

Evangelical
Fellowship of India



Religious Liberty
Commission

HATE AND TARGETED VIOLENCE AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN INDIA



HALF YEARLY REPORT 2021

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION OF
THE EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF INDIA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere acknowledgments and appreciation to the team of the Religious Liberty Commission for contributing towards this report and making it possible.

We would also like to thank the following activists and organizations who facilitated our desk and field research. In particular we thank Dr. John Dayal and Advocate B. D. Das who continue to guide us.

We also thank Rev. Fr. Abhishek John, Mr. Surender Pokhal, Rev. Amit Manwatkar, Rev. Jagdish Sahu, Mr. Jimmy Damore, Rev. Nehemiah Christie, Mrs. Sonia Daniel, Mrs. Surinder Kaur, Mr. Jitendra Rathor, Mr. Manish Walter, Rev. P. David, Mr. D. Jaiswar, Rev. Akash Nandi and Rev. Solomon Ghosh.

We would particularly like to thank the United Christian Forum (UCF) who operates the helpline at 1800-208-4545 where incidents of persecution and violence against Christian minorities can be reported 24x7.

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



Evangelical
Fellowship of India



Religious Liberty
Commission

Report by:

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION OF
THE EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF INDIA

805/ 92 Deepali Building

Nehru Place

New Delhi—110019 INDIA

Email: mail@efirc.org

"Why should a person above 18 years not choose his religion?... every person is the final judge of their own choice of religion... the fundamental right under Article 25 of the Constitution allows freely profess, practice, and propagate religion, subject to public order, morality, and health. There is a reason why the word "propagate" is there in the Constitution."

Hon'ble Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman



CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary and Analysis	01
2. Statistics	03
3. Recommendations to the Government of India	07
4. About The Religious Liberty Commission	08
5. Photos	09
6. List of Incidents	12

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JANUARY - JUNE 2021

Before the year 2021 had reached its halfway mark, some of the most powerful forces in modern India prepared to counter the Christian - and Muslim - presence in India, with discussions and statements on how to rid the country of "padri" [Hindi of the Latin Padre, father or Christian priest, pastor or clergy], pushing a massive 145 incidents of religious persecution against Christians, including three murders, into the background. That the incidents, and the threats, took place even as the country, still reeling from the impact of the first wave of the Corona Virus pandemic, was struck anew by the second wave, which struck the country, particularly the metropolitan cities including the national capital New Delhi, the worst hit.

In the hill town of Chitrakoot on the border of the states of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, held holy according to the epic Ramayana, the top echelons of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh [RSS], the ideological mother of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the main grassroots force behind the government of the Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi, met in a secret conclave. The main agenda, according to the authoritative Hindi newspaper and TV group Dainik Bhaskar, was to launch a campaign with the slogan "Chadar aur Father Mukt Bharat" (An India liberated from Chadar (Cloth Sheet symbolizing Muslims) and Father (Christian Priests)).

The threat of such campaigns has accompanied promises — or threats - of bringing in legislation in Parliament against conversion. One such Bill listed in Parliament is moved by RSS spokesman and member of the Upper House [Rajya Sabha] Mr Rakesh Sinha. Indeed, as reported by other news outlets, one of the other things that the Sangh spoke about was to propose to the Modi government to bring a nationwide anti-conversion law.

The violence, detailed in the report, itself was vicious, widespread and ranged from murder to attacks on church, false cases, police immunity and connivance, and the now normalised social exclusion or boycott which is becoming viral.

An analysis of the 145 cases recorded by the Evangelical Fellowship of India's Religious Liberty Commission and its associate Helplines and activists, documents three murders, attacks or desertion of 22 churches / places of worship, and 20 cases of ostracization or social boycott in rural areas of families which had refused to renege on their Christian faith and had stood up to mobs and political leaders of the local majority community.

True to the pattern of previous years, Madhya Pradesh topped the list with 30 cases. The state, which has large pockets of forest lands where Adivasis, or Tribals live, was amongst the earliest to enact anti-conversion laws, which it has periodically applied on the ground with increasing viciousness. The neighbouring state of Uttar Pradesh, continued to be a dangerous place for Christians too with 22 cases. Karnataka and Chhattisgarh, also polarised by a decade of religiously divisive political campaigns, documented 14 and 13 cases each.

Violence against Christians by non-state actors in India stems from an environment of targeted hate. The translation of the hate into violence is sparked by a sense of impunity generated in India's administrative apparatus.

COVID-19, which has severely impacted data collection, grassroots investigations and even a measure of solidarity with victims in distant villages, seems to have given the police a ruse not to register cases – police

have generally been loath to register cases. Access to courts for relief was restricted too. The violence was also facilitated by the absence of civil society on streets as activists were unable to travel because of lockdowns restrictions and because of the collapse of the media.

The most alarming development has been the expansion and scope of the notorious Freedom of Religion Acts, which are popularly known as the anti-conversion laws, earlier enforced in 7 states, to more states ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party. Once targeting only Christians, they are now armed also against Muslims in the guise of curbing 'Love Jihad'. This is an Islamophobic term coined some years ago to demonise marriages between Muslim men and non-Muslim women, particularly those belonging to the Hindu upper castes. The laws ostensibly punish forced or fraudulent religious conversions. But in practice, they are used to criminalise all conversions, especially in non-urban settings.

Uttar Pradesh has become the eighth state in India to enforce an anti-conversion law. Similar laws are in force in the states of Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand. The states of Arunachal Pradesh and Rajasthan have passed anti-conversion laws that are not in force for various reasons, and Tamil Nadu has passed and repealed its anti-conversion law. Christian activists fear that the expanding footprint of the anti-conversion laws bring a step closer the BJP's manifesto promising a nation-wide law to check evangelisation by "missionaries", a term designed to impute western conspiracy to Christianise Dalits, Tribals and others in rural areas, small towns and urban slums.

The most bizarre incident which caught the eyes of the international media took place on 19 March 2021 in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, when four nuns from the Delhi Province of the Sacred Heart Society (SH) were arrested while on their way to Odisha from Delhi. The incident occurred while the train in which they were traveling stopped at 6.30 pm at Jhansi railway station. A group of religious extremists, who were returning from a pilgrimage, unjustifiably accused them of religious conversion and caused trouble. They challenged the faith of the women and raised religious slogans. Subsequently police arrived at the spot and arrested the women without paying any heed to their side of the story. Around 150 religious radicals accompanied the women in procession to the police station. The terrified nuns were released at 11.30 pm after the intervention from advocacy groups convinced police that the nuns were innocent and had credible documents to prove their story.

There was perhaps some consolation for religious minorities in recent pronouncements by various courts of law in the land. A Haryana court held that "hate speech is violence," as other courts said reiterated that the health of the Indian democracy depended much on the health of its minorities. Helping the judicial sentiment was the national outrage over the custodial death of Jesuit priest and social activist Fr Stan Swami who'd been detained under the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevent Act in which the arrested can be held for long periods without bail pending trial which may begin years later.

Responding to several writ petitions, the Supreme Court of India has agreed to examine the constitutional validity of laws enacted by Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand but has said that the laws need to be first challenged in the respective high courts.

For further information, please write to mail@efirlc.org

Released by:

