

Evangelical  
Fellowship of India



Religious Liberty  
Commission

# SYSTEMATIC TARGETING OF CHRISTIANS IN INDIA: JANUARY-JULY 2025

# Executive Summary

Between January and July 2025, the Evangelical Fellowship of India's Religious Liberty Commission documented 334 incidents of systematic targeting against Christian communities across India, encompassing arrests, physical violence, threats, disruption of worship services, and denial of basic rights including burial. This sustained pattern of persecution reflects an alarming consistency, with incidents occurring every month and affecting Christian communities across 22 states and union territories.

The geographic concentration of violence remains deeply concerning, with Uttar Pradesh recording 95 incidents and Chhattisgarh 86 incidents together accounting for more than half of all documented cases. These states have emerged repeatedly as primary hot spots where Christian families face not only immediate violence but prolonged legal harassment under anti-conversion laws. The misuse of these laws has become a primary weapon of intimidation, with threats, harassment, and false accusations representing two-thirds of all incidents documented during this period.

Particularly disturbing are the 13 cases involving denial of burial rights, with 92% occurring in Chhattisgarh alone, where Christian families are prevented from honouring their deceased according to their faith even on private property. The systematic nature of this targeting is evident in timing patterns, with many incidents strategically occurring during Sunday worship services, suggesting organized monitoring and disruption of Christian religious gatherings.

The brutality of some incidents underscores the escalating nature of persecution. In July, six pastors in Bhilai, Chhattisgarh, were not only wrongfully detained but severely beaten with wooden batons inside Durg jail simply for identifying themselves as pastors during routine questioning. Despite documented evidence of torture, charges against the pastors remain active while no action has been taken against the attackers or jail officials responsible for the abuse.

These 334 documented cases likely represent only a fraction of actual incidents, as many go unreported due to fear of reprisals, intimidation by local authorities, or lack of access to documentation channels. The pattern reveals a coordinated effort to suppress Christian religious expression through both legal mechanisms and social pressure, creating a climate of fear that extends far beyond the immediate victims to entire communities.

The constitutional promise of religious freedom for all citizens demands urgent attention from government authorities, law enforcement agencies, and the judicial system to address these systematic violations and restore the rule of law that protects India's religious minorities.







# Methodology and Verification

EFIRLC documents incidents through multiple channels including direct victim reports, local partner networks across India, media monitoring, and official sources where available. Each case is verified through multiple sources where possible, with documentation including police reports, medical records, witness testimonies, and photographic evidence.

The Commission maintains a network of local contacts and partner organizations who report incidents in real-time, allowing for immediate assistance to victims and accurate documentation of events. All reported cases undergo verification processes before inclusion in official documentation.

Given the sensitive nature of religious freedom violations and fear of reprisals, some victims are reluctant to report incidents formally. Additionally, remote areas may have delayed reporting due to limited communication infrastructure. Therefore, the 334 documented cases likely represent a conservative estimate of actual incidents affecting Christian communities during this period.

For verification of specific cases or additional information, stakeholders may contact EFIRLC directly through official channels.

