited Pastor Glory Anna for a prayer and worship meeting in their home at R. B. Nagar. Pastor Anna has an independent ministry called Glory of Christ. While the meeting was in progress, some ladies living in the neighbourhood, on the pretext of loud noise and espousing a radical non-Christian view, started a quarrel with the Christians and disrupted the prayer meeting. No complaint was filed by Christians and to avoid further trouble the Christian family decided to hold prayer meetings without using any musical instruments.

Bhadradri

Kothagudem Social Opposition / Boycott

On 18 October in Palvancha mandal of Bhadradri Kothagudem district in Telangana, a Christian pastor was not allowed to enter a village for conducting prayer meetings. Villagers opposed and blocked Pastor K. Jeremiah from entering Palvancha village to conduct prayer meetings in church members' houses.

Adilabad

Church / Worship Stopped

On 5 November in Adilabad district of Telangana, religious fanatics barged into a church and hurled abuses at the Christians. Pastor Ullas Shreeddharan of Christian Revival Ministry of India was conducting the Sunday worship service when the incident occurred. While the prayer was in progress, around eight fanatics barged into the Church hall and started to hurl insults at the Christians. The assailants were very aggressive and started questioning Ullas, "Why have you come here? Have you come to convert the villagers?" They warned Ullas not to hold any more Christians meetings. After the threats, the fanatics left the place. The pastor has been facing problems from religious fanatics for quite some time. Earlier, he had been forced to close the church and stop the prayers. Just a week before he had restarted the services with the hope that the prayer meetings would happen smoothly and peacefully.

Medak

Physical Violence

On 22 December in Chinnakanjerla village which is in Patancheru tehsil of Medak district in Telangana, a Christian pastor named Moses was physically assaulted by villagers. The incident occurred at night while he was returning home after conducting a prayer service. Pastor Kristudas, leader of the local Pastors' Association and 30 others, visited the police station at night where the pastor had been kept. Around 60 villagers also arrived at the spot. The local police inspector was able to calm both the parties and a compromise was reached.



Tripura

Unakoti

Hate Campaign

On 21 January in Kailashahar in Unakoti district in Tripura, in an apparent bid of 'Ghar Wapsi' by Hindu Jagaran Mancha and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), 96 Christians were converted to Hinduism. Hindu Jagaran Mancha leader Makhan Lal Nath said that the converted persons were Hindus to start with and were simply 'reconverted' to their original faith. "They were Hindus at the beginning. Nine years back, these 98 persons of 23 families from Rachipara area were converted to Christianity. They wished to be reconverted to Hinduism and a yajna (holy pyre) was organized to convert them back and respect their wishes," Nath said. He also informed that most of the converted persons hail from Jharkhand and Bihar and belong to Oraon and Munda tribal communities. They were engaged as workers with Sonamukhi Tea Estate in the area. The Ghar Wapsi 'Yajna' was headed by Chandrakanta Singha, a Vedic scholar and president of Gayatri Kunja, a local Hindutva organisation.

Agartala

Church / Worship Stopped

On 23 May in Gakulnagar town of West Tripura district in Tripura, extremists disrupted a Brethren Assembly gathering and warned the

Christians of dire consequences. The extremists threatened and forced Pastor Sambhat to stop the prayer service. The pastor conducts the services regularly every Sunday evening. The pastor gave a written complaint at the police station but the police failed to act on the complaint. Eventually the pastor had to shift the prayer meeting venue to another house.

Unokoti

Arrested

On 13 October in Kumarghat area of Unokoti district, police arrested three Catholic priests in connection with the death of a 15-year-old school student. However, church leaders suspect the move is part of a plan to tarnish missionary services. Holy Cross Father Lancy D'Souza had to remain in judicial custody until 30 October. He was in charge of a hostel attached to Holy Cross School in the Kumarghat area. A local court bailed two other priests — Fathers Joe Paul and Alfred D'Souza — after they were arrested on 13 October. All three priests face investigation in connection with the death of a ninth-grader, Happy Debbarma, who died in hospital on 6 October. A police complaint filed by the boy's mother claims her son died of internal injuries after the hostel warden beat him up. Father D'Souza has been falsely accused of not acting against hostel warden Bulchung Halam, who is accused of beating up the student. The two bailed priests, who visited the school as part of a courtesy call, are charged with destroying evidence and helping Father D'Souza evade arrest. Hostel warden Halam, arrested on 15 October has been remanded to judicial custody until Oct.30.



Uttar Pradesh

Sonbhadra

Church / Worship Stopped

On 2 January in Bagharu village of Dudhi Tehsil in Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh, Christians were threatened by police officers to stop prayer services. A Christian pastor named

Virendra Gond regularly conducts prayers at the house of Rajendra Prasad, a Christian. Earlier, on 30 December, while the pastor was holding a prayer service at Prasad's house, two religious radicals disrupted the service. Half an hour later, two policemen came with more radicals and threatened the Christians. On the next day, two policemen from Dudhi police station made another visit to Prasad's house, took away Christian song books, copies of the Bible, etc., and told the Christians to come to the police station on 2 January. Hence, three Christians - Rajendra Prasad, Manilal and Keval Prasad - went to Dudhi police station on the said date. To their dismay, the Station House Office and other policemen warned them that false charges under Section 107 and 116 will be held against them if they continue the regular prayers. Though the Christians explained that they had accepted the Christian faith of their own free will, police warned that if their pastor entered the village again, the radicals might physically assault him and the police cannot responsibility of such an event. Later, on 6 January, the pastor was summoned to a meeting of the villagers and warned to stop conducting Christian prayers in the village.

Ghazipur

Arrested

On 5 January in Birno vilage of Ghazipur district in Uttar Pradesh, religious radicals accompanied by the local police stopped a prayer meeting led by Pastor Rajesh Kumar. Pastor Kumar belongs to the Indian Pentecostal Church and the meeting was being attended by around 20 Christians, close to 3 in the afternoon. The police arrested the pastor along with an evangelist identified as Rahul and presented them in a local court. A mob of religious radicals surrounded the Magistrate (SDM) and demanded that the Christians be sent to jail. Despite pressure, the SDM granted bail to both the Christians and they were released at 9 pm the same day.

Mau

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 6 January in Sahadatpur village of Mau district in Uttar Pradesh, while Pastor Lakhveer Kundan of Assembly of Believers Church was conducting regular Sunday worship, a member of Hindu Yuva Vahini (HYV) entered the church and began enquiring about the service. Soon he left and returned with more HYV members and media persons. The HYV members accused

Kundan of carrying out forceful conversion. Eventually, Sarahu Police arrested Kundan and released him only after he gave an undertaking in writing declaring that he was not converting anyone.