Rev. Vijayesh Lal

National Director – EFIRLC

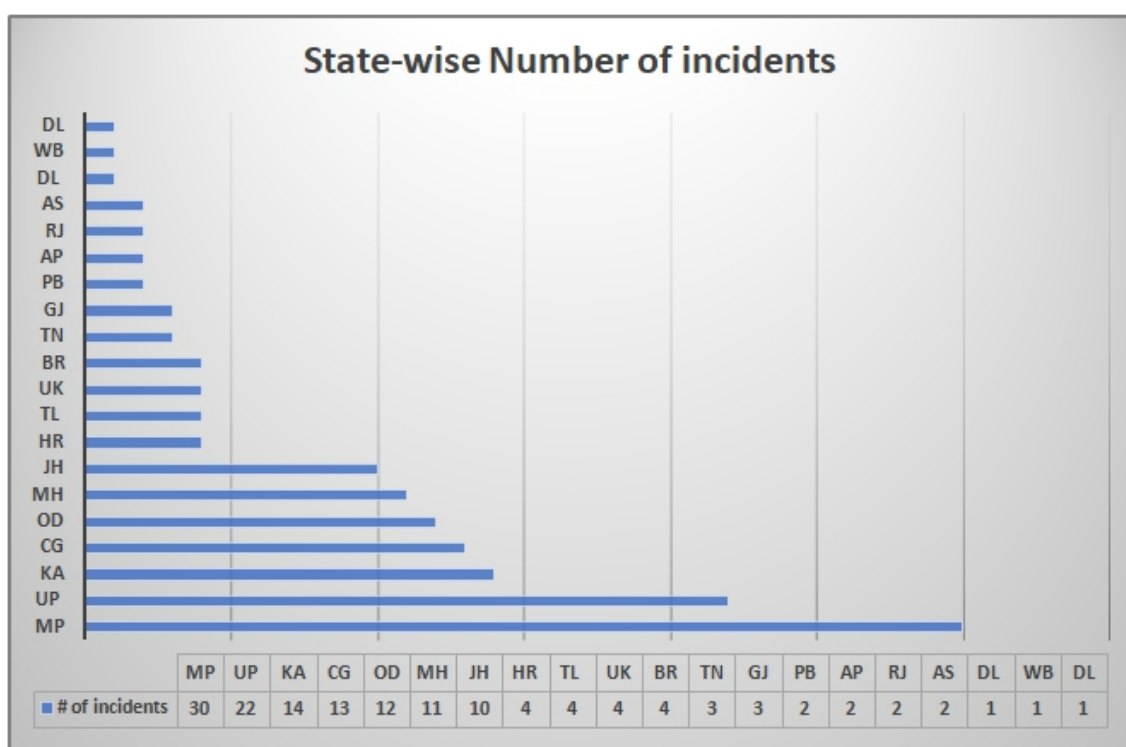
General Secretary – EFI



STATISTICS

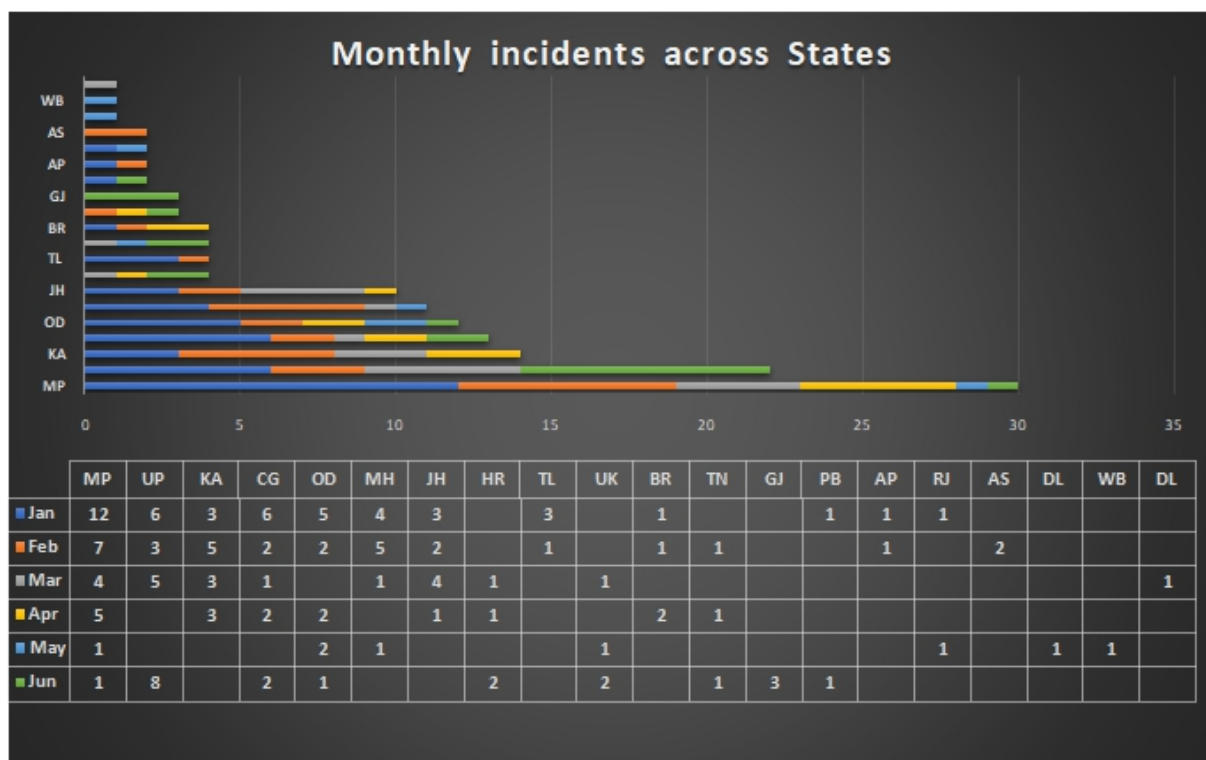
STATE-WISE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

State	# of incidents
MP	30
UP	22
KA	14
CG	13
OD	12
MH	11
JH	10
HR	4
TL	4
UK	4
BR	4
TN	3
GJ	3
PB	2
AP	2
RJ	2
AS	2
DL	1
WB	1
DL	1
Grand Total	145



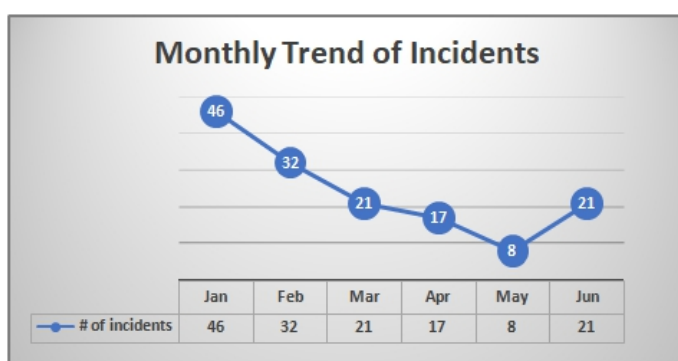
MONTH OF INCIDENTS ACROSS MONTHS

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
MP	12	7	4	5	1	1	30
UP	6	3	5			8	22
KA	3	5	3	3			14
CG	6	2	1	2		2	13
OD	5	2		2	2	1	12
MH	4	5	1		1		11
JH	3	2	4	1			10
HR			1	1		2	4
TL	3	1					4
UK			1		1	2	4
BR	1	1		2			4
TN		1		1		1	3
GJ						3	3
PB	1					1	2
AP	1	1					2
RJ	1				1		2
AS		2					2
DL					1		1
WB					1		1
DL			1				1
Grand Total	46	32	21	17	8	21	145



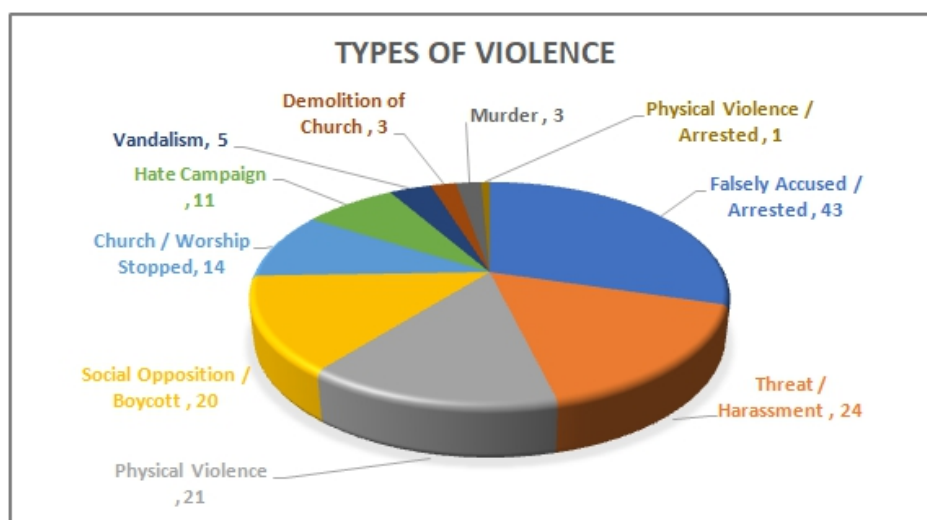
MONTHLY TREND OF INCIDENTS

Month	# of incidents
Jan	46
Feb	32
Mar	21
Apr	17
May	8
Jun	21
Grand Total	145



TYPES OF VIOLENCE

Type of incidents	# of incidents
Falsely Accused / Arrested	43
Threat / Harassment	24
Physical Violence	21
Social Opposition / Boycott	20
Church / Worship Stopped	14
Hate Campaign	11
Vandalism	5
Demolition of Church	3
Murder	3
Physical Violence / Arrested	1
Grand Total	145



RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

- a. Enact a comprehensive national legislation against targeted and communal violence.
- b. Advise the State Governments of Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha to repeal the unconstitutional Freedom of Religion laws that actually limit religious freedom and are being misused by agenda driven groups to harass and create trouble for the religious minorities. The new laws in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh are especially troublesome as they infringe on personal freedoms even more than the laws in other states.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- e. Advise the state governments, especially Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, 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.
- f. 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.
- g. 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.
- h. Amend paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950 to include Christians and Muslims.
- i. 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.
- j. Prevent and pursue through the judicial process, all violent acts against religious and tribal minorities and Dalits.



ABOUT THE RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

The Religious Liberty Commission (RLC) is an initiative of Evangelical Fellowship of India and is established in accordance with biblical principles to facilitate reconciliation, to promote religious liberty and fundamental freedoms for all, and to seek justice for those who are abused and oppressed. The RLC promotes through its activities a suitable response to violations of religious freedom in the complex context of India while speaking for the marginalized.

It was formed in 1998 and is envisioned as a platform for all like-minded Christian groups, clergy and activists working on issues of Freedom of Religion or Belief and other fundamental freedoms. The RLC played a pivotal role in the formation of the Christian Legal Association which is a separate body today consisting of lawyers from across the nation.

Helping and empowering victims of persecution through practical and legal means is something that the RLC has done since its inception and continues to do so. It has been documenting incidents of hate and targeted violence on the Christian community since 1998 onwards and has since 2009, released an annual list of incidents. The RLC continues to engage in advocacy to raise awareness on issues connected with religious liberty and other fundamental freedoms.

Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI), founded in 1951, is the national alliance of evangelical Christians. Its membership includes over 54 protestant denominations and related congregations (over 65,000 Churches), over 200 Church related mission agencies and organizations and thousands of individual members. As a central network of evangelicals and a service organization, it represents the Evangelical voice and builds capacity to promote participation in nation building.

EFI is a charter member of the World Evangelical Alliance. The WEA is a global organization of evangelical Christian churches, serving more than 600 million evangelicals, founded in 1846. WEA has a consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.



INCIDENTS PHOTOGRAPHS



DETAILS OF INCIDENTS STATE WISE

ANDHRA PRADESH

On 17 January in YSR Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh, a saffron flag, a symbol of spiritual and cultural traditions used by the radical nationalist groups, was planted on a church that has been shut down for the past 10 months. The incident has left the local Christian community fearful that increased persecution is on the horizon. The incident took place in Chittimitti Chintala village. The church's pastor, Pastor James Prasad, claimed this is just the newest sign of anti-Christian movements as radicals attempt to make it a "Christian-free" village.

On 4 February in Chittoor district, Andhra Pradesh, Bharatiya Janata Party's national secretary and Andhra Pradesh co-in charge, Sunil Deodhar, accused Chief Minister Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy of wanting everyone to become a Christian, and assured that an anti-conversion law would be brought in if Jana Sena-BJP government comes to power in the state. Speaking to a mainstream media, the BJP leader who has been campaigning in Andhra Pradesh for the past few months for the Tirupati Lok Sabha by polls, also remarked that those Hindus who have converted to Christianity cannot continue to take the benefits of reservation. Hindus who have converted to Christianity cannot be Scheduled Caste (SC). Deodhar further remarked that the church has got political interests and demanded that video footage of those who visit churches regularly should be released and churches should also make public their attendance register.

of whom are young girls, were admitted at a hospital in Aizawl. Most news agencies reported that the violence was in relation to the ongoing border dispute between Assam and Mizoram.

On 14 February in Harijan Colony, Tezpur city, Assam, Manjit Masrakhiya, a church youth leader, and around 30 Christians were called to a meeting organized by a religious radical group in partnership with the Harijan Yuvak Sangha. The community leaders reprimanded the Christians for their religious beliefs and demanded that they stop their prayer services in the colony. When the Christians denied their demands, they were threatened of social boycott. Earlier on 20 January the religious radicals had confronted the Christians, vandalized their prayer hall, and accused them of tearing their religious flags. During the 14 February meeting the Christians, who belong to the Harijan community, were warned that if they did not leave their Christian faith, they would have to lose their government jobs. Most of them work as cleaners and sweepers in the city. The Christians are now in a state of shock and fear. Despite their best efforts to seek police's intervention, no help has arrived.



