

# A REPORT ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHRISTIANS 2017

*A report on the sustained violence experienced by the minority christian community in Januray – November, 2017 across India.*

## **Freedom of Religion or Belief under Threat in India**

The Constitution of India protects the freedom of conscience and the right to practice, profess and propagate the religion of one's choice. However, there are frequent violations of the religious freedom of minorities across the country.

## **Sustained Violence against Christians**

According to a statement made by the Government in the Indian Parliament on the 7th of Feb. 2017,<sup>1</sup> over the last three years, over 278 persons have been killed and over 6500 people were injured due to communal violence in over 2000 incidents.

According to the World Watch List 2017, India is now ranked 15th in the list of countries where the practice of the faith is a high-risk activity. India was ranked 31 only four years ago.

More than 700 cases of attacks on Christians were reported on the United Christian Forum (UCF) toll free helpline number 1800-208-4545 since 2014. Last year, 216 incidents were recorded and this year 216 incidents have already been reported as on date.

Out of 29 states in India, at least 19 regularly witness attacks on Christians. Tamil Nadu tops the list with 41 incidents as on November 30th followed by Chhattisgarh (39) Uttar Pradesh (27), Madhya Pradesh (22), Maharashtra (16). Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttarakhand and West Bengal are the other states.

The states of Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh accounted for over 50% of the incidents recorded. The violence of incidents includes Ghar wapsi; Refusal to grant permission to establish and run places of worship; False accusation of forceful and fraudulent religious conversions: Physical and verbal assault on Church pastors and members; False and divisive propaganda; Damage and desecration of

places of worship and arson; Disruption of prayer services and Restrictions on religious gatherings.

Apart from the violence, social exclusions were also common tactic used to victimize minorities by denying basic human rights that are common to every citizen. These exclusion orders make Christians vulnerable to excessive violence and denial of social privileges like access to water, electricity and work.

In addition, to the violence, the selective impunity

**SINCE JANUARY 2017 THERE  
HAVE BEEN 216 INCIDENTS.  
HOWEVER, THE POLICE FILED  
CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS OR  
FIRST INFORMATION REPORTS  
ONLY IN 43 INCIDENTS.**

enjoyed by the mob is a cause for concern. According to date collected, the police filed complaints only 43 criminal complaints or First Information Reports (FIRs) inspite of the information about attacks against Christians being provided repeatedly to them in over 200 incidents.

## **Speech Inciting Violence and Hostility**

In addition, frequent statements against religious minorities made by some of the political leaders have served to exacerbate the discrimination and hostility being experienced by religious minorities in India.

For instance, in Jharkhand, the Chief Minister claimed that "those involved 'in conversions' of tribals were behind protests against the state government's attempt to make an amendment" in local land laws.<sup>2</sup> The Government of Jharkhand recently published a full-page advertisement in many local newspapers misquoting Gandhi, denouncing Christian

<sup>1</sup> <http://164.100.47.190/loksabhaquestions/annex/11/AU849.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/54437126.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/54437126.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

missionaries for their act of conversion and proselytising among Adivasis and Dalits.<sup>3</sup>

In another incident, leaflets saying '*sarkar hamari aa gayi hai, sudhar jao* (mend your ways, our government is in power)' and was signed '*gaon ke sabhi Hindu* (Hindus of the village)', surfaced in two villages of Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly in March.<sup>4</sup>

### Anti-Conversion laws

Reports from the various minority communities and human rights agencies reveal that these laws foster hostility against minority communities.

However, despite the existence of these acts in some states for over fifty years, there have been very few convictions, though cases are registered under the Acts almost every month.

The recent incidents in Madhya Pradesh are suspected to be abuse of the anti-conversion laws. On three separate occasions, Christian children traveling in a train for a Christian camp were taken into custody at railway stations by the Railway Police on the grounds that the children were being "kidnapped to be converted."

On May 22 and 23, nine elders and a minor were arrested by the Railway Police when they were accompanying 71 Christian children for a summer Bible camp to Nagpur from Indore. On June '3, a Catholic nun and four girls were detained at the Satna railway station. On October 21, two elders and seven children going for Bible Studies were detained and not allowed to meet the parents.