Ghazipur

Arrested

On 6 January in Shekhanpur village of Kasimabad block in Ghazipur district of Uttar Pradesh, police arrested Pastor Sonu, Shri Bhagwan and two other members of a church. They were acting on the basis of pressure and complaints received from the extremists in Shekhanpur village. The police team barged into a worship service and arrested the pastor and believers citing complaints of forceful religious conversion. The pastor and the believers were booked under IPC Section 151, 107 and 116. Later, Christians applied for bail and were released.

Ghazipur

Threat / Harassment

On 11 January in Ghazipur city of Uttar Pradesh, police harassed Pastor Ramvilas to stop his church activities. The pastor conducts prayer meetings under a tree in an open public place. Around 700 Christians attend the meetings. The Station House Officer (SHO) of Saidpur police station began been harassing and threatening the pastor to stop all activities of the church. He demanded that the Christians report to him at the police station.

Mau

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 12 January in Sahadatpur village of Mau district in Uttar Pradesh, leaders of Hindu Yuva Vahini (HYV) surrounded Pastor Lakhveer Kundan of Assembly of Believers Church and threatened him. He was harassed by the members of the HYV the previous Sunday, 6 January, as well and was detained by the police on allegations of carrying out forceful conversions.

Kushinagar

Physical Violence / Arrested

On 13 January in Ravindra Nagar village of Dudhahi Block in Kushi Nagar District of Uttar Pradesh, police arrested a woman pastor Sindhu Bharti, and other Christians, based on a complaint by religious extremists. The incident

occurred when female police officers disrupted a Sunday worship service and arrested four women and two men, including Sindhu Bharti who was leading the worship service. At the police station, a lady police officer physically assaulted Bharti, who fell unconscious. "Boiling tea was forcibly thrust in her mouth because the police thought that she was feigning her unconsciousness," an eyewitness, Madhu Bharati said. "When that did not work, they poured two jugs of cold water on her face, not caring that it was already severely cold due to winter." Those arrested were charged with intent to hurt religious feelings, defilement of a place of worship and rioting, among other charges. The intervention of Christian leaders resulted in police freeing the arrested female Christians, but the men were kept under judicial custody. Pastor Bharti received medical treatment for her injuries. The Christian women were booked under IPC section 147, 295, 298, 504 and 120B.

Shahjahanpur

Church / Worship Stopped

On 13 January in Kubhiya village of Shahjahanpur district in Uttar Pradesh, while a church service was underway, seven to eight young men asked permission from Pastor Harish Chandra to attend the service, to which Pastor Chandra consented. Soon they were joined by 25 more men, who immediately began to create a ruckus. They alleged that Chandra "forcibly converts Hindus" and questioned him as to why he does not have "pictures of Hindu gods and goddesses" inside the Church. It was only at the intervention of the police that the extremists dispersed. The police summoned Pastor Chandra to report at the Khutar police station at 4 p.m. When he did, a mob of Hindutva activists surrounded the police station levying allegations of "forceful conversion" by Chandra. The police let Chandra go only by the evening with instructions to report the next day.

Pratapgarh

Physical Violence

On 27 January in Kopa village of Aspur Deosara block in Pratapgarh district of Uttar Pradesh, around 200 religious extremists stopped a worship service in an Assembly of God Church. They beat up church members and locked the ladies in a room. Later they took pastor Srikant Kharwar and two others with them. The two believers were brutally beaten up and injured

badly. The church has around 30 members.

Bahraich

Arrested

On 28 January in Rupaidiha village of Bahraich district in Uttar Pradesh, police arrested a 40-year-old pastor Dharmendra Singh on the charges of 'alluring to convert,' 'outraging religious feelings,' and 'promoting enmity.' He was released on bail on 30 January. Pastor Singh denied all charges against him stating that members of the Hindu extremist group, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal, had fabricated a story and pressured a new Christian, Ramesh Gautam, to file a false complaint against him. Gautam said in court on 30 January that the allegations were false. Gautam witnessed that his faith was his own choice, and nobody had forced him or his family to believe in Jesus. "We have not converted by allurements but have become worshippers of Jesus," said Ramesh in the courtroom.

Jaunpur

Church / Worship Stopped

On 3 February in Nagawa village in Mariahu tehsil of Jaunpur district in Uttar Pradesh, around noon, while Pastor Bharat Lal was conducting Sunday worship service along with 400 believers, a team of local police from Barsathi Station barged into the meeting and disrupted the service. The pastor showed them the registration paper of his organization, 'Pavitra Parmeshwar Yesu Dham'. The police alleged that the pastor was converting poor people to Christianity. Subsequently they took the pastor to the police Station. In his defence he also showed a high court order to conduct worship. Only then did the police let him go. This was not a new incident of persecution for Pastor Lal. He had faced a similar turn of events in December 2018.

Sultanpur

Physical Violence

On 7 February in Chapar village of Sultanpur district in Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Ranjeet Kumar Gautam (Jokhu) was conducting a Christian prayer. All of a sudden around 25 religious fanatics entered their home and started abusing the Christians verbally, and later assaulted them physically. They did not even spare the women in the church. Rakesh, Mukesh and Bhanu Pratap were severely beaten. A police team from Chanda station

arrived on the spot but did not take any action against the culprits. The injured believers were later taken to a hospital in an ambulance.

Jaunpur

Threat / Harassment

On 10 February near Jaunpur city of Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Manoj Jacob, Pastor Ramsevak and others were returning in a car from Allahabad. They had gone there to meet Pastor Vijay Dubey whose life has been under threat from religious extremists. Some of the extremists followed the car in which the pastors were traveling and threw stones at the moving vehicle.

Sonbhadra

Church / Worship Stopped

On 18 February in Robertsganj city of Sonbhadra district in Uttar Pradesh, religious fanatics disrupted a Christian function organised at the Assembly of Believers Church. The Church is led by Pastor Narendra. During the opening ceremony right wing fanatics, accompanied by the local police, barged into the church building and shouted anti-Christian slogans. Bishop Arun Michael and Bishop Tony of the Assembly of Believers Church were present at this time and they spoke to the police. The attackers went back after creating a ruckus.

Agra

Vandalism

On 22 February in Agra city of Uttar Pradesh, religious extremists destroyed a Gideon Books stall. The extremists threatened the stall owner and took away the entire stock of the copies of the New Testament. They also threatened the Gideon representative with dire consequences if they continued to do arrange such stalls in the future.

Jaunpur

Physical Violence

On 24 February in Dhanja Mau in Jaunpur district of Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Mahajan Bind, Pastor Kedarnath, Pushpa Bind, Sarita Bind and Meena Bind were conducting a Sunday church service in the house of Parvesi Chauhan. Their church name is Mahima Satsang. Local RSS leaders came and disrupted the service and started beating the Christians.

Subsequently, they took 5 of them to Baksha Police Station.