BIHAR

On 17 January in Gopalganj district, Bihar, religious fanatics along with police personnel disrupted a prayer meeting led by Pastor Kamlesh Kumar. The pastor is affiliated to the Assembly Church of Jesus Christ. They verbally abused the Christians gathered at the meeting and warned them to stop converting others to Christianity. During the ordeal, they kept looking for the pastor who had hid himself in another room. Consequently, the mob left the place. The pastor has been leading Christian prayers at a rented hall in the locality for the past eight years and around 80 to 100 Christians gather every Sunday.

On 13 February under Daniyawan police station, Patna district, Bihar, a Christian missionary was caught by religious extremists and later handed over to Daniyawan police. The incident occurred near the Daniyawan High School where the missionary was distributing Christian literature on

ASSAM

On 9 February in Gharmura, Hailakandi district, Assam, unidentified miscreants stormed into a Presbyterian Mission School compound and beat up the headmaster, Mr. H. Vanlaldika, and his family members, with sticks and iron rods, inflicting grievous injuries on them. Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (MKHC), a conglomerate of leaders of major churches in Mizoram, vehemently condemned the attack on a religious place. The vandals torched houses, vandalized furniture, and vehicles. The family members, two

the street. The extremists - Radhe Shyam, P.R. Suman and Kunwar Vijay Paswan - accused the missionary of involving in the religious conversion of poor and marginalized people. SHO Munna Kumar made the missionary sign a bond assuring that he will not involve in religious conversion activities in the future.

On the morning of **22 April** in Riga block, Sitamarhi district, Bihar, a group of religious fanatics attacked Pastor Ramniwar Kumar and his wife Pinkie while they were in the house of Nagender, a church member. Pastor Kumar serves as the minister of the Penuel Christian Church located in Riga. The assailants attacked with sticks and iron rods which left the couple with severe injuries on the head. The pastor informed our sources that he and his family have been facing regular opposition for the past two years. The fanatics had been warning him to stop converting people - an allegation the pastor vehemently denied - and leave the city or be killed. After the attack, Kumar approached local police with a complaint, but no case was registered against the assailants.

On 25 April in Kharasan village, Sitamarhi district, Bihar, a Christian family - Manoj Ram, his wife Neetu Kumari, and their kids - were brutally assaulted. The assault was so violent that Neetu Kumari was bitten by one of the men. Manoj informed our sources that there has been constant opposition by the villagers due to their Christian faith. On 26 April, the incident was reported to the police, but the complaint was not registered. However, police took Manoj and family to a local hospital for treatment. Two days later, with the help of a Christian advocacy group, a written complaint was sent to the Superintendent of Police and to Riga police station.

CHHATTISGARH

On 4 January in Sagripal village, Bastar district, Chhattisgarh, villagers destroyed the ancestral home of Maniram Nag's family. The villagers had been pressuring the family to leave their Christian faith. When they did not oblige the assailants destroyed their house claiming that they would have to leave the village if they do not abandon their Christian beliefs.

On 7 January in Abhujamadh village, Narayanpur district, Chhattisgarh, two Christian families were threatened by village elders to either give up their beliefs or leave the village. Aayatu Mandavi, one of the victims, lives in the Naxalite dominated village and has been living under fear. Paswan, the Christian pastor, who ministers to these families has been forbidden to enter the village.

On 7 January in Kora village, under Gadiras police station, Sukma district, Chhattisgarh, a Christian couple - Mr. Masa Kunjami and Mrs. Sunny Kunjami - were severely beaten on account of their Christian beliefs. The incident occurred around 6 am when three persons - Sodi Joga, Sodia Deva and Sodi Ganga, along with a few others - barged into the couple's home and attacked them. The couple was verbally assaulted and beaten with sticks. Sunny Kanjami was held by her hair and pulled outside their home by her blouse. Masa Kunjami too was dragged out of the house and was repeatedly attacked with murderous intent.

On 8 January in Sukma district, Chhattisgarh, religious extremists launched a major rally against Christians with slogans of "Christians should be chased away from India" echoing in the air. Local sources reported that the district administration seemed supportive of the hate campaign.

On 18 January in Bagbahar village, Bastar district, Chhattisgarh, a Christian couple - Bal Singh and his wife Gudiya - were ostracized from the village. They had recently accepted the Christian faith. Thrown out of their home by their family they resorted for help from Pastor Salim Hakku, who arranged a rented house for them to stay.

On 24 January at Pulgaon police station, Durg district, Chhattisgarh, local villagers provoked by religious radicals who are affiliated to a major political party, surrounded the police station demanding arrest of four Christian families residing in Peeparchhedi village. The enraged mob accused the Christians of converting the locals. Upon heightening tension, additional police force was summoned. Pastor Vikram Philip conducts prayers for the four Christian families.

On 18 February Kota tehsil, Bilaspur district, Chhattisgarh, five Christians – Durgawati, Vidyawati, Gulshan Kumar, Durgawati and Sandhya – were coerced by their family members

and other villagers during a village council meeting to reject their Christian beliefs. Upon their refusal they were brutally beaten up. After which, all five of them, out of fear of their relatives and villagers left the village and hid in the nearby Navadih village in the house of a Christian family. The Christian families had been facing harassment for more than three weeks. Subsequently, Pastor Chensay Lakda filed a complaint at the Kenda police post appealing for protection and help.

On 20 February in Lamker village, Bastar district, Chhattisgarh, a village council met to sort out the concerns raised by the Christian families in the village. Pastor Guptha Khawasi told sources that the families had been frequently verbally assaulted and harassed by religious radicals on account of their Christian beliefs. Reportedly, the matter was eventually settled through mutual understanding and compromise.

On the night of **8 March** in Surguda village, Bade Kilepal block, Bastar district, Chhattisgarh, a mob of villagers physically assaulted and severely injured Pastor Samson Baghel, and a group of 30-35 Christians, while they were holding a prayer meeting. The assault caused serious injuries to many. The villagers burnt copies of the Bible and damaged a vehicle. Subsequently an FIR (bearing number 0018) was registered against the assailants at the Kodenar police station.

On 7 April in Singanpur, Chattisgarh, a group of villagers forcefully tried to gain control of Vijay Sori's agricultural field. Villagers threatened him to leave the village since he had accepted Christianity. No physical violence was reported. Local sources informed that Vijay Sori intends to report the matter to the head of the Village Council.

On 17 April in Marenga village, Lohandiguda block, Bastar, Chattisgarh, two Christian men –Puran and Nani – and a Christian woman, Boti, were beaten up by their family members owing to their Christian beliefs and ostracized from the village. When local police reached the village, they too were threatened by the villagers, who argued that since they had not committed a murder or any major crime they could not be arrested.

On 9 June in Dongam village, Jagdalpur block, Bastar district, Chhattisgarh, a religious militant organisation submitted a memorandum to the district collector pronouncing the denial of the land

allotment to the Christian community in the village. Local sources reported that the organization had been inciting villagers against each other on communal lines, particularly against the Christians. Subsequently they had also started opposing the land allotment done by the government to the Christian community at Dongam Village Council's Office.

On 19 June in Mutanpal village, Bastar, Chhattisgarh, villagers opposed the burial of a child whose family profess to be Christians. Mahadev, a Christian, was in the process of the burial of his child who had passed away, when some villagers confronted him and opposed the burial on account of Mahadev's religious beliefs.



DELHI

On 22 March in New Delhi, in the Supreme Court of India, a petition was filed by a political leader whose group espoused right-wing ideology. The petition alleged that the court should direct the Centre and the States to control black magic, superstition and religious conversion being done through threats, intimidation or bribes. On 9 April, the Supreme Court said people are free to choose their own religion and lashed out at the petition that claimed that there is mass religious conversion happening “by hook or by crook” across the country. A Bench led by Justice Rohinton F. Nariman said people have a right under the Constitution to profess, practise and propagate religion. Justice Nariman asked the petitioner, we will impose heavy costs on you, withdraw it or argue and risk the consequences. The petition was dismissed as withdrawn.

On 16 May near Yamuna Vihar, North East Delhi district, Delhi, irate relatives threatened a couple – Varsha and her husband – for accepting the Christian faith. The couple were warned of a physical assault on them and their friend, who was instrumental in leading them to Christianity. The relatives warned them that they would approach the police claiming that the religious conversion occurred due to allurement of financial benefits.



GUJARAT

On 1 June in Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat, the Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (Amendment) Act, 2021, came into effect by the State Legislative Assembly. Christian and other religious minorities in Gujarat State are disturbed about a new state law that they say restricts their right to manage their educational institutions. Father Teles Fernandes, secretary of the Gujarat Education Board of Catholic Institutions, said that the new law has practically withdrawn the rights of all religious minorities guaranteed in the constitution to establish and manage educational institutions.

On 17 June in Sabuti village, Dediapada taluk, Narmada district, Gujarat, an under-construction church building was demolished by the local gram panchayat despite the church being in possession of relevant building permits. The Janjaati Suraksha Manch had submitted an application to the district collector that the village was a tribal area, that there were no Christians there, that Christians had come from outside and built the church in the village, and that if the church was built, it would be harmful for their society. Thereafter, the church was razed down to the ground despite the church officials having a written permission given in 2008 by the Village Council Head for land allocation and church construction.

On 26 June in Valsad district, Gujarat, several local dailies reported that a memorandum had been sent to the Chief Minister of Gujarat to insinuate hostility against Christians in the district. The memorandum was targeted against the Adivasi Christians highlighting three points: 1. to ascertain whether there were Adivasi Christians wherever a church exists in the region, 2. if Adivasi Christians were found, then all their benefits as a Scheduled Tribe should be taken away, and 3. to investigate if the church buildings were built as per existing laws.

HARYANA

On 19 March in Faridabad, Haryana, miscreants vandalized the walls and gates of an under-construction church building of the Assemblies of

God Church and stole the building materials. Subsequently church officials filed a police complaint.

On 11 April in Tarawadi village, Karnal district, Haryana, miscreants disrupted a Christian prayer meeting, created a ruckus, and falsely accused Pastor Vikram Paul of engaging in religious conversions. The incident occurred while the pastor was conducting the regular Sunday prayer service at his rented home when two men from his neighbourhood barged into the house and verbally abused him. Later, his landlord demanded that Paul stop all prayer meetings. Christian advocacy groups have raised the concern with state police officers and requested their intervention.