## State wise trends

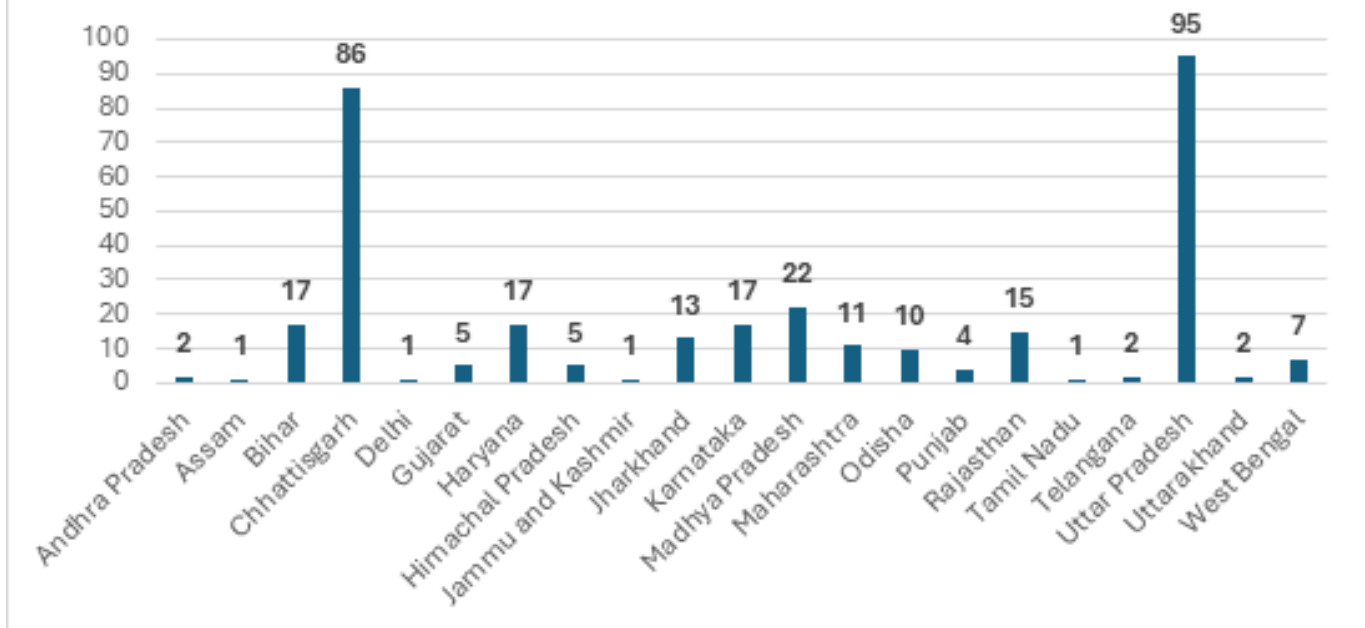
The incidents spanned several states, with the highest concentrations in Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Haryana, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, and Odisha.

State	No. of incidents
Andhra Pradesh	2
Assam	1
Bihar	17
Chhattisgarh	86
Delhi	1
Gujarat	5
Haryana	17
Himachal Pradesh	5
Jammu and Kashmir	1
Jharkhand	13
Karnataka	17

State	No. of incidents
Madhya Pradesh	22
Maharashtra	11
Odisha	10
Punjab	4
Rajasthan	15
Tamil Nadu	1
Telangana	2
Uttar Pradesh	95
Uttarakhand	2
West Bengal	7
Total	334



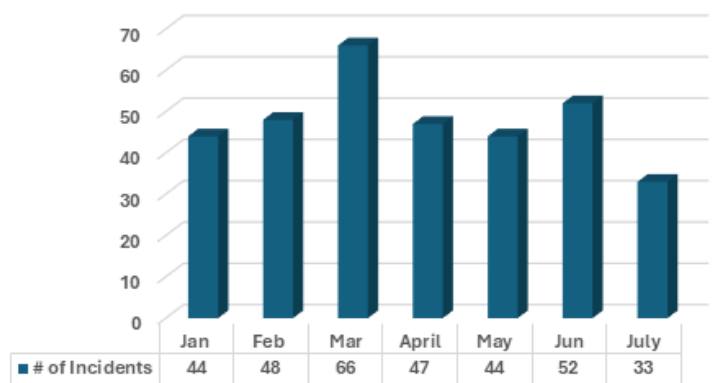
### State-wise number of incidents



Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh emerge once again as the primary hot spots for incidents against Christians, continuing a troubling pattern with frequent reports of arrests, false accusations, physical violence, and social boycotts. Together accounting for 181 incidents (54% of all cases), they are followed by Madhya Pradesh (22), Bihar (17), Karnataka (17), Rajasthan (15), and Haryana (15), demonstrating that challenges span multiple states across different regions of India.