Bijnor

Threat / Harassment

On 1 March in Prithvipur village, Chandpur tehsil, Bijnor district, Uttar Pradesh, it was reported by Ban Singh that police was troubling his pastor Bakshi Sagar. He said that the police was visiting Pastor Sagar's house and alleging that he was indulging in conversions. They were also threatening him with legal action mentioning that there was a complaint against him.

Kushinagar

Threat / Harassment

On 19 March in Padrauna city of Kushinagar district in Uttar Pradesh, Christians - Krishna Prasad, Sindhu Bharti and others - were persecuted for their faith. The village chief, Markandey Tiwari, accompanied with a police team, approached the Christians and began harassing them. He further threatened that the land that had been given to them by the Gram Samaj (Village Council) would be taken away from them. He continued his abusive tirade and threatened to remove their names from the Ration Card (an official document issued by state governments in India to households that are eligible to purchase subsidized food grain from the Public Distribution System) and would ensure that they don't get any wheat or rice from the government.

Faizabad

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 24 March in Ambedkar Nagar district near Faizabad in Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Surendra was summoned to a nearby local police station with allegations that he was converting people to Christianity. While he was about to finish the church service, a constable from Rajesultanpur police station came to his church and informed him that the police had got a call from somebody alleging that the pastor was converting people. The constable asked the pastor to come along with him to the police station and meet the Station House Officer. Surendra is involved in Christian ministry through an independent unregistered organization named Shifa Prarthna Bhawan. Around 60 to 70 members attend the meetings regularly.

Kushinagar

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 24 March in Goradiya village in Kushinagar district of Uttar Pradesh, while Pastor Krishna Prasad was conducting a Sunday service someone complained to the local police that the pastor was converting people despite a previous warning. In the past, he used to conduct Sunday service at his home which is 20 to 25 kms away from Goradiya village. After the complaint, local police from Kotwali Padarun arrived at the village in civil dress and started looking for the pastor. However, the pastor managed to get away from there.

Auraiya

Forced Conversion

On 28 March in Auraiya city in Auraiya district of Uttar Pradesh, religious extremists, allegedly from the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), disrupted a Christian prayer meeting. Pastor Rajendra Prasad was leading a house prayer meeting in Lalli Ram's home when a group of right wing extremists barged in and asked the Christians to stop the prayer meeting. The pastor stopped the meeting and left the place. Later the extremists forcefully took thumb impressions of all the Christians on a blank paper and later filled it with a false confession of Christians owning up that they were converting people by allurements. Police personnel seized three bikes and took them to the police station, while the extremists went to a Christian house with a gun, broke glass bottles and tried to beat the owner. On the same night, around 11 p.m., twelve extremists barged into Pastor Prasad's house and verbally threatened him.

Kushinagar

Physical Violence

On 7 April in Raipur Bhaishahi village of Padrauna tehsil in Kushinagar district in Uttar Pradesh, Christians were physically assaulted by anti Christians. Prayer meetings were conducted every Thursday at a believer's home. However, some disgruntled neighbours who had been harassing the pastor, Jitendra Sahani, decided to disrupt one of the meetings. They threatened and accused the pastor of spreading the values of Christianity. Subsequently they severely assaulted two young boys, one of whom ended up fracturing

his hand. Although the pastor informed the police about the incident, no action was taken.

Kaushambi

Arrested

On 9 April in Manjhanpur town of Kaushambi district in Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Chandrabhan and six other leaders were arrested and sent to jail. While they were conducting a prayer meeting, police arrived and booked them under charges of conversion.

Ghazipur

Arrested

On 10 April in Suhwal village of Reotipur block in Ghazipur district of Uttar Pradesh, seven Christians, including Pastor Pastor V. S. John, were arrested and taken into police custody for conducting a prayer meeting. Police registered a complaint against the Christians under IPC section 151. Christians were able to get bail with the help of Christian advocacy groups on the next day.

Jaunpur

Physical Violence

On 14 April in Jamdaha village in Shah Ganj block under Khetasarai post of Janpur district in Uttar Pradesh, around 200 religious extremists brutally beat Pastor Ram Vachan Bind and other Christian believers, including women, in the presence of local police. This particular church, under Assemblies of God, had been forcefully closed by religious extremists in September last year. And it was reopened after a High Court order. The extremists destroyed everything in the church and beat up the men and women with sticks. The pastor and his family were forced to take shelter in the nearby villages.

Raebareli

Threat / Harassment

On 21 April in Sareni village in Lalganj Tehsil of Rae Bareli district in Uttar Pradesh, religious extremists threatened a Christian woman, Suman, and her family that they should stop attending church. The extremists warned the family that if they did not oblige, her daughters would be kidnapped. The radicals verbally abused and threatened them with dire consequences.

Azamgarh

Arrested

On 22 April in Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh, a false complaint alleging forceful religious conversion was registered in Bilariyaganj police station, against Pastor Ram Chandra. The pastor was conducting a prayer meeting in his own building but his relatives along with religious extremists complained against him that he was doing forceful religious conversion and trying to convert them to Christianity. They also produced copies of the Bible and other Christian literature at the police station as evidences. Subsequently, when the pastor conducted prayer meeting, police came and arrested the pastor and his brother and filed a First Information Report under IPC section 151. Omkar Nath, Guddu Prasad and Nathaniel Singh, who had gone to the Court, helped in securing a bail for their release.

Kushinagar

Arrested

On 27 April in Kaptanganj town in Kushinagar district of Uttar Pradesh, police arrested Pastor Narmada Kumar (Himalaya Evangelical Mission) and his daughter, based on a false complaint given by religious extremists. The extremists had earlier barged into a prayer meeting conducted by the pastor and had disrupted the program. Later they rang up the police and complained that forceful religious conversion were taking place in the church. When the police reached at the spot, they immediately arrested the pastor and his daughter.

Mirzapur

Church / Worship Stopped

On 7 May in Majhigawan near Pawarinkala village of Hallia block in Lalganj tehsil of Mirzapur district in Uttar Pradesh, police personnel disrupted a prayer meeting that was being led by Pastor Binayak Maurya. Furious over this, some villagers called the Sub-Divisional Magistrate, the Station House Officer and some religious radicals. They started alleging that he was converting the locals into Christianity and eventually stopped him from conducting the service. They told him that if he intends to hold such prayers regularly then he must take permission from administrative authorities, otherwise they

would ensure that he is put in jail. The SDM charged the pastor with sections 107 and 116 of CRPC. Later the pastor was released on bail.

Lucknow

Physical Violence

On 16 May in Khargapur locality of Gomti Nagar in Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh, extremists attacked Pastor Prem Lal Singh with a blade and threatened to kill him if he did not stop the church activities. Police took the injured pastor to a nearby hospital and registered a FIR against the religious extremists.