On 23 June, using extremely anti-minority rhetoric, a Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader in India on Wednesday tweeted his support for mass 're-conversion' programs pushing Indian Christians and Muslims to convert to Hinduism. "The whole world knows that most of the ancestors of India's Christians and Muslims are Hindus," Surendra Jain, the VHP's Joint General-Secretary, said in a tweeted video message. "A few Muslim rulers and Christian missionaries forcibly converted Hindu people. But now all of them should convert back." Surendra Jain is a central office bearer of Vishva Hindu Parishad in Rohtak, Haryana, as Joint General Secretary.

On 30 June at Sangoi village in Karnal District, Haryana, a suspected criminal released on bail killed pastor Vinod Kumar for sharing the "love and forgiveness of Christ" with him. Sonu Kashyap attacked pastor Kumar with a wooden roof truss at about 8 p.m. The pastor had received a call from Kashyap's brother to visit a sick villager and was attacked as he was about to leave the ill person's home. Sonu Kashyap was waiting in ambush as the pastor was about to start his motorbike and attacked him unaware from behind. Senior Pastor Sompal Kalre, the murdered pastor's mentor who led him to Christ around 25 years ago, said neighbours found Kashyap standing with the wooden beam in his hand as Pastor Kumar lay dead. They informed the police immediately. The Station Head Officer of Sadar police station asserted that the motive for the killing "was some petty animosity, and further interrogation is underway". However, the villagers and the police argued when the police declared that it was because of personal hostility that Sonu Kashyap

killed Pastor Vinod, the villagers countered and claimed that it couldn't be.



JHARKHAND

On 17 January in Potanga village, Barkagaon tehsil, Hazaribagh district, Jharkhand, around fifty villagers physically assaulted Anita Hansda and her mother for their Christian beliefs. Anita and her mom attend the Believers Church. With the support of a Christian advocacy group Anita filed a police complaint at the Barkagaon police station. Though the police confronted the attackers and warned them of legal consequences, the villagers also filed a complaint against the Christians.

On 22 January in Khala village, Dhurki block, Garhwa district, Jharkhand, three Korwa tribal families were allegedly fined, caned, and made to do sit-ups after a kangaroo court declared them social outcasts for converting to Christianity recently. Jaiwardhan Kumar, the subdivisional magistrate (SDM) of Banshidhar Nagar, confirmed that he had received information about the alleged backlash against conversions in the area. "Reports of some villagers being targeted in Khala village have come to my notice," the SDM said. The Korwas are officially categorized as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group. The three Korwa families allegedly targeted for converting were fined Rs 25,051 each, besides being subjected to caning and forced to do 110 sit-ups.

On 24 January in Jungur village, Latehar district, Jharkhand, Pastor Lakshman Oraon and other Christians were summoned by the village elders to a meeting where they were told to give donations for the ritual worship of tribal deities. When the pastor refused, they tied his hands behind his back, knocked him to the floor, and struck his back, head, and face. When the pastor argued that as Christians, they were free of such obligations, the villagers reminded him that his ancestors were tribal priests, that he was a useless ingrate who adopted a foreign faith, and that he must be taught a lesson. Further, they threatened to expel all the Christians from the village.

On 9 February in Chapi village, Palamu,

Jharkhand, a Christian woman, 26-year-old Mantu Devi, with her children, was expelled to the woods by her relatives on account of her Christian faith. Her in-laws and villagers figured out the family had converted to Christianity when she and her husband, Sunil Oraon, stepped away from idol worship and customs. Devi faced death threats from Sunil's parents and had been through a brutal physical assault before she was expelled to the woods. The next day, a police officer came to her, warning her that if she did not obey the village elders and respect their religious customs, her father-in-law would file criminal charges against her. Devi told the officer her family threatened her life. Under no circumstances would she or her family abandon their faith.

On February 11 in Garwah, Jharkhand, Christians were brutally attacked by religious fanatics who accused them of constructing an unauthorized church and converting people to Christianity. Because of the assault, three Christians were hospitalized with severe injuries and 12 were charged with false accusations of several crimes. According to local sources, a mob of 30 fanatics, encouraged by a man named Shankar, struck the building site and assaulted the Christians. Following the assault, local police recorded FIR No. 20/21 against 12 Christians that were assaulted by the extremists. Three Christians, Sunil Kumar, Sambu Kumar, and Aryan, were arrested and put in jail.

On 8 March in Lohardaga district, Jharkhand, a group of villagers threatened Kuldeep Oraon, a Christian, of social ostracization from the village owing to his Christian beliefs and practices. Oraon's close family members too have been pressuring him to renounce his beliefs, if not, they would prevent him from working in the field or his sisters to be married. Amid the harassment from immediate family members, Oraon's family have been facing pressure to make donations for religious activities. Though Oraon responded that he was a Christian yet the opposition from the villagers has mounted up.

On 10 March in Palamu district, Jharkhand, anti-Christian elements in an inebriated condition barged into a Christian wedding ceremony and created a ruckus. Gulabchandra Bhuiyaa's daughter, Sarojini Kumari, was engaged to be married, when the goons created an uproar

demanding that the hosts play film songs instead of Christians songs. When the hosts politely turned down their demands, they manhandled some of the guests and Bhuiyaa's relatives. At around 9 pm, Bhuiyaa and some of his well-wishers went to Chhatarpur police station and submitted a written complaint. When they returned back at the wedding venue, to their utter shock, they saw the goons beating up the brother of the groom, hurling obscene language against Christians and Christianity. Despite the police complaint no action has been initiated. Meanwhile the assailants continue to threaten and terrorise.

On 12 March in Bishrampur block, Palamudistrict, Jharkhand, Pastor Daniyal Kar was threatened and forced to stop conducting prayer meetings in the area. According to local sources, the pastor was being harassed by a Sub Inspector who had been acting at the behest of Pankaj Lal, the leader of a religious radical group. The pastor was hindered from conducting prayer meetings for two consecutive Sundays. Eventually he approached the Superintendent of Police with a complaint on 23 March.

On 21 March in Kerki Khurd village, Chhatarpur block, Palamu district, Jharkhand, Jagdish Oraon, a Christian, was socially boycotted and hindered from availing any employment in the village. Due to his Christian beliefs, his younger and older brother have been exerting pressure on him to renounce his faith. In order to meet ends, he was working at a farm. However, a group of villagers have started ostracizing him from the community and his work. Nine members of Oraon's family hold to Christian beliefs and Pastor Sarabjit Bharti conducts regular prayers. No police complaint has been filed yet.

On 16 April in Dhab village, Domchanch block, Koderma district, Jharkhand, Uttam Sharma, a Christian, was physically assaulted by some of his neighbours. The attackers were irate about the Christian prayer meetings that Uttam and his wife, Pinky Sharma, often conduct at their home. The couple had also been threatened a couple of days before the attack. When they brought their complaint to Sub-Inspector Dileep Kumar at the Dhab police station, they were met with a cold response. Subsequently, Religious Liberty Commission activists called SI Kumar and requested him to ensure protection and freedom for the couple to practice their faith.

KARNATAKA

On 3 January in Abbigeri village, Koppal district, Karnataka, Pastor Devendhrappa Jamalappa Lamani was severally assaulted by a mob of about 20 tribal animists because of his Christian faith. The mob dragged pastor Devendhrappa Jamalappa Lamani from a home where he was teaching from the Bible to three other Christian families at about 6 p.m. In a foul language they told him that he had maligned their Banjara tribal culture by introducing a foreign faith and that he was a traitor disloyal to his motherland. Koppal Rural police registered a First Information Report (FIR) against six of the 20 assailants – the only ones the pastor could name – for criminal intimidation (Section 507 of the Indian Penal Code), insult intended to provoke (Section 504), rioting (Section 147), house trespass (Section 448), being a member of an unlawful assembly (Sections 143 and 149), voluntarily causing hurt (Section 323) and assault or use of criminal force to outrage modesty of a woman (Section 354). Also, an FIR registered against Pastor Lamani and three people who tried to rescue him – his wife and another Christian couple, Mallikarjuna Mukkumbi and Sanna Savithreva – lists the charges as criminal intimidation (Section 506), inducing a person to believe that he will be rendered an object of divine displeasure (Section 508), voluntarily causing hurt (Section 323), wrongfully restraining any person (Section 341), insult intended to provoke breach of peace (Section 504), assault or use of criminal force to outrage modesty of a woman (Section 354) and abetment (Section 114) under the IPC.

On 4 January in Bannimardatti village, located in the Hassan District, Karnataka, 15 Christian families were summoned to a meeting with the Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) along with other police officials. At the meeting, the DSP asked the Christians to show proof that they were Christian and accused them of collecting government benefits as both Christians and Hindus. The DSP then outlawed the Christians from gathering for worship in Bannimardatti village. The official justified this order by claiming none of the Christians in Bannimardatti village were Christian at birth and falsely claimed they were coercively or fraudulently had accepted Christianity. The DSP's order is in direct

disagreement with the religious freedom rights under Article 25 of the Indian constitution. According to Article 25, Indian citizens have the freedom to profess, practise, and propagate the religion of their choice.

On 31 January in Harohalli village, Kanakapura tehsil, Ramanagara district, Karnataka, a church was attacked by religious extremists. Pastor Subhash Hanok and 27 Christian believers were injured and hospitalised. Subsequently Hanok approached Harohalli police station and registered an FIR under sections 143, 323, 354, 448, 506, 504 and 149 of IPC and section 3(1)(r) and 3(1)(s) of SC/ST Act.

On 9 February in Chitradurga, Karnataka, Pastor Ashok and Anand were falsely accused of hurting and insulting the religious sentiment of a community by members of the Bajrang Dal. Hence, Anand was arrested and sent to jail. Anand was later released, however, after he was able to secure bail. Pastor Ashok was not in the town when Anand was arrested and was working towards receiving anticipatory bail against the false charges.

On 23 February in Chikmagalur district, Karnataka, Pastor Krishna, Pastor Umesh and another Christian were arrested and charged with The Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act along with charges of engaging in religious conversion activities. Their application for bail was rejected by a lower court.

On 24 February in Mysuru, Karnataka, Mr Pratap Simha, Member of Parliament (MP), said to the officials why the tribals, if they are converting to Christianity, were receiving benefits mandated by the government. The comment came from MP at the Karnataka Development Programme meeting with the officials. The MP reiterated that those “wearing the cross” should not be given any facility, check and filter Christians. Karnataka Christian Political Leaders Forum had sought an immediate apology from the MP for his comments against the Christian community. It warned that failing compliance, the community will launch strong agitation against him.