These cases bring in deep sense of insecurity among Christians who cannot freely practice their faith in the state where anti-conversions laws have been enacted.

### UN Report and Recommendations

The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, noted in her report after a visit to India that, "Even in the Indian states which have adopted laws on religious conversion there seem to be only few – if

any – convictions for conversion using force, inducement or fraudulent means. In Orissa, for example, not a single infringement over the past ten years of the Orissa Freedom of Religion Act 1967 could be cited or adduced by district officials and senior officials in the State Secretariat... However, such laws or even draft legislation have had adverse consequences for religious minorities and have fostered mob violence against them."<sup>5</sup>

The report further stated that, "there is a risk that Freedom of Religion Acts may become a tool in the

---

*Despite the existence of the Anti-Conversion Acts in some states since 1967, there have been very few convictions, though cases are registered under the Act almost every month*

hands of those who wish to use religion for vested interests or to persecute individuals on the grounds of their religion or belief. While persecution, violence or discrimination based on religion or belief need to be sanctioned by law, the Special Rapporteur would like to caution against excessive or vague legislation on religious issues which could create tensions and problems instead of solving them."

### Recommendations to the Government of India

- Guarantee the security of religious minorities: There should be a clear signal, from central, state governments and police, that the protection of the safety and security of religious minorities is vital aspect of the ethos of India.

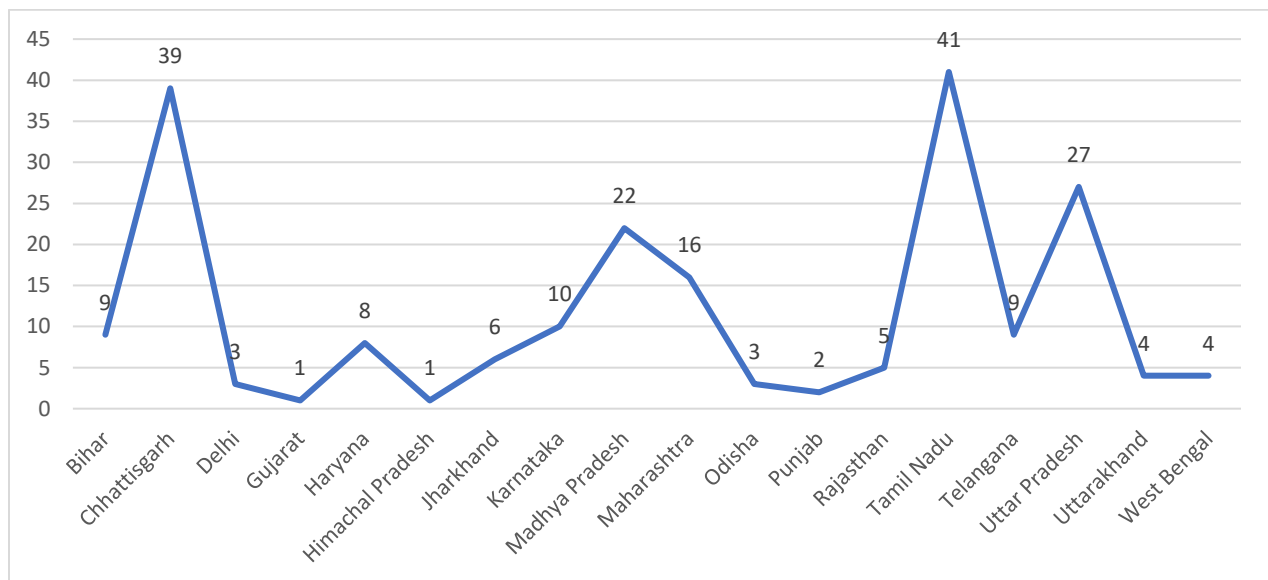
<sup>3</sup> <https://thewire.in/167252/jharkhand-gandhi-advertisement-christians/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/hate-posters-against-muslims-found-in-two-uttar-pradesh-mosques/story-Zboceb64QnzzKE4tFLRQLK.html>