Azamgarh

Arrested

On 29 May in Mubarakpur town of Azamgarh district in Uttar Pradesh, police arrested Pastor Philip Christie based on a complaint filed by religious radicals. The pastor was conducting a convention for three days at Azamgarh. During the prayer meeting, police came and detained the pastor. The allegation against him stated that Christians were forcefully converting people to Christianity. After an informal inquiry police released the pastor.

Raebareli

Arrested

On 30 May in Dalmau town of Raebareli district in Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Roopsen, who is working with Assemblies of Believers Church, was arrested and later released after police warned him of dire consequences. Some religious radicals had complained against the pastor saying that he was involved in forceful religious conversion. Acting on the complaint police arrested him and took him in custody under IPC section 151. He was later released on bail on the same day. Police warned him with dire consequences if he continued any church activity in the district.

Moradabad

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 2 June in Moradabad district of Uttar Pradesh, a mob of around 150 Bajrang Dal members came and stopped a Christian service being conducted at the Assembly of God Church. The mob forcefully took Pastor Vinod Kumar, his wife Roseline, and their son in law Harish, to the Civil Lines police station.

Raebareli

Church / Worship Stopped

On 16 June in Shekhwapur village of Lalganj tehsil in Rae Bareli district of Uttar Pradesh, fifteen religious extremists entered a church, disrupted the Sunday service and clicked pictures of the gathering, which they later published on social media. The extremists also complained to the local police alleging that the pastor of the church, Sohan Lal, was involved in fraudulent conversions. Two days later, the pastor was summoned at the police station and charged under sections 107, 116 and 151, Cr. P. C. The pastor was sent to jail on these charges.

Raebareli

Arrested

On 23 June in Lalganj town of Raebareli district of Uttar Pradesh, in two separate incidents, mobs forcefully entered the church buildings of Assemblies of Believers Church and Assembly of God Church, accusing Pastor Roopsen and Pastor Bablu Massey respectively, of conducting conversions by allurement with money. Police filed an FIR against Pastor Roopsen under section 295A and 298, and arrested him. With the help of Christian advocacy groups Pr. Roopsen was able to obtain bail.

Kushinagar

Physical Violence

On 4 July in Raipur Bhisahi village in Padrauna tehsil of Kushinagar district in Uttar Pradesh, two young Christian boys were severely beaten up during a prayer meeting. Prayer meetings were conducted every Thursday at Jantri Sahani's house. However, a few disgruntled neighbours had been harassing Jantri Sahani and his pastor, Jitendra Sahani. They had often threatened and accused the pastor of spreading the values of Christianity through allurement. On the day of the incident, the neighbors severely assaulted the young boys, one of whom ended up fracturing his hand. Although the pastor informed the police about the incident, no action was taken. Subsequently, on 5 July, members of Hindu Yuva Vahini, a religious organization, called a meeting with the villagers and created pressure on one of the Christians to either abandon his faith or face dire consequences.

Faizabad

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 7 July in Mahawan village in Sohawal Tehsil of Faizabad district in Uttar Pradesh, some villagers filed a police complaint against Pastor Amrit Lal and other Christians for holding prayer services in the village in a Christian's house. Acting on the complaint, police detained the pastor and some Christians.

Raebareli

Arrested

On 7 July in Shiv Garh village in Maharajganj tehsil of Rae Bareli district in Uttar Pradesh, a police team from Shivgarh Police Station arrested two evangelists, Azaad and Kandahi, amidst a Sunday worship service. The arrests were made on the basis of complaint received from the villagers that Christian services were taking place there.

Agra

Arrested

On 14 July in Agra district of Uttar Pradesh, a Sunday worship service was disrupted by a mob of religious radicals. Around 70 people had gathered for the service. While the meeting was in progress the radicals, allegedly belonging to the Bajrang Dal and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, started shouting slogans and asked the pastor to stop the prayer service. They then called the police. Subsequently police arrested the pastor and took him to the police station. He was later released.

Sonbhadra

Physical Violence

On 17 July in Barganwa in Chopan block of Sonbhadra district in Uttar Pradesh, Paras Nath, Martin and Bhagwandas were physically assaulted on account of their Christian faith by Hindu extremists. While taking Christians to local police station, the Circle Officer told the Hindu extremist – “Don't bring these people to us, just kill them then and there”.

Muradabad

Arrested

On 17 July in Civil Lines locality of Muradabad city in Uttar Pradesh, a mob of 150 religious fanatics entered a church hall where an

inauguration ceremony was underway. The mob was accompanied with police personnel, who arrested five people and took them to the police station.

Gonda

Arrested

On 27 July in the city police station area of Gonda district in Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Sunny Tyagi was arrested on allegations of religious conversion. Raju Valmiki, a local resident filed an FIR against the pastor alleging that he was a threat to the Valmiki community, would frequently hold prayer meetings in the area and tried to convert the locals into Christianity, through force and allurements. The FIR contends the possibility that the pastor even brought illegal firearms to such prayer meetings and would threaten those that opposed his religious works. The pastor was later granted bail.

Maharajganj

Threat / Harassment

On 29 July in Maharajganj district of Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Jitendra was threatened and abused by Hindu fanatics. This was a part of a series of regular threats and opposition that he had been facing for the last many months.

Azamgarh

Physical Violence

On 5 August in Kushal Gaon village of Phulpur block in Azamgarh district of Uttar Pradesh, Christians were violently attacked which led to many being injured. The incident took place at Pastor Ledar's church. The pastor was arrested last year, and of late had been receiving increased threats to his life. He had been warned by religious fanatics in the village to stop all Christian prayers. Since the pastor and his church members did not heed to the warnings, the fanatics attacked them on the fateful day. Several Christians including Kiran, Amarnath, Sachin, Madanlal and Pravin were grievously injured.

Ghaziabad

Arrested

On 9 August in Bhopura locality of Ghaziabad city in Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Mohan Masih was arrested by the police after false charges of conversion were levied against him by Narayan

and Gayatri, a couple. Pastor Masih leads a house prayer group that gathers at the house of local Christians, Sagar and Maya. According to reports the couple who have complained against the pastor are under influence of Hindu right-wing groups. They had earlier complained against the pastor as well, but the police had investigated and had found no substance in their complaint. In the complaint registered recently they alleged that the pastor had come to their house and had desecrated the idols kept there. The police at the Tulsi Niketan post called the pastor for questioning at 11 am and arrested and sent him to Sahibabad police station in the evening. FIR was also registered against the two women - Maya and Suman. The pastor remains in prison till the writing of this report. On 27 August in the Ghaziabad case, Pastor Mohan Masih was released on bail. Earlier on 9 August in Bhopura, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, the pastor had been arrested by the police on false charges of conversion.

Ghaziabad

Arrested

On 11 August in Indirapuram locality of Ghaziabad city in Uttar Pradesh, religious activists created a ruckus at a church led by Pastor Himanshu. The church has been meeting in the location for the past 10 years. On the day of the incident, a mob of around 50 people came at the church venue after the service was over and started interrogating the worshippers and kept looking for the pastor. The mob created a lot of commotion and the pastor had to call the police. Upon arrival, police arrested the pastor and detained him at the police station. He was later bailed out, but he and his family are now receiving threats of dire consequences if worship services continue.