On 27 February in Kallur village, Belgaum district, Karnataka, Prakash Narayan, a Christian, and his family were arrested by Bailhongal police and

detained at the police station for queries. Narayan and his family were picked up from the home of a Christian family where they had gone for a friendly visit. Some local villagers complained to the police that Narayan and his family were involved in religious conversions. Only after the other family gave a written undertaking that Narayan's visit had no conversion element to it, that the police released them without any charges.

On 27 February in Itaga, Gulbarga district, Karnataka, a mob of 15 Bajrang Dal activists stormed a Methodist Church where 25 Christians had gathered for Lent prayers. The mob accused the Christians of causing a public disturbance by gathering for worship and demanded the church be shut down permanently.

On 3 March in Salagame village, Hassan district, Karnataka, anti-Christian elements confronted Pastor Puttaswamy about him conducting prayer meetings in the locality. They warned him that if he did not stop the meetings, he would be severely beaten up. Local sources reported that the pastor approached Hassan rural police station, but no help was provided.

On 1 March in Bilakundi village, Gokak taluka, Belgaum district, Karnataka, a mob barged into a birthday celebration and beat up Pastor Sadanshiv Mang. The pastor had organized his child's birthday party at his home when the incident occurred. The anti-Christian mob had been irked by the Christian prayers conducted by the pastor in the village. Subsequently, an FIR was filed at the local police station against the assailants.

On 18 March in Kanka Nagar, Bangalore, Karnataka, religious radicals confronted and opposed an ongoing prayer meeting of the Power of God Ministries Church. The incident occurred while Pastor Peter Benjamin and his church members were praying in their church building during the Holy Lent season. The radicals threatened to break the audio speakers and hurled abuses at the Christians. They alleged that the noise from the prayer meeting was a nuisance. This prompted the pastor to broadcast a live video on social media to expose their intolerance. The Christians maintained that their prayer room was soundproof and that they had a constitutional right to freely profess and practice their faith.

Subsequently, on 19 March local police registered an FIR against the radicals based on a complaint filed by the Christians.

On 4 April in Davangere district, Karnataka, religious fanatics barged into a Sunday prayer service and abused the Christians present there. Pastor Lakshman Nayak was leading the prayer when the fanatics confronted and abused him accusing him of converting people to Christianity by forcing and luring them. Subsequently the mob filed a complaint at the nearby police station. The police officers in turn reprimanded the pastor and told him to stop the prayers in the rented hall.

On 5 April in Halaga village, Belgaum city, Belgaum district, Karnataka, Pastor Sanjay Bhandari was publicly paraded on the street on allegations of illegally converting people. The pastor and his wife were at the home of his sister when fanatics barged into the house, grabbed him by his shirt collar and dragged him outside, where 50 to 60 other extremists were waiting. Though the pastor explained that it was only a casual visit to his relative's house, the men refused to listen. The mob paraded him a mile to the rented worship hall where he has been leading Sunday services for five years. They continued to drag him and hit him, verbally abusing him and Jesus Christ, and pressured him to hail "Jai Shri Ram" while beating him. Once at the church hall they applied kumkum (vermillion) and haldi on him. They left him after warning him of worse consequences if he did not stop Christian prayers in the area. Later, on 6 April, Shahpura police filed charges against seven assailants for unlawful assembly, rioting, and voluntarily causing hurt. The pastor continues to be under treatment and medical examinations.

On 21 April, Karnataka High Court rejected a petition seeking orders to take action against the alleged illegal construction of two crosses on a hillock in Chitradurga region. The petitioner, who claims to be a yoga teacher, stated that gathering before the cross every Sunday causes pollution. In this matter, Chief Justice Abhay Oka and Justice Suraj Govindaraj characterized the petition to be motivated one and said, on a plain reading, it is noticeable that the petitioner is not a pro-bono litigant. The petitioner evidently wants to target a particular religious group.

MADHYA PRADESH

On 4 January in Chituhula police station area, Budhar, Shahdol district, Madhya Pradesh, religious radicals barged into a Christian program that was taking place at Devgan DasKol's house. The radicals created a ruckus alleging that Das was engaged in a religious conversion racket. They called local police, who escorted Das to the police station. However, for want of evidence to verify the accusations, police instead booked him for violation of the Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Act, 2020.

On 7 January in Amgawan village, Jaithari police station, Annupur district, Madhya Pradesh, a Christian wedding ceremony was disrupted by police personnel who cited complaints from a leading political party that a religious conversion activity was underway at the venue. Ram Ratan, the groom, and two others were taken into custody. They were later let go after they filed their statements before the Sub Divisional Magistrate. The wedding ceremony had taken place at the house of Urmila Rautel, a schoolteacher. On 8 January Rautel received a notice from her school administration wanting her response regarding allegations that she was involved in religious conversion activities. Again, on 12 January she received a legal notice from the local municipal corporation accusing her of illegally constructing certain parts of her house. Allegedly, all these developments were at the behest of the political party.

On 13 January in Kurai Nagar, Seoni district, Madhya Pradesh, Pastor Namdeo Neti and Ashok Yadav were booked under the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Ordinance, 2020 for engaging in religious conversion work by alluring local people. The incident occurred while the two were in a Christian prayer meeting. Acting upon a complaint filed by religious radicals, police arrived at the meeting venue and arrested them. They were later granted bail on 18 January.

On 14 January in Temachi village, Alirajpur district, Madhya Pradesh, twelve Christians were taken into police custody. The incident occurred at around 10.30 am when a group of Christians had gathered for a baptism program in Temachi. Eight among the arrested, including evangelist Xaviour

Antony, were Christians who had arrived from Bharuch district in Gujarat. While the congregation were singing religious songs, a group of religious radicals gathered around the prayer hall and launched an attack, alleging that religious conversions were in progress. Soon a group of police officers came in three vehicles, filmed a few videos, and took the twelve people into custody, which included the evangelist, his wife Sheeba, and their son Boaz and daughter Feba. They were booked under section 188 of IPC and were granted bail the next day.

On 17 January in Ambua village, Alirajpur district, Madhya Pradesh, police personnel barged into a prayer meeting conducted by Pastor Mukesh Davar and took him to the Ambua police station. Reportedly some religious extremists had filed a complaint that the pastor was involved in illegal religious conversion activities. After many Christian advocacy organizations called up the station and requested a fair investigation, the pastor was let go without any charges.

On 18 January in Juna Bilwa village, Barwani district, Madhya Pradesh, villagers convened a meeting alleging that religious conversions were being carried out in the region by Christian missionaries. They were particularly agitated by Pastor Kiran Badole who has been conducting prayers in the village since 2004 and around 100 to 150 Christians gather regularly. The meeting was attended by local press reporters. The villagers accused the Christians of eroding their tribal traditions and customs.

On 20 January in Dindori district, Madhya Pradesh, a mob of 50 religious extremists physically assaulted Pastor Ramfal Yadav and other Christians while they were busy in the construction of a church building. They stopped the Christians working at the site from taking water from the nearby public well, threatened them, and physically attacked them for their Christian beliefs. Many women and children sustained injuries in the attack.

On 20 January in Madhopura village, Jhabua district, Madhya Pradesh, a radical mob along with police personnel barged in to Balu Minama's house and disrupted a Christian prayer meeting. They threatened Pastor Hatesingh Gundiya, Pastor Gulab Singh, and Kamlesh Bamaniya to

stop coming to the village and holding prayer services. Police also confiscated Pastor Hatesingh's AADHAAR Card.

On 26 January at Bhanwarkuan police station, Indore district, Madhya Pradesh, religious radicals barged into the Sat Prakashan Communication Centre and disrupted a Christian prayer meeting. The radicals manhandled the Christians and raised provocative slogans. Police arrived at the spot, and instead of arresting the assailants, registered a case against 11 Christians who were charged under the M.P. Freedom of Religion Act. Rakesh Kaushal and Rani Kaushal, a couple, residents of Nayapura Gujarkheda Mahu, are two among the eleven accused.

On 26 January in Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh, Kamlesh Malviya, a leader of a right-wing nationalist group, made an announcement that Christianity should not be propagated and should be opposed. According to the Union of Catholic Asian News (UCAN), radical nationalists have stepped up a Christian hate campaign in Madhya Pradesh state. They are calling on local residents of the district to disassociate themselves from Christians and demanding Christians convert to Hinduism to avoid hostility.

On 27 January in Lalbarra tehsil, Balaghat district, Madhya Pradesh, religious radicals disrupted a Christian prayer meeting and called local police. Police took Chattarsingh Katre, MahendraNagdeve and Ulghanj Nathan into custody and filed an FIR false charging them with involvement in religious conversion work.

On 31 January in Mehrapipriya village, under Kanhiwada police station, Seoni district, Madhya Pradesh, a religious radical abused and threatened Chitra Rekha, a Christian, because of her religious beliefs. When Rekha approached local police for help, instead of confronting the assailant, they reprimanded her for engaging in religious conversion activities. On the next day, Rekha was again threatened by the village chief of expulsion from her village when she denied giving monetary donations to the village council for a puja.

On 4 February in Betul district, Madhya Pradesh, Abdul Raheem, a Christian, was arrested by Nishatpura police. Police received a complaint

from a certain Mr. Ansul Kamra and booked Raheem under IPC sections 327, 294, 323, 506 and 34. Raheem has been involved in Christian ministry in the locality.

On 6 February in Lakhnadon town, Seoni district, Madhya Pradesh, two missionaries of the India Evangelical Mission were falsely accused of involving in religious conversion activities during a wedding. The duo had been invited as guests to the wedding by a Christian family but had to leave midway after some religious extremists confronted them. Subsequently police arrived at the venue searching for the missionaries and took the Christian families to the nearby police station. The Christians were interrogated the entire night about the whereabouts of the missionaries.

On 7 February in Alirajpur district, Madhya Pradesh, a mob of religious extremists forcefully barged into a church. Around 25 people had gathered there for Sunday prayers. The mob threatened and physically assaulted the men and women. The assailants lodged a complaint at the Udaygarh police station alleging that people were being lured to Christianity in the church. Police detained all 25 Christians, interrogated them, and eventually registered an FIR against Pastor Dilip Vasuniya, under sections 3 and 5 of the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Ordinance, 2020. The pastor was sent to jail. Subsequently on 10 February, the pastor was released on bail.