Month	No. of Incidents
Jan	44
Feb	48
Mar	66
April	47
May	44
Jun	52
July	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>334</b>

### Month-wise Incidents

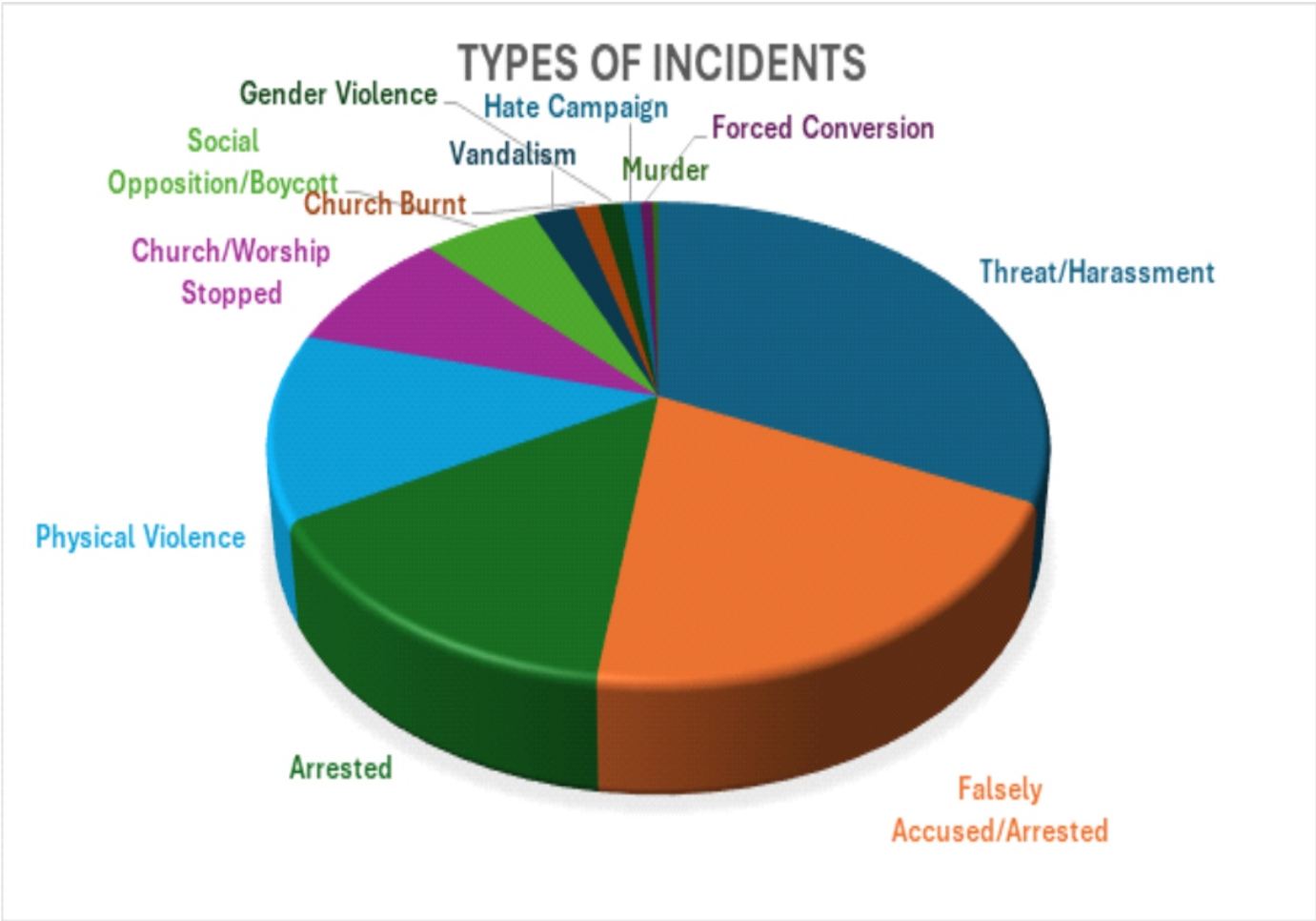


While incidents occurred consistently throughout the seven-month period, March recorded the highest number (66), followed by June (52), compared to the monthly average of 48 incidents, indicating periods of heightened tensions affecting Christian communities. Many incidents occurred on Sundays during or after worship services.

# Incident types

The documented incidents fall into several distinct categories, revealing patterns in how Christian communities are targeted.