Jaunpur

Arrested

On 20 August in Bhadupur village of Jaunpur district in Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Tinku Bin was arrested by the police. While conducting a Christian prayer meeting the pastor and other Christians were brutally assaulted and taken to the local police station. The assaulters accused that the pastor was converting the local villagers fraudulently.

Siddharthnagar

Arrested

On 23 August in Bhawaniganj of Siddharthnagar district of Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Shankar Varma was arrested at the behest of local radicals. The pastor, along with his wife and children, had gone there to visit the homes of a few church members. The local religious radicals objected to this, verbally abused him and later called the police to arrest him. The pastor was later released.

Raebareli

Arrested

On 23 August in Bharrapur village under Lalganj police station of Raebareli district in Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Amanat was falsely accused and arrested. The pastor had finished conducting a prayer meeting at the village and was about to leave. That's when a few religious radicals confronted him and accused him of converting people into Christianity. The local police arrived at the spot and took the pastor into custody.

Bareilly

Church / Worship Stopped

On 25 August in the Madhinath locality of Bareilly city in Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh, a church service was disrupted by local religious fanatics. The incident occurred when Pastor Pawan was conducting the regular Sunday worship service. A group of local fanatics along with the ward councillor barged into the house and demanded that the service be stopped. They alleged that the pastor had no right to conduct such meetings without the permission of the Sub Divisional Magistrate. A complaint was later filed against the pastor at the local police station.

Hardoi

Arrested

On 25 August in Jamalpur village of Hardoi district in Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Pramod Kumar and Lalbahadur were detained at the local police station. The pastor regularly conducts prayer meetings on Sundays at his house. On the day of the incident, some religious radicals complained at the police station that the pastor was alluring and converting the locals. The Shabad police station swung into action and arrested the two.

Lakhimpur

Arrested

On 25 August in Saidpur Khurd of Lakhimpur district in Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Bablu was arrested and taken to the local police station. He was conducting the usual Sunday worship service when a group of religious fanatics, armed with weapons, started shouting and accusing the pastor of religious conversion. The local police arrested the pastor and made him to sign an undertaking stating that he would not gather people for church meetings until he gets a written permission from the Sub Divisional Magistrate.

Saharanpur

Church / Worship Stopped

On 25 August in Saharanpur city of Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh, a group of religious fanatics disrupted a church service and abused the pastor. Pastor Naresh Kumar was conducting a worship service along with church members when the mob barged into the building, attacked the pastor and abused the members. The pastor immediately sought the police's help. One of the assailants was arrested, but later released after a compromise was reached between both parties.

Agra

Physical Violence

On 28 August in Iradatnagar of Agra district in Uttar Pradesh, a Christian evangelist of the Indian Pentecostal Church, named Amiri Singh, was badly beaten up. He had gone to Ganedhi village to conduct a prayer meeting and was on his way back home. No complaint was filed with the police.

Chandauli

Threat / Harassment

On 28 August in Chandauli district of Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Raju was taken into custody over a false accusation. The pastor was constructing a building for starting a Sewing Centre. A group of religious fanatics obstructed the construction work and filed a complaint with the police alleging that the pastor was intending to construct a church building. Consequently the police took the pastor into custody. He was later released.

Gautam Budh Nagar

Threat / Harassment

On 29 August in Greater Noida city of Gautam

Budh Nagar district in Uttar Pradesh, a group of religious radicals confronted Pastor Vishal and threatened him to stop his Christian activities. They verbally abused the pastor and threatened him of dire consequences if he did not desist from visiting houses and praying for the needy families. The pastor is emotionally shaken; however, he did not file a complaint at the local police station.

Kheri

Arrested

On 1 September in Durgapur village of Lakhimpur tehsil in Lakhimpur Kheri district of Uttar Pradesh, a group of religious extremists forcefully took Pastor Balram to the Lakhimpur police station from his church. They alleged that he had not obtained prior permission to conduct the prayer services. An FIR was registered against the pastor under sections 153A, 295A and 505(1) of the Indian Penal Code.

Lakhimpur

Arrested

On 1 September in Sundrawal village in Lakhimpur Kheri district of Uttar Pradesh, some Hindutva extremists disrupted a prayer service at a church. The assailants barged into the service accompanied with police and verbally abused Pastor Sarvan. They forced him to stop the prayer and warned him from conducting any meetings in the village. They then arrested and took him to the Phoolbehar police station.

Kushinagar

Church / Worship Stopped

On 1 September in Kasia block of Kushi Nagar district, two men allegedly belonging to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) disrupted a prayer meeting. Pastor Mohan Lal of the VCI Church had just finished the worship service and was praying for the Christians that had gathered. Just then the two men, accompanied with police personnel, arrived at the spot and levelled false accusations of religious conversion. Subsequently police ordered the pastor and Christians to come to Kasia police station the next day. More than 300 people come to church for prayer meetings.

Kheri

Arrested

On 8 September in Jahanpur village in Gola Gokaran Nath tehsil of Lakhimpur Kheri district in Uttar Pradesh, a mob of 100 religious extremists, allegedly belonging to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal, wearing saffron coloured attire surrounded Pastor Shibu Mathew's house and accused him of engaging in conversion activities. Intimidated by the crowd, the pastor called the police and asked for protection. Instead, when the police arrived at the spot they took the pastor to the police station and registered a FIR against him under sections 295A and 153A of the IPC.

Pratapgarh

Church / Worship Stopped

On 8 September in Sundernagar of Pratapgarh in Uttar Pradesh, around 25 members of Hindutva extremist group barged into a prayer meeting taking place at the E.C.I. Church, disrupted the prayers and accused Reverend Dasrath Pawar of religious conversions. They also asked the media personnel to report about the same.

Hapur

Church / Worship Stopped

On 13 September in Hapur tehsil of Hapur district in Uttar Pradesh, a team of police personnel sought to arrest a pastor on the charges of religious conversion. Pastor Kishan Masih, from Evangel Bible Church, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, was invited to speak at a 'Friday Fasting & Prayer' meeting at Hapur. At 10 a.m., 3 persons, including the pastor, had gathered at Monu Bhai's residence and were awaiting the rest of the people to convene for prayer. A short while later, a police Jeep arrived at the house and half a dozen policemen walked into the house of prayer. The policemen demanded that the meeting be stopped with immediate effect. Pastor Kishan politely stated that it was violation of their constitutional right to worship. They had been meeting at this home for the past 10 years. Police directed the pastor that they must secure permission for future meetings. They persistently alleged that the prayer meetings were used as a cover for religious conversions. The Christians were upset over the racial profiling and open discrimination against them. Enraged by this, one of the policemen wanted to take the pastor

into custody. However, the Christians vehemently objected to such a plan. Eventually, the police forcibly stopped the meeting and summoned the Christians to the Hapur Police Station, at 6:30 pm, for further interrogation.