On 10 February in Alirajpur district, Madhya Pradesh, during a press conference, Nagar Singh Chauhan, a former Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), remarked that they would continue to oppose Christian missionary activities in the district. He accused Christian missionaries of alluring and converting people. He also falsely claimed that the current MLA of Jobat city, Kalawati Bhuria, was protecting Christian missionaries who carry out religious conversions.

On 16 February, in Mangadh village, Dindori district, Madhya Pradesh, local villagers passed a diktat that none of the Christians in the village were allowed to access drinking water or walk on the village roads. They fixed thick barbed wires around the village's public tube well in order to prohibit the Christian families from collecting water. They also warned that if anyone did not oblige, they would be beaten up. Pastor Arjun

Yadav conducts Christian prayers in the village and has been seeing a growing rise in cases of persecution and opposition towards the Christian community. The threats from religious extremists have allegedly resulted in the conversion of many Christians into the majority faith, including Gyan Singh, Santosh Maravi, and their family members. On the day of the incident, villagers dropped stones in Dhan Singh Marawi's water well, urinated, and dropped human faeces in it in order to stop the Christians from having access to water.

On 19 February in Khajuraho town, Chhatarpur district, Madhya Pradesh, Sister Bhagya, the principal of Sacred Heart Convent High School was booked under the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Ordinance 2020 on a complaint by a female teacher who accused her of harassment and attempts to force her to convert her religion. Khajuraho police registered the case after Ruby Singh, who worked as a librarian at the school, alleged that the school Principal had lured her with more salary and a regularized job if she adopted Christianity. Singh alleged that when she refused, the school Principal fired her from the job and stopped paying her salary. She has been working at the school on contractual basis for the past four years. The school administration denied the charges and said that after Ruby Singh was removed from her job, she put the allegation. The school had asked for police protection from Ruby Singh on 17 February.

On 23 February in Dindori district, Madhya Pradesh, villagers of Mangadh and Amadongri villages, seemingly incited by religious extremists, filed a police complaint against some Christians alleging that they were being induced to convert. The complaint was submitted at office of the Superintendent of Police, Dindori.

On 10 March in Pushprajgarh tehsil, Anuppur district, Madhya Pradesh, anti-Christian individuals vandalized a property belonging to Prahlad Singh, a Christian. Prahlad has been holding on to Christian beliefs for the past two years and this has not gone well with his brother, Sangram Singh, who has opposed his participation in Christian prayers and Bible study. On the day of the incident the vandals, led by Sangram, damaged Prahlad's house while he was not at home.

On 11 March in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, the Union General Secretary of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) Milind Parande, while interacting with media, claimed that Christian missionaries in Dhar and Jhabua districts were converting the tribal populace with allurements and lies. He said that a list of 56 priests active in the area has been drawn by his organization and would be handed over to the Collectors of the respective districts for appropriate action. Parande made the statements at the World Dialogue Centre. He also congratulated the state government for implementing the Freedom of Religion Act 2021 in Madhya Pradesh.

On 21 March in Mandya District, Madhya Pradesh, a 76-year-old pastor, Peter Nyana Ratnappa, was harassed and publicly ridiculed by religious radicals as he attempted to lead Sunday worship in K.R. Peta Town. Pastor Peter, who travels almost 80 miles to lead worship at New India Church of God, was attacked by a group of 10 radicals who forced their way into the church.

On 30 March evening in Bajag tehsil, Dindori district, Madhya Pradesh, Ravindra Yadav, a Christian, was threatened and attacked by the Sarpanch of a village and others, who met him in an inebriated condition on the street. Yadav has faced opposition due to his Christian beliefs in the past too. In spite of their intention to cause bodily harm to Yadav, he was able to escape to safety. Next day the assailants filed a complaint against Yadav alleging that he had outraged the modesty of a girl from the village. Subsequently, advocacy groups contacted the S.P. at Dindori and ASI Parsetji (Bajag police station) appealing for a fair investigation. Eventually, after recording statements from the Sarpanch and Yadav, police let Yadav go without filing any charges.

On the night of **4 April** in Pipartara gram panchayat, Shahdol district, Madhya Pradesh, local police accompanied with 4 to 5 other individuals, disrupted a Christian prayer meeting, and interrogated the nine Christians who had gathered for the prayer. Subsequently they arrested Samaru Deen Baiga and took him to the Budhar police station since he was not a resident of the village. Baiga was kept overnight at the station due to the unavailability of the Thana in-charge at the station. He was released at 11 am

the next day without any charges against him.

On 4 April in Mandsaur, Madhya Pradesh, Christian Rajendra Dwivedi was arrested after he compared the salvation of Jesus to the revelations in the Vedas and Upanishads, both sacred texts for a particular community. He was arrested and charged with hurting religious sentiments on Easter Sunday. Local Christian leaders claim this is just the most recent case of religiously motivated arrests and harassment in the state. The president of the Global Council of Indian Christians told a Christian media that the accusation of hurting religious sentiments is the new mantra for right-wing nationalist forces.

On 4 April in Rangwasa village, Indore, Madhya Pradesh, a religious radical mob barged into a Christian's home where Pastor Manu Damor, 35, was leading five families in Christian prayers. The pastor called the police for protection when the irate mob began beating down the door and tore through the roof of the house. Betma police detained the pastor and his family at the police station assuring them that they would be allowed to go home after their first night of detention. However, they were later charged under sections 3 and 5 of Madhya Pradesh Anti-Conversion Law upon pressure from anti-Christian elements. Damore's wife was released from Indore district jail on 12 April. Meanwhile Pastor Damor remains in Depalpur jail.

On 10 April in Rewa district, Madhya Pradesh, Santosh Chauhan, a Christian evangelist, was taken into police custody based on a complaint filed against him by a major religious radical outfit. He was arrested on charges of converting people by alluring them. Chauhan originally hails from Bihar and has been living in Rewa for the past two years.

On the morning of **26 April** in Seoni district, Madhya Pradesh, in one of its first kind of incidents, unknown miscreants put a garland of shoes on the Cross located in Church of North India property at Kachhari chowk. The matter was reported to the police who are investigating the matter.

On 6 May in Ghugri village, Mandla district, Madhya Pradesh, a group of villagers hindered Ram Lal from repairing his house since he and his family had adopted the Christian faith. The

perpetrators - Rajesh Partey, Ram Prasad Partey, and Anup Partey - warned him that he and his family would be ostracized from the village if they did not desist from practicing the Christian faith. The victims have been facing such threats and harassment constantly. Ram Lal and his family are residents of the village for two generations.

On 2 June in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, a family dispute over the burial rites of a deceased relative escalated to a criminal investigation under the state's anti-conversion law. Dharmendra Pratap Singh, who converted to Christianity, attempted to bury his deceased mother in a cemetery, when his niece, Shweta Suman, stopped Singh from burying his mother and instead cremated the remains. Subsequently she lodged a complaint with police claiming her uncle attempted to forcefully convert his mother to Christianity. Suman equated the attempt of burying her relative's remains with an attempt to forcefully convert the bodily remains to Christianity.

MAHARASHTRA

On 11 January in Akola taluk, Ahmadnagar district, Maharashtra, religious radicals confronted Pastor Gorakh Sable at a weekly market while he was selling sarees. The pastor sells garments in order to earn his livelihood. The radicals threatened and harassed him, accusing him of converting people to Christianity through inducement. They demanded that he wind up his stall and leave the market. Soon police personnel showed up and took both the parties to the police station. Police officials favoured the pastor stating that he could not be denied the right to sell the garments since he was not forcing anyone to accept Christianity. Eventually both the parties were let go without charges.

On 14 January in the Taluka Anjangaon S, Amravati, Maharashtra, pastor Vijiel Aghamkar was falsely accused of carrying out religious conversion work by the local villagers. Pastor Vijiel is doing ministry work in Hantoda village and also participates in social work along with other Christian groups in and around the village.

On 22 January in Bangaon village, Ner tehsil, Yavatmal district, Maharashtra, an FIR was

registered against Pastor Sanjay Diwe, his wife Asmita Diwe, Gaurav, and Bhushan. The four had been invited to the home of a Christian family for a prayer meeting. During the prayer, an observer recorded a video of the program and lodged a police complaint alleging that the Christians were promoting enmity between religious communities. The FIR was filed under sections 153A, 295A, 143, and 188 of IPC.

On 22 January in Shivaji Nagar, Nagpur, Maharashtra, a Christian woman, Chitra Banjari, was terminated from her job on account of her Christian faith and for talking about her religious beliefs in the workplace. Chitra had shared about Jesus Christ with one of her colleagues and this led the colleague to take part in Sunday prayers at Chitra's church. Subsequently, when the colleague elaborated her experiences with other colleagues at her workplace, Chitra Banjari was summoned by the management and dismissed from service.

On 2 February in Jam village, Wardha district, Maharashtra, a Christian prayer meeting was disrupted by an irate businessman. Ramkumar Suryawanshi, a member of the Christ Church located in Hinganghat and working in a textile company, was in a prayer meeting at his home with a few pastors and family members when the manager of his company barged in. He demanded that the meeting be stopped immediately and accused Suryawanshi of converting people. He told him to vacate the staff residence and resign from his job at the company. After meeting the company President, the next day, he was able to save his job but had to vacate the staff quarter.

On 8 February in Yerwada, Pune district, Maharashtra, Pastor Murli Nair was summoned at the Yerwada police station based on a complaint filed by one Mr Shinde. The pastor resides at an apartment in Navi Khadki. Shinde, who lives adjacent to his flat, had been constantly complaining about the noise from prayer meetings that take place at the pastor's house. The pastor had been refuting the accusations stating that no other flat owner had complained about any noise. Earlier on 5 February, Shinde had an argument with the pastor's son, which prompted him to file a police complaint that he had been physically attacked by the pastor and his family. When the pastor met Yerwada police on 8 February and requested that police file a counter complaint, they

told him that since they had received Shinde's complaint as a Nominal Complaint (NC), they were unable to register a counter-complaint until the NC was resolved.

On 13 February in Harsul village, Trimbak taluk, Nashik district, Maharashtra, villagers opposed a funeral ceremony that was to be conducted as per Christian rites. Pintu Rajaram Garel, a Christian, had lost his two-year old son due to an accident. The local villagers demanded that Pintu make monetary donations for their religious activities if he intended to bury his child. Eventually another Christian man offered his land for the burial.

On 13 February in Besa village, Nagpur Rural tehsil, Nagpur district, Maharashtra, Chitra Banjari and two other Christians, were confronted by local villagers who accused them of converting people to Christianity. The trio were in the house of a Christian family when a man barged into the house and filmed their discussions on his phone. He accused them of religious conversions, gathered the local villagers, and tried to hand them over to local police. However, they were able to leave the place safely.