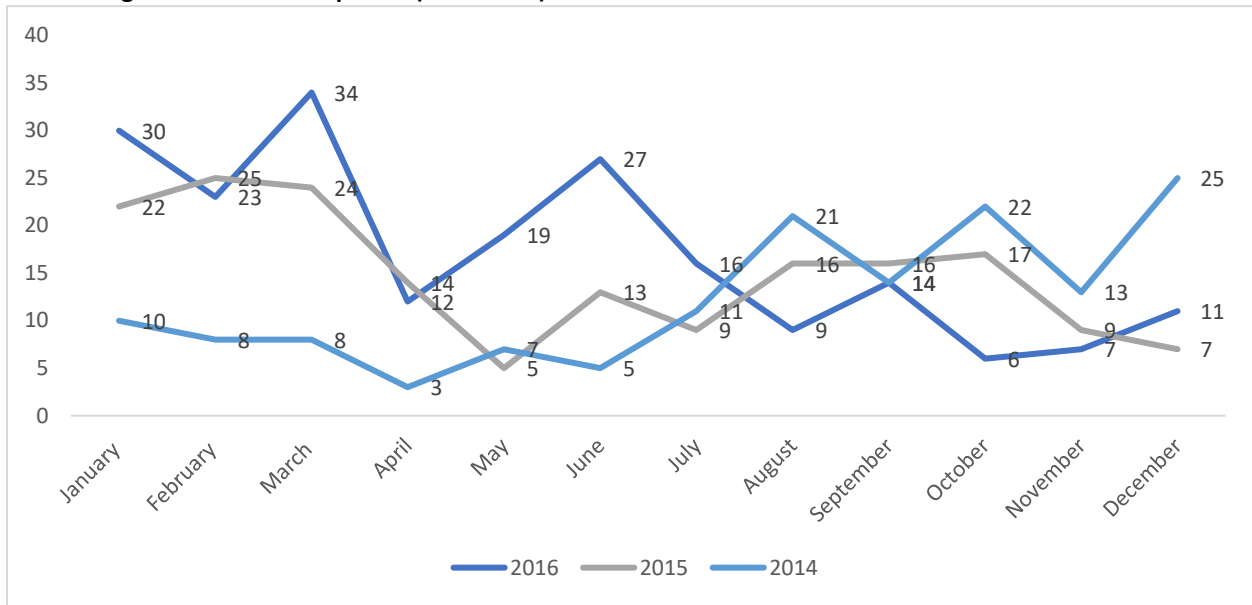
<sup>5</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, Promotion and Protection Of All Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social And Cultural Rights, Including The Right To Development: Report Of The Special Rapporteur On Freedom Of Religion Or Belief, A/HRC/10/8/Add.3 (26 January 2009) available at <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/5744267.70210266.html>

- Enforce legal protections for religious minorities: In addition to ensuring the rights guaranteed in the Constitution, the Government of India should take strict measures to end the culture of impunity, ensuring that violations are effectively identified and appropriate and timely action is taken by police and the judiciary.
- The government should implement a process of education and training on rights of religious minorities among police and judicial officials.
- The legislature should actively identify and repeal various discriminatory laws and policies which curtail the freedom of conscience and the freedom of religion of belief.
- The government should take steps to strengthen human rights monitoring mechanisms, including the National Commission for Minorities and the National Human Rights Commission.