Varanasi

Arrested

On 14 September in Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh, some Hindutva extremists entered a prayer meeting, that was being conducted by Pastor Shyam Sundar Bhardwaj of Jaunpur, raised slogans and accused the pastor of conducting religious conversions. The extremists then forcefully took him to the Baragaon police station and he was consequently put in jail.

Lakhimpur

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 15 September in Mustafabad village of Gola Gokaran Nath tehsil in Lakhimpur Kheri district of Uttar Pradesh, some Hindutva extremists filed a police complaint against Pastor Gokran Prasad alleging that he converts villagers to Christianity. The pastor and another Christian were detained by the police at Gola Gokaran Nath station based on the complaint.

Pratapgarh

Arrested

On 21 September in Pratapgarh district of Uttar Pradesh, a group of religious fanatics, accompanied with police, barged into a prayer meeting and accused the Christians of converting people. Police arrested Pastor Vinod Kumar and some Christians and took them in custody.

Pratapgarh

Arrested

On 21 September in Ajhara village of Lalganj tehsil in Pratapgarh district of Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Rakesh Kumar Kori was arrested and detained at the Langanj police station. The incident occurred while the pastor was conducting a prayer meeting. A police officer arrived at the spot and started inquiring whether the pastor has permission to hold the prayer services. He then forcefully took the pastor to the Lalganj police station.

Raebareli

Arrested

On 1 October in Raebareli district of Uttar Pradesh, Christians were arrested while they were busy propagating the Christian teaching. Some Hindutva extremists opposed Pastor Manoj Kumar, his wife, Pastor Ajit and others while they were visiting one house to another and preaching the tenets of Jesus Christ. The extremists called the police, who came and took the Christians to the police station and registered an FIR against them under section 295A of IPC.

Gorakhpur

Church / Worship Stopped

On 6 October 2019 in Kuraghat of Gorakhpur district in Uttar Pradesh, while Christians were conducting Sunday service, some religious fanatics came and ordered them to stop the service. Subsequently, they dialled 100 and called the police. Police came and took Pastor Rakesh Kumar Maddheshiya and his wife into custody.

Shahjahanpur

Threat / Harassment

On 11 October in Khutar area at Nahil Village of Shahjahanpur district in Uttar Pradesh, some neighbours, espousing a right-wing ideology, barged into a Christian's house and made threats warning not to conduct prayer meetings. False accusations were made that in the name of prayer meeting, Christians carry out religious conversion activities. Pastor Harish Chandra who does independent ministry in Kutar leads the prayer meeting every Friday. EFI team talked to Pastor Chandra and explained the essentials of filing a complaint.

Varanasi

Arrested

On 13 October in Varanasi city of Uttar Pradesh, a Christian pastor was arrested and taken into custody for conducting religious prayers. While Pastor Rajesh was conducting the Sunday worship service, suddenly, some religious fanatics barged into the prayer hall and disrupted the prayer meeting. They accused the pastor of carrying out religious conversion work and then called the police. Pastor Rajesh was taken to the Cantt Police Station. There was lot of pressure from

religious fanatics on Sub Inspector, SHO and Circle Officer. It seemed as if Pastor may get falsely implicated with sections 153A and 295A of IPC.

Bahraich

Church / Worship Stopped

On 15 October in Pandit Purwa village in Mahasi tehsil of Bahraich district in Uttar Pradesh, police broke up a congregational gathering of 6,000 worshippers on Tuesday, after Hindu extremists levelled false charges of black magic, arms possession and forcible conversion against Pastor Santosh Jaiswal. An administrative officer arrived with police from Hardi police jurisdiction announcing that the outdoor venue for the gathering had to be vacated by 8 a.m. Pastor Jaiswal said that officers accused him of performing black magic on Hindus. About a week before inspection, a Brahmin journalist had come to their Sunday worship service with cameras. He had videotaped the congregation lifting up their hands and praying. And had also interviewed some people who had experienced healing. Soon the local news media reported the prayers as black magic rituals, and that a Christian priest is promoting blind belief. The police officers parroted the same accusations.

Azamgarh

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 20 October in Gambhirvan village in Azamgarh tehsil of Azamgarh district in Uttar Pradesh, Christians were falsely accused of converting people through illegal means. Christians had gathered in the village for the Sunday worship service. While Pastor Suraj Vishwakarma was leading the worship two individuals of the Hindu upper caste came inside the church and enquired about the gathering. Realizing that it was a Sunday worship service, they falsely accused Christians of carrying out religious conversion and threatened them not to conduct prayer meetings in future. Suraj Vishwakarma has an independent ministry called Divya Jyoti Trust.

Chandauli

Threat / Harassment

On 26 October 2019, in Saiyadraja town of Chandauli district in Uttar Pradesh, as per local news sources, religious extremists threatened a

group of Christians that they would attack Rajendra Prasad, a Christian missionary working with GEMS (Gospel Echoing Missionary Society). Alarmed by the threat the Christians were able to avert the attack. However, the missionary continues to live under regular threats and warnings.

Hardoi

Church / Worship Stopped

On 3 November in Hardoi district of Uttar Pradesh, while Pastor Raja (Shivnandan) was conducting a Sunday service, some religious extremists came along with police and inquired whether the Christians had requisite permission to hold prayers. The Christians were told that they needed a written permission from the Sub Divisional Magistrate's Office, if they intended to hold prayer meetings regularly. Police took Pastor Raja and three believers into custody at Sursa Police station. Christian advocacy groups called the local police station, requested to carry out a fair investigation and tried to reason with the police, citing article 25 of the constitution. Eventually the pastor was let go without any complaint against him. Two days later, he also got permission from the SDM's office.

Ghaziabad

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 3 November in Sahibabad area of Ghaziabad district in Uttar Pradesh, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights directed the police to register a FIR against Asha Deep Foundations for teaching Bible to the children of jail inmates in Sahibabad. Some personnel from the Commission had searched the girls' and boys' hostel, where they found copies of the Bible and construed it as a criminal activity.

Mau

Church / Worship Stopped

On 17 November in Chiraiyakot police station area of Mau district in Uttar Pradesh, religious extremists disrupted a prayer meeting. Pastor Surendra Banvasi, who is work with Jeevan Marg Charitable Trust, was conducting the Sunday Service. A group of radicals came and disrupted the service. Later Police also arrived at the spot and took the pastor to Chiraiyakot Police Station.

Varanasi

Church / Worship Stopped

On 17 November in Rameshwar area of Varanasi district in Uttar Pradesh, a Christian pastor was taken into police custody. Pastor Atia was conducting a Sunday Service in which around 500 people had gathered. The meeting was disrupted by police authorities who arrested the pastor and took him into custody, invoking Section 144 of IPC.