On 21 February in Basmath city, Hingoli district, Maharashtra, a police complaint was filed against Pastor Prakash Wadekar. Four days prior to the incident a group of locals had approached the pastor to rent his Prayer Hall for a wedding. The pastor had turned down their demand saying that the hall is only used for prayer meetings. On 21 February, the irate group of locals approached the local police station and the District Collector and filed a complaint that in the guise of conducting prayer meetings the pastor was using the hall for practising witchcraft and tricking innocent people in the area.

On 4 March in Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra, sources at the Sironcha Mission of Methodist Church of India reported about an illegal construction of a religious shrine taking place in their property. When the caretaker of the property objected to the construction and informed them that the land was owned by the Methodist Church, the builders responded with claims that it was a free land. However, they stopped the construction after the caretaker warned them of legal and police action.

On 24 May in taluk Katol, Nagpur, Maharashtra,

Vishan Pardhi, a Christian, was conducting prayer in his home. One of the neighbours went to Katol police station who was opposing the prayer and made a complaint against the prayer activity. The police called Vishan to the police station, took his statement, however, thankfully, he told him that he could have the prayer at his home.



ODISHA

On 10 January in Durgapur village, under Badasahi tehsil, Mayurbhanj district, Odisha, Pastor Mangal Marandi informed that his church members were hindered from conducting a prayer service at the house of Rabindra Hansda. Local villagers had been threatening the pastor for about five days. Badha Soren one of the main instigators exclaimed that the Christian god was a foreign god and threatened Hansda that severe consequences will befall upon him and the pastor if they continued the services. The incident occurred again on 17 January when villagers chased away the Christians who tried to gather for Sunday prayers. Later Pastor Marandi approached Badasahi police station to file a complaint against the radicals, but the police did not heed to his complaints.

On 13 January in Badaguda village, Koraput Sadar, Koraput district, Odisha, Radhika Nayak - a Christian woman - was severely beaten up owing to her religious beliefs. She was attacked by Nagama Nayak and her husband Purna Nayak, who are locals. The couple barged into her house, abused her verbally with filthy languages, and hit her head with a stone. She sustained grievous injuries on her head that required 12 stitches to stop the bleeding. The next day she approached local police, with the help of her pastor, and an FIR was registered.

On 15 January in Malkangiri, Odisha, Raja Kartami, a 20-year-old Christian, was falsely accused of kidnapping and attempting to forcefully convert his wife Ramburti to Christianity. The falsely accused of violating the state's anti-conversion law came from Kartami's in-laws. When Ramburti's parents discovered Kartami accepted the Christian faith, they began to threaten him and his family. They claimed Kartami had accepted a foreign religion and planned to

force their daughter to convert to Christianity.

On 26 January morning in Padampur village, Malkangiri district, Odisha, religious radicals demolished a church building and physically assaulted the church members. The next day Mutai Khilla, a Christian woman, registered an FIR, bearing number 0029, at Malkangiri police station against the vandals.

On 10 February in Malkangiri, Odisha, a couple was socially boycotted by the local villagers for allowing a Christian pastor to come home and pray over them. Ganga Padiama, age 35, had suffered a hip injury in January 2021. Ganga's wife rushed him to a hospital where he was admitted; however, they could not afford the cost of the surgery and the hospital discharged him. Ganga and his wife prayed to all their deities, sought the help of witch doctors, and invited other spiritual advisors to their home, but to no avail. In sheer desperation, the couple chose to invite Pastor Samuel, a local pastor in Kalimela, for prayer. The pastor visited their home, shared the Gospel, and prayed for Ganga. The couple accepted Christ on the same day. The villagers became angry when they discovered a Christian pastor prayed over Ganga and said now you no longer belong to this village and our community.

On 14 February in Koraput, Odisha, 11 local villagers interrupted a church service to find a Christian, Ratna Mandi, and her family. Ratna, a 21-year-old woman, suffered from a urinary blood disease since she was 18. Ratna attended a church service secretly as a last resort and asked for prayer. After two or three days, Ratna miraculously recovered from all pain and her weakness disappeared. Days after Ratna's healing, her mother had pain all over her body and agreed to get prayed over by the same local pastor. In disbelief, her pain relieved almost instantly. Now along with her mother and other family members, Ratna was participating in the church service on Sundays. Local villagers said that Ratna is a Hindu girl who should not be going to church. If she continued, then she would be banished from the village and never allowed to come back.

On 21 April at Badaguda village, Koraput district, Odisha, a group of anti-Christian elements opposed the construction of a church building. The mob called local police and alleged that the land

did not belong to Devo Bhai, a church member. The church's pastor, Jitendra Khosla, and Devo were eventually able to prove ownership with their registered documents. Due to constant opposition for many days, the construction work has slowed down. However, the church members have not filed a police complaint yet.

On 27 April in Gopinathpur village, Puri district, Odisha, a group of religious extremists threatened seven Christian families to leave their Christian faith. The Christians have been socially ostracized from the village; even the relatives and extended families of Christians are not allowed to enter the village and visit these seven families.

On 12 May in Malkangiri, Odisha, an elderly Christian couple, Jaga Madkami, age 61, and his wife Debe, age 55, were socially boycotted by the villagers on account of their Christian faith. The couple grew up in Hindu homes and lived a comfortable life. Jaga spent most of his life devoted to serving as a Hindu priest, meditating, and making offerings to deities. From 2018 onwards, Jaga and his wife had undergone a severe case of tuberculosis. Jaga sacrificed many animals to their gods and goddesses, went to many different doctors, and tried several medications; however, nothing worked. One day, the couple heard about Jesus healing the sick from local Christians. Interested in learning more, they attended a church service in secret. The church pastor and the congregation prayed for the couple in the name of Jesus. Miraculously, their health started improving within days. In June 2020, Jaga and Debe accepted the Christian faith to live by.

On 20 May in Loisingha village, Balangir district, Odisha, a group of religious extremists barged into Pastor Alok Rajhans' house and severely beat the pastor, resulting in his death. The murder took place under the Laramba police station. The pastor was affiliated with ALTC ministry.

On 7 June in Rayagada district, Odisha, five Christian families fled Kotlanga village after threats from villagers to assault them. The opposition was so fierce, according to sources, that they had to flee to the jungle to avoid the planned attack on the night of 7 June. They took the threats seriously as villagers who practice traditional religion in the nearby Sikarpai village had destroyed the roofs of the homes of six other

Christian families, looted their belongings and beat them, driving them in to the jungle, on 23 May. More than 50 Christians from three villages have now taken refuge in the jungles of Rayagada. They are without proper shelter, food, water, and electricity. Despite registering several complaints with Singhpur police, the Christians continue to face opposition, and officers have done little to protect them.

PUNJAB

On 18 January in Halwara township, Ludhiana district, Punjab, religious extremists threatened a Christian woman to desist from attending prayers at a church pastored by Surina Masih. The extremists have been protesting against the prayer meeting conducted by Surina and often stop church members from attending the prayers. The church was earlier led by Surina Masih's father, Pastor Surrender Masih. Upon his sudden demise Surina has been leading the services.

On 20 June in Ghawaddi village, Ludhiana, Punjab, three women who had recently accepted the Christian faith were assaulted by three men belonging to the same village.

RAJASTHAN

On 31 January in Dheephri village, Pipalda tehsil, Kota district, Rajasthan, Dilkhush Mahaveer, a Christian, was summoned at the Khatauli police station. Sources reported that Mahaveer had been constructing a prayer hall at his property after gaining permission from the village panchayat. However, certain religious extremists had complained to the police that he was illegally constructing the building. Pastor Senthil Kumar conducts regular prayers in the village.

On 18 May in Thep village, Kotra tehsil, Udaipur district, Rajasthan, a vengeful mob barged into Pastor Ramesh Bumbariya's home and severely assaulted the pastor and his father Bhima Bumbariya. The mob comprised of the pastor's

relatives who were irate at his Christian convictions. They were armed with guns, axes, swords, and wooden clubs. Initially they fired three rounds of bullet, then struck Bhima with an axe and swords resulting in his death. The pastor was also grievously injured. An FIR has been filed in the case and police investigation is underway.

TAMIL NADU

On 14 February in Ellampillai town, Salem district, Tamil Nadu, some religious extremists barged into the LEF Church and disrupted the Sunday prayers alleging that the pastor and the church members were involved in illegal religious conversion activities. According to sources they have also filed a complaint at the local police station.

On 11 April in Allinagaram, near Theni, Tamil Nadu, religious radicals barged into a Sunday prayer service that was being conducted by Pastor Haggin. The pastor has been ministering at the Word Church for past 15 years. His church has been facing regular opposition for three years. Earlier a police complaint had been filed by the pastor against the radicals for constantly disturbing church activities. This had led to a written undertaking by the radicals that they would desist from troubling the Christians. However, the opposition has not stopped. On the day of the incident, the radicals sat down in front of the church building and raised provocative religious and communal slogans.

On 13 June in Salem district, Tamil Nadu, a pastor, and his pregnant wife were attacked by radical Hindu nationalists. The attack on the Christian couple was the latest attempt by radicals to shut down the local church. Pastor Jeevanandam and his wife were confronted by Manibannan and Nagaraj, allegedly belonging to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and two other unidentified men after Sunday worship at Omega Church in Salem. The situation quickly turned violent when Manibannan broke into the church and began to beat Pastor Jeevanandam. The other radicals joined Manibannan and stripped Pastor Jeevanandam of his shirt while they continued to beat the pastor. Pastor

Jeevanandam's pregnant wife attempted to protect her husband and was pushed aside, stripped, and beaten on the legs with a wooden stick.

TELANGANA

On 4 January in Nalgonda, Telangana, Horebu Pentecostal Church was desecrated by unknown assailants. As a result, the church was partially broken, and its members were left to worry about the possibility of future attacks. Pastor Samuel, the head of the District Pastor Association, told that the members of the church found the church had been vandalized on the morning of January 5. According to witnesses, broken glass and other debris scattered at the church premises. Pastor Sunil Kumar, the pastor of Horebu Pentecostal Church, was informed of the desecration and immediately reported the incident to local police. The Church has been operating in Peddamunigala village for the last 11 years. At present, around 200 people consistently attend worship services at Horebu Pentecostal Church.