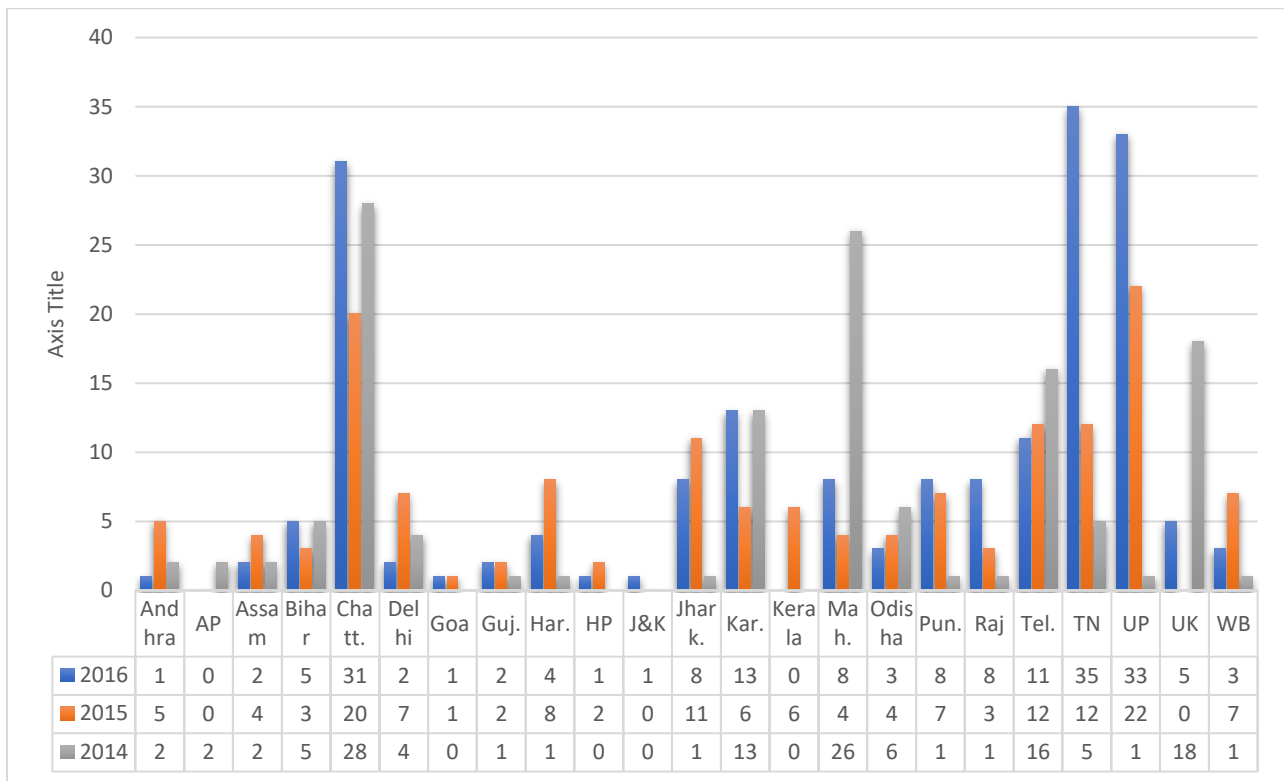
#### List of Incidents in 2017 in the different states of India



**Violence against Christians in period (2014-2016)**



**List of Incidents in 2014-2016 in the different states of India**



**Brief List of Incidents - 2017****PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AND ASSAULT OF CHRISTIANS**

1. A Christian evangelist, Dr. K. A. Swamy, was manhandled and threatened by a group of Hindu extremists on 21 January 2017 in Hyderabad, Telangana for distributing free Bibles (New Testaments) by the road side. Due to the prolonged harassment and trauma, Dr. Swamy suffered a massive brain hemorrhage and a paralytic stroke on the right-side body along with loss of speech and eye-sight. An First Information Report (FIR) or criminal complaint has been filed by Christians (No. 25/2017) at Gandhi Nagar Police Station.
2. Pastor Tilak Kumre and eleven other Christians were brutally attacked by a mob of Hindu villagers in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra. Five of the 12 Christians assaulted were seriously injured. The attack took place on 3rd January 2017 in the village of Saale in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra following dispute over funeral rites of Tulsiram Hedame, 60, who with his wife had started to attend the Indian Friend Fellowship Church in Korchi for the last five months of his life. Hedame's son did not consent to a Christian burial and the Hindu villagers did not allow a Hindu cremation to Hedame. The villagers invited Pastor Tilak for peace talks and assaulted him and the eleven others who were accompanying him. Chandrasai Kamro, 55, had his ear bleeding profusely because of the beating; Barsu Uikey, 26, was hit with so many blows that he was unable to walk; Lalsai