Mirzapur

Church / Worship Stopped

On 17 November in Jamalpur police station area of Mirzapur district in Uttar Pradesh, a Christian pastor was taken into police custody. Pastor Khaia was conducting a Sunday Service in the city when religious fanatics came and disrupted the service. Eventually, police also arrived on the spot and took Pastor Khaia to Jamalpur Police Station. However, with the intervention of the local village chief the pastor was released for some time. Later, on the same day (17 November), police took him into custody again.

Bahraich

Threat / Harassment

On 22 November under Hardi police station of Bahraich district in Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Santosh Jaiswal was called by local police for inquiry. The pastor has been involved in Christian ministry in the area for a considerable period of time. The Station House Officer of Hardi police station called him to the police station and verbally abused him to control the group of people who were coming to visit the pastor regularly. Despite the fact that prayer services had earlier been stopped, 100-200 people visit him daily so that the pastor can pray for them.

Mau

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 26 November in Muhammadabad Gohna tehsil of Mau district in Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Ajay Kumar, Pastor Om Prakash and Kapil Dev Ram were arrested and taken to the Ranipur police station. The incident took place when they were holding a prayer meeting at the houses of a Christian named Kapil. The pastors and Christians were falsely accused of hurting the religious sentiments of the locals and

carrying out religious conversion. The three pastors were booked under IPC 295a and 153a on 27 November.

Jaunpur

Church / Worship Stopped

On 27 November morning in Saraiya village of Mariahu tehsil in Jaunpur district of Uttar Pradesh, Nevadhiya police took 4 women and 5 men from the Christian community into custody. It also seized 11 carton boxes full of copies of the Bible, several booklets, and a loudspeaker. Hindutva extremists along with police stormed into a church and disrupted the prayer meeting. There was chaos in the church when the women police station officer Taravati Yadav and the Station Head of Nevadhiya reached the spot and raided with full police force.

Khushi Nagar

Arrested

On 28 November in Hetimpur locality of Kasaya tehsil in Kushinagar district in Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Dilip Paul, who serves with Himalaya Evangelical Mission was taken into custody. Some police personnel came to the pastor's house and took him to the Kushi Nagar Police Chauki (station).

Pratapgarh

Falsely Accused / Arrested

On 28 November in Lalganj Ajhara locality in Pratapgarh district of Uttar Pradesh, a Christian pastor was arrested on allegations of religious conversion. Pastor Rakesh Kori has been working with Grace Church and regularly conducts Christian prayers in the area. On the day of the incident while he was conducting a house prayer, somebody from the local village informed to the Police that mass conversion was taking place in the village. Police personnel from the Lalganj Ajhara police station arrived at the spot and took the pastor into custody. In response, Christian advocacy groups contacted the local police and sought his release. Eventually, local police released the pastor without filing a complaint against him.

Mau

Threat / Harassment

On 4 December in Muhammadabad Gohna tehsil in Mau district of Uttar Pradesh, local

police confronted a Christian pastor for conducting prayer meetings. Pastor Ramjit regularly conducts prayer meetings in the region for the past fifteen years. On the day of the incident, a police inspector called him to the Mohammadabad police station. The officer was very rude, used a foul language and threatened the pastor that if he continued the meetings he too would be booked under relevant charges and arrested like other Christian pastors. When a EFI volunteer spoke to the pastor, he seemed gripped with fear and expressed his intention to apply for permission to conduct prayer meetings.

Bulandshahr

Threat / Harassment

On 8 December in Narora town of Bulandshahr district in Uttar Pradesh, Pastor T. Paul John was taken to local police station on account of his Christian faith and evangelistic work in the area. Pastor John is associated with the Assemblies of God Church. After Christian advocacy groups talked to the local police, the pastor was let go after he was imposed upon to sign a bond that stated that he would not involve in evangelistic activities in the area.

Sant Kabir Nagar

Church / Worship Stopped

On 15 December in Mehdawal tehsil in Sant Kabir Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh, religious extremists threatened Christians while they were holding a prayer meeting. In the evening, while Pastor Shankar Verma was conducting the meeting with 25 to 30 believers, some religious radicals barged into the place, and started abusing and threatening them. They warned those who had come from outside the village not to enter the village again, or they would be beaten up.

Christians Pritham and Maithelishwaran belonging to the Brethren Church were arrested on the allegation that they had violated laws and had attempted to forcibly convert Hindus to Christianity.

Udham Singh Nagar

Physical Violence

On 8 November in Bagwala village of Rudrapur block in Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand, a Christian pastor's father was attacked and brutally beaten up. Pastor Sawan Paul is involved in Christian evangelistic work in Udham Singh Nagar. There have been continuous targeted assaults on him, verbal and physical, on account of his Christian faith. Due to which, he stopped conducting prayers at Bagwala, and focused on visiting the adjoining villages to conduct prayer meetings. However, on the day of the incident, villagers in Bagwala plotted deceitfully against the pastor and attacked his father, Shyama Prasad. Mr Prasad was grievously injured.

Dehradun

Threat / Harassment

On 23 November in Prem Nagar locality of Dehradun district in Uttarakhand, a program organized by a Christian school was disrupted by police and religious fanatics. The Madhya Kerala Diocese, one of the twenty-four dioceses of the Church of South India (commonly referred as CSI), runs a tuition centre in the locality for the past 15 years. The tuition centre, which is led by Soby George, had organized an Annual Get Together for students and parents. When the lunch was being served, right after the conclusion of the program, a group of fanatics, police personnel and the SSP (Superintendent of Police) arrived at the spot. They began to charge George, and his team of teachers, of religious conversions. Police asked for documents of permission, rent agreement, etc. He was then summoned to the Prem Nagar police station. Owing to lack of any complaint against him they let him go.

Uttarakhand

Haridwar

Arrested

On 19 February in Raisi locality of Laksar town of Haridwar district in Uttarakhand, two

West Bengal

Paschim Bardhaman

Physical Violence

On 19 March in Pangachhiya town in Barabani CD Block in Asansol Sadar subdivision of Paschim Bardhaman district of West Bengal, a mob of around 20 people barged into a prayer meeting and assaulted a church elder. Mr. Anand Hari, a member of Full Gospel Church, was holding a cottage meeting at one Rekha Hari's house, which was attended by around 10 people. 62-year-old Anand himself was presiding over the meeting as an elder of the church. Anand had started the meeting at 7 p.m., when a mob of around 20 people led by Mr. Ghandi Nonia barged into the house, dragged him out and beat him so badly that he is unable to walk. They also beat up the Christians present. Many of the women were slapped and kicked on the stomach. Anand himself was forced to say, "Jai Shri Ram" and had to chant the Hanuman Chalisa (a devotional hymn addressed to Hanuman) while he was being beaten. He was threatened with dire consequences unless he embraced Hinduism. Later, he had to be admitted in Asansol Government hospital. A complaint was filed at the Kanyapur police station.