On 20 January in BTR Nagar Colony, Mahabubabad city, Telangana, around 30 people, allegedly belonging to Bajrang Dal, demolished the boundary wall of a church. Pastor Afzal has been regularly conducting prayer services at the church. A complaint was lodged against the vandals at the Mahabubabad Town police station.

On 31 January in Sarakonda village, Telangana, a Christian prayer meeting was attacked by the religious fanatics. Mob of ten fanatics attacked the prayer being held inside the home of a Christian. Mob, without saying a word, rushed towards church pastor Zachariah and started to beat him. They punched him and fell to the ground. They also took away the Bible pastor was holding. Other Christians were also beaten by the religious fanatics. They also damaged a keyboard, a speaker system, and a microphone.

On 28 February in Dharmapuri, Jagtial, Telangana, a house church was shut down after religious extremists put pressure on the police and the church's landlord. To legitimize the closure of the house church, local authorities used a state ordinance that prohibits the propagation of non-

Hindu faiths in places designated temple towns. As the extremists stormed into the rented house, they shouted anti-Christian slogans and used insulting language. Members of the mob confronted church Pastor K. Samuel and threatened him with grave consequences if he did not shut down the church.

UTTAR PRADESH

On 3 January in Vikas Colony, Shahjahanpur district, Uttar Pradesh, four Christians and a pastor were charged on allegations of engaging in religious conversion activities. Religious extremists accused Pastor H.S. David, Rajat, Jagat, Ajay, and Shirish Gupta of luring people into Christianity - a claim that the Christians vehemently denied. The incident occurred while they had gathered for the regular Sunday prayers, when a group of extremists arrived at the spot and physically assaulted the Christians. Subsequently they called local police and an FIR was registered against the five men.

On 3 January in Bhadohi district, Uttar Pradesh, some policemen barged into a prayer meeting led by Pastor Ashok Kumar and started filming the program. They then questioned the pastor whether he had permission to conduct such meetings. Before leaving they warned him that he might be summoned to the nearby police station.

On 10 January in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh, while Pastor Ajay Pal was conducting a prayer meeting along with 25 to 30 Christians, two policemen from the nearby Cantonment police post arrived at his house and took him into custody. Apparently, some locals had complained that the pastor was involved in religious conversion activities. Soon a group of Christian leaders visited the police station and advocated for the pastor's release stating that the complaint was a false one. Consequently, the pastor was let go without charges.

On 20 January in Garwar block, Ballia district, Uttar Pradesh, religious extremists confronted Pastor Jag Jeevan Ram and other Christians, warning them to desist from gathering for prayers at the Budhua village. They threatened the

Christians that they would demolish their church on the ensuing Sunday. Shocked by the incident, the pastor approached the local police station for protection and help.

On 22 January at JP Nagar police station, Amroha district, Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Daniel Masih and Ramavtar Patil were interrogated on allegations of converting people through inducement. Masih and Patil work with Vishwa Vani, a Christian organization. Reportedly certain religious radicals had complained to the police that the organization was involved in conversion activities. However, no FIR was registered against the pastor.

On 28 January in Guba Garden, Kalyanpur town, Kanpur district, Uttar Pradesh, Kalyanpur police arrested Pastor Pankaj Malik on allegations of engaging in religious conversion activities. He was kept in custody the entire night. The next day multiple advocacy groups contacted the police demanding a fair investigation. Subsequently the pastor was let go without any charges.

On 16 February in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, members of the right-wing All India student organisation vandalized Sadar Methodist Church. When local Christians detailed the episode to police, authorities did little to investigate the crime. Pastor Simon Prasad, leader of the Pastors' Association of Bareilly, told the media that members of a student organisation vandalized the Sadar Methodist Church in Bareilly in an effort to stoke communal tensions. Nationalist slogans such as "Jai Sri Ram" were repeatedly painted across the entryways and walls of Bareilly's oldest church. On February 17, Pastor Prasad and other Christian leaders of the church made an attempt to report the incident to local police. However, police personnel tried to block the submission of the complaint and told the Christian victims that nothing had happened. Only after pictures of the vandalism were produced did the police agree to examine the matter.

On 21 February in Ambedkarnagar district, Uttar Pradesh, a team of local police and religious radicals barged into a Sunday prayer meeting and demanded that he stop the service. They verbally abused him and warned him that if conducted the services again, he would be arrested and sent to the prison on charges of religious conversion. The pastor categorically denied all allegations.

On 27 February in Gajraula city, Amroha district, Uttar Pradesh, seven Christian pastors - including Daniel Masih and Ramavtar Patil - who are affiliated with Vishwa Vani, were summoned by Sanjay Kumar, the Local Intelligence Unit (Intelligence Bureau) official, for questioning. Sources reported that the officer, with much aggression, questioned the pastors about their source of funding, their Christian services, and the activities for which their organization was utilizing the funds. The pastors were visibly shocked and traumatized after the verbally harassing interrogation. Earlier too, on 22 January this year, they had been summoned by the JP Nagar police station regarding their Christian ministry in the area.

On 3 March in Shivli town, Kanpur Dehat district, Uttar Pradesh, police personnel arrested Pastor Kishan Lal from his home while he was engaged in a Bible Study program and brought for interrogation to the local police station. After Christian advocacy groups contacted SHO Pramod Shukla, the pastor was let go after questioning without any charges filed against him.

On 14 March in Jyoti Nagar, Arjun Nagar, Agra district, Uttar Pradesh, Ravi Kumar, a pastor of the Rehoboth Christian Assembly, was physically assaulted by religious radicals belonging to a major political party and was taken into police custody at the Shahganj police station. Owing to much pressure from the irate mob of radicals, local police felt helpless in releasing Kumar. The mob accused him of urinating inside their temple, a charge which Kumar vehemently denied. Subsequently, after continual intervention from minority rights groups Kumar was let go.

On 15 March in Madarbhari village, Ambedkar Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, a group of villagers accompanied with police personnel barged into the house of Pastor Anjeet Kumar, accused him of engaging in religious conversion activities and escorted him, Bhullar Banbasi, and five others to the Bhati police station. The incident occurred while the pastor and his relatives were peacefully resting in the house. The Christians were kept in custody for about 6 hours. Subsequently, upon intervention from human rights groups they were released without any charges.

On 19 March evening in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, four nuns from the Delhi Province of the Sacred

Heart Society (SH) were arrested while on their way to Odisha from Delhi. The incident occurred while the train in which they were traveling stopped at 6.30 pm at Jhansi railway station. A group of religious extremists, who were returning from a pilgrimage, unjustifiably accused them of religious conversion and caused trouble. They challenged the faith of the women and raised religious slogans. Subsequently police arrived at the spot and arrested the women without paying any heed to their side of the story. Around 150 religious radicals accompanied the women in procession to the police station. The terrified nuns were released at 11.30 pm after the intervention from advocacy groups convinced police that the nuns were innocent and had credible documents to prove their story.

On 23 March in Matehu, Ghazipur district, Uttar Pradesh, some Christians - Munna Bharti, Vinod Kumar and few others - were arrested and detained at the Matehu police post on allegations of illegal religious conversion activity. The charges were brought against them by a group of religious extremists. However, after intervention from human rights groups and police's interrogation, the Christians were let go without any charges.

On the morning of **20 June** in Rohania, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, Ajay Kumar Rajbhar, a field staff of APC Church, and other church leaders were taken into police custody on false charges of religious conversion. After interventions from Christian advocacy groups both were let go without any charges against them.

On 24 June in Jahanaganj block, Azamgarh district, Uttar Pradesh, local sources reported that a false complaint of religious conversion was brought against Pastor Bhanu Pratap in Jahanaganj police station.

On 25 June in Ambedkar Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Punvaasi was taken to a local police station on a complaint that he was involved in religious conversion. The pastor was later let go after interrogation.

On 25 June in Gonda, Uttar Pradesh, local police arrested some Christians, including a woman, Jilomina John, and questioned them. Some local villagers had falsely accused that the Christians were luring and trying to convert some families in the village.

On 26 June in Rampur district, Uttar Pradesh, two Christian individuals - Shubdes and Raman - were arrested by local police on false accusations of carrying out religious conversion activities.

On 27 June 2021 in Ambedkar Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, pastor Ram Ujagir and a fellow Christian, Fursat, were arrested by police while they were having a prayer meeting in the village and taken to the Malipur police station. Pastor Ujagir and Fursat were accused of being involved in a religious conversion activity and were charged under 151 of IPC and were sent to jail custody for tendays.

On 28 June in Raebareli, Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Shivkumar Verma and another individual, were taken into police custody at Salon police station on false charges of religious conversion. Local sources reported that since there was no evidence corroborating the accusations police personnel demanded bribe in order to release the two Christians.

On 29 June in Farrukhabad, Uttar Pradesh, Pastor Deshraj and his family were attacked by a group of people accusing them of carrying out religious conversion activities in their locality.



UTTARAKHAND

On 7 March in Haridwar district, Uttarakhand, two pastors - Hari Prakash and Deepak - were taken into custody by police personnel of Jagjeetpur police post. The pastors were conducting a church service when police barged in and arrested them on allegations of involving in religious conversion activities. Rohit Singh, a local Christian lawyer, visited police station and tried to get the pastors released. The pastors were later released without any complaint after police received multiple calls for a fair investigation from advocacy volunteers.

On 25 May, Balkrishna, the top aide of yoga guru Baba Ramdev, took to social media accusing Indian Medical Association President Dr. Johnrose Jayalal of "a conspiracy to convert the entire country to Christianity and turn them against yoga and Ayurveda." The statement had

the potential to trigger a hate-campaign against the Christian community in India.

On 13 June in Haridwar, Uttarakhand, Pastor Sanjay Kumar Bharti was taken to the Shyampur police station and was beaten up during interrogation for his alleged involvement in religious conversions done through force and allurement. The pastor was initially accused of breaking lockdown norms and brought to the police station. However, at the police station, he was accused with illegal religious conversion activities and beaten up brutally. Local sources reported that police threatened him to vacate his rented house and leave the village.

On 26 June in Haldwani, Nainital, Uttarakhand,

Pastor Ami Wasah was falsely accused of engaging in religious conversion by a woman who was influenced by right-wing religious extremists.



WEST BENGAL

On 10 of May in Midnapore, West Bengal, some Christians from a tribal community were blocked from using the road outside their homes on account of their religious beliefs. Religious radicals barricaded the road prohibiting the Christians from commuting.



Evangelical
Fellowship of India



Religious Liberty
Commission

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION OF
THE EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF INDIA

805/ 92 Deepali Building

Nehru Place

New Delhi—110019 INDIA

Email: mail@efirlc.org