Types of Incidents	No. of incidents
Threat/Harassment	107
Falsely Accused/Arrested	67
Arrested	49
Physical Violence	42
Church/Worship Stopped	29
Social Opposition/Boycott	19
Vandalism	7
Church Burnt	4
Gender Violence	4
Hate Campaign	3
Forced Conversion	2
Murder	1
Total	334



False accusations and arrests, often under anti-conversion laws, represent the largest category and are particularly prevalent in Uttar Pradesh, frequently resulting in prolonged legal battles. Physical violence, disruption of worship services, social boycotts, and vandalism form additional patterns of systematic targeting that affect Christian communities across multiple states through both legal and social pressures.

Notably, threats and harassment (107 incidents) combined with false accusations and arrests (116 incidents) account for two-thirds of all documented cases, indicating that intimidation and misuse of legal processes are the primary tactics employed against Christian communities.

## Burial Opposition and Denial

EFIRLC documented 13 specific cases involving opposition to or denial of burial rights for deceased Christians, with 12 incidents occurring in Chhattisgarh and 1 in Odisha. These cases represent a particularly grave violation of human dignity, denying Christian families the fundamental right to perform burial rituals according to their faith. The concentration of burial denial cases in Chhattisgarh (92% of such incidents) indicates a particularly concerning pattern in that state, where families are prevented from honouring their deceased even on their own private property.

## Temporal Trends

The 334 incidents spread across seven months suggest a sustained, systematic pattern rather than isolated events. Many incidents occur on Sundays during or immediately after worship services, indicating that religious gatherings are under close monitoring, particularly in **Uttar Pradesh** and Chhattisgarh where Sunday targeting is most frequent.

## Representative Cases

- On 7 January in Chhindwara village, Bastar district, Chhattisgarh, a pastor named Subhash Bagaël passed away. When his family began preparations to bury him in the village graveyard, they were confronted and stopped by a group of local villagers and religious hardliners. The group not only denied

permission for burial in the public cemetery but also refused to allow it on the family's own land, issuing threats of dire consequences if the family attempted to proceed with the burial.

- On 28 March 2025 in Saran, Bihar, Pastor Sanjay Kumar Singh held a fasting prayer meeting at his residence. As the attendees were dispersing after the prayer, a group of miscreants from a nearby village arrived and launched a violent attack on the gathering. Several individuals were injured in the assault, including an auto driver. The attackers issued threats, warning the believers not to return and accused them of spreading Christianity in the area.
- On 20 April, Easter Sunday, in Santoshinagar, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, a group of religious hardliners stormed the West India Pentecostal Church. They disrupted the Easter prayer service by chanting religious slogans, issuing verbal threats, and carrying sticks—one individual was reportedly armed with a knife. The prayer attendees resisted the disruption, and the intruders fled when local police arrived.
- On 13 June in Rajgangpur, Sundargarh, Odisha, Pastor Vinod Kerketta, along with several church members, was invited to pray during a child's birthday celebration hosted by a church member. During the prayer, an unidentified man entered the house and began recording the gathering without permission. He left briefly and returned with a group of violent individuals and religious hardliners. The group physically assaulted Pastor Vinod and several female believers, causing serious injuries. Following the attack, the assailants forcibly took Pastor Vinod to the local police station and falsely accused him of engaging in religious conversion.
- On 20 July in Kailash Nagar, Bhilai, Chhattisgarh, approximately 35 members of the Bajrang Dal surrounded Grace Church during Pastor Abhinav Baksh's afternoon service, shouting derogatory slogans against Christians and demanding action for alleged conversions. Pastor Moses Logan, who owns the church building legally registered 35 years ago with proper government permissions, called police for assistance. When police arrived, they transported about 40 church members, including the pastors, to Jamul police station. Despite Logan's requests to file charges against the attackers, police instead detained six pastors under preventive detention provisions

and sent them to Durg jail that evening. Inside the jail, five pastors were severely beaten with wooden batons by jail officials after identifying themselves as pastors during routine questioning, leaving visible injuries. The pastors were released on bail the following evening, while charges against them remain active and no action has been taken against the attackers or jail officials despite documented evidence of torture.