Howrah

Threat / Harassment

On 22 May in Howrah district of West Bengal, Hindutva extremists disrupted a conference. Few hindutva extremists came and photographed a prophetic conference and soon more extremists joined arrived at the place and caused nuisance. Pastor Oswald Gracis immediately complained to the local police. The Commissioner of Police took immediate action and sent four policemen to the venue. The conference then continued peacefully under police protection.

Kharagpur

Physical Violence

On 20 September in Kharagpur district of West Bengal, religious fanatics attacked Pastor Bhim Marandi and other Christians and beat them severely. Despite a police complaint, the police did not offer help. The radicals

threatened the Christians to renounce their Christian faith or face severe consequences. The Christians are living in fear and shock.

Darjeeling

Threat / Harassment

"On 5 October in Bagdogra Airport of Bagdogra town in Darjeeling district of West Bengal, a U.S. pastor attending a Sunday School conference in India was arrested for failing to report money he was carrying. Pastor Bryan Nerren, 58, was traveling to Sikkim for a Sunday school conference along with two U.S. pastors on 5 October, when they were detained at the Bagdogra airport, the closest airport to Sikkim. While the other two pastors were let go, Pastor Nerren was arrested when authorities alleged that he had violated the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) and the Customs Act by not declaring the cash that he was carrying for his trip and for conferences in India and Nepal. He was later released on bail on 11 October. He is now awaiting trial in Siliguri city. The Siliguri Civil and Criminal Court had imposed a travel ban on him and confiscated his passport and travel money on 6 October."

Hooghly

Threat / Harassment

On 21 October in Dewan Bheri village of Singur tehsil in Hugli district of West Bengal, some villagers barged into a prayer meeting and threatened the Christians to stop the prayers. Christians - Manik Majhi, Reba Maity and Bandana Koley along with other Christians - gather for prayer meetings regularly the village. On 21 October, some villagers came and threatened to stop conducting prayer meeting or else there would be dire consequences which may involve ostracization from the village. The area falls under the jurisdiction of Singur Police Station.

Jalpaiguri

Church / Worship Stopped

On 2 November in Jabramail village, Jalpaiguri district, West Bengal, according to reports received, 30 plus religious radicals disrupted a prayer meeting that was being held at Pastor Ramesh Ray's residence. The incident took place around 8 pm. The mob threatened the pastor with dire consequences but the pastor remained steadfast.

West Medinipur

Threat / Harassment

On 13 December at 2pm in Bilkua in West Medinipur district of West Bengal, 16 Christians, mostly women whose husbands had not accepted the Christian faith, were summoned to a village council. The village head asked them to bring their husbands on Sunday, 15 December, when they would be confronted and forced to decide to choose whether reconvert to Hinduism or follow Jesus and be expelled from the village. These Christians are regular members of a church led by Pastor Ramu Hala of Oasis Ministries. The pastor, until recently, conducted prayer meeting at Bilkua village. He often travels from village to village to share the Christian message and pray for the sick. His ministry had led people to accept Jesus Christ into their lives. The Christians had started gathering regularly at a fellow villager, Gopal Bhakta's home. A while back, around 12 Christians were sitting and praying together when they were suddenly interrupted by a group of religious fanatics who forcefully stopped the meeting accusing them of religious conversion. Later when Pastor Ramu arrived and restarted the meeting, the angry extremists who were backed by the village heads, stopped him and threatened him to never enter the village again. The dejected pastor left and was not allowed to conduct any worship services in the village. This made the villagers very unhappy. The religious extremists threatened to boycott the Christians from every village activity - including no permission to take

water from the well and no work in the fields, if they did not re-convert to Hinduism. In the meantime, a concerned Pastor Ramu started a worship service in another village nearby so that the Christians from Bilkua could continue to gather for prayer and worship. They now travel to the nearby village for fellowship. However, on 13 December, things took a different turn and the Christians of Bilkua were summoned and threatened by the village council.

Purba Medinipur

Vandalism

On 28 December in Bhagabanpur assembly constituency in Purba Medinipur district in West Bengal, vandals, allegedly linked to the RSS and BJP, attacked a church. A group of eight men hurled bombs with shouts of "Jai Shri Ram," and when worshippers fled, entered the church and vandalised it. The incident occurred in Bhagabanpur block, 120 km from Kolkata, around 2 pm. Three people were eventually arrested. Alok Ghosh, the pastor of the church, filed a police complaint naming eight people who he claimed were local BJP and RSS workers. Christians had come to church around Saturday noon when suddenly, at least two bombs burst outside the building. When the people fled, the men entered the church and smashed chairs, tables, windowpanes, and the microphones. They left after 15 minutes, but not before vandalising the pastor's car. However, the district BJP leadership reportedly denied any link with the church attack.



PRESS RELEASE

New Delhi, 16th December 2019

Christians in solidarity with fellow citizens Government must reconsider CAB and NRC

The Evangelical Fellowship of India shares the nation's concern of the terrifying impact of the enactment of amendments to citizenship law which threatens to radically change the status of a large number of Indian citizens.

The eruption in India's many universities by students - who are the antenna and the conscience of the people, and future decision-makers - is an indication of this.

We had expressed concern at the rapid passing of these laws and on the cumulative impact they would have. The dangerous experiment of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam, and the government's assurance that illegal migrants would be pardoned and given citizenship if they belonged to religions other than Islam, exposes the motives and the political agenda.

The breaking of covenants that the Constitution and founding fathers of the nation had made with the people, began with Kashmir, took the course of the NRC and the Citizens Amendment Bill (CAB), and now we have the threats to do away with the two seats reserved for Anglo-Indians in Parliament and Legislative Assemblies. These have roused fears among all Minorities, Tribals, and Dalits on their future welfare and status as full citizens.

While the Prime Minister and the Home Minister keep on assuring that the citizens need not fear; the pronouncements of political leadership and their frontal organizations, on the contrary, aggravate the fears.

The NRC and CAA, we hold to be unnecessary. They seem to have been rushed through to take away the focus from the burning issues of the day which remain, education, the price of domestic consumer goods, food and above all massive and increasing rural and urban unemployment.

The government needs to focus immediately on restoring peace, reassuring people and taking urgent steps to stabilize the economy, reduce prices and revive employment.

That will be a positive message that the Government would be sending to the nation and the people of the world. We too would rejoice, if that were to happen and hopefully the bitter happenings of the winter of 2019 will become only a bad memory.

We assure the government of our cooperation and prayers in all this.

The Evangelical Fellowship of India's vast numbers of congregations will be praying for the nation as we approach Christmas and New Year.

Released by:

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