## Impact on Affected Christian Community

These incidents create wide-ranging and devastating consequences for affected communities:

- **Psychological and Physical Trauma:**  
Physical violence, threats, and assaults often targeting women, children, and the elderly cause fear and trauma. Acts like church burnings erode community morale and sense of safety.
- **Legal and Financial Burdens:**  
Arrests and court proceedings impose heavy costs. Victims often endure prolonged legal battles, draining their financial and emotional resources.
- **Social Isolation:**  
Denial of burial rights and exclusion from shared resources result in displacement and severed community ties. Many families are forced to leave their villages.
- **Suppression of Religious Freedom:**  
Ongoing harassment and arrests under anti-conversion laws curtail open religious expression, creating a climate of fear and self-censorship.

## Key Concerns for Policy Action

- The incidents raise serious concerns about **the misuse of anti-conversion laws**. While these laws aim to prevent coercive conversions, their vague language enables arbitrary arrests and harassment.
- Police **response** is often **inadequate**, some officers act to protect victims, while many others turn a blind eye to perpetrators.

- The involvement of **extremist groups** presents a significant threat to public order and minority rights. Legal action against hate speech, incitement, and mob violence is necessary.
- Additionally, **denial of burial rights and social boycotts** demand attention and legal protections for cultural and religious practices.

## Recommendations to the Government of India

- a. Initiate immediate disciplinary proceedings against law enforcement officials who have failed in their duty to protect religious minorities, particularly those complicit in custodial violence and those who shield attackers while pursuing victims under anti-conversion laws.
- b. Advise the State Governments of Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Haryana, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Odisha to repeal the Freedom of Religion laws that are being systematically misused by agenda-driven groups to harass religious minorities and restrict legitimate worship activities.
- c. Take swift action under existing criminal law provisions against organizations and groups involved in orchestrating hate campaigns and violence against Christians, including prosecution for hate speech and incitement to violence.
- d. Ensure constitutional guarantees protecting burial rights and religious practices are enforced uniformly, with immediate intervention to prevent the harassment of Christian families seeking to honor their deceased according to their faith.
- e. Establish a comprehensive victim compensation program providing relief for medical expenses and legal costs incurred by victims of religious targeting under central and state victim compensation programs.
- f. Institute fast-track courts specifically for religious freedom violation cases to ensure timely justice and prevent prolonged detention of innocent individuals falsely accused under anti-conversion laws.



# Interventions by EFIRLC

From January to July 2025, EFIRLC has been assisting persecuted Christians across India through comprehensive support services. This has included legal advice, help with filing complaints, and engagement with police and local authorities, particularly in regions where persecution is most severe.

EFIRLC also guided churches on handling disruptions to prayer meetings and encouraged pastors and believers to file First Information Reports (FIRs) and counter-complaints. The organization provided financial and medical aid to victims while conducting citizen awareness training to educate Christian communities about their constitutional rights and best practices for navigating the challenges they face because of their faith.

## Conclusion

The data reveals a troubling pattern of persecution against Christian communities in India, marked by arrests, violence, threats, and social exclusion. The 334 documented incidents likely represent only a portion of the actual cases, as many go unreported or are delayed in being documented. While the resilience of the affected communities offers hope, sustained advocacy and meaningful policy reforms are crucial to ensure justice, protection, and the right to religious freedom for all citizens.

EFIRLC remains committed to working with

government authorities, civil society, and all stakeholders to address these challenges and strengthen India's constitutional promise of religious freedom for every citizen.

## About the Evangelical Fellowship of India's Religious Liberty Commission (EFIRLC)

The Religious Liberty Commission was established in 1998 as a platform for Christian groups, clergy, and activists dedicated to promoting religious liberty and fundamental freedoms for all citizens. EFIRLC operates under biblical principles of reconciliation and justice, working with affected communities and authorities to address violations of religious freedom.

EFIRLC represents India's evangelical community through the Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI), founded in 1951, which includes over 54 Protestant denominations with more than 65,000 churches nationwide. As a charter member of the World Evangelical Alliance, EFI brings both national representation and international perspective to religious freedom advocacy.

Since 1998, EFIRLC has systematically documented incidents affecting Christian communities and has released annual reports since 2009, while providing practical and legal assistance to victims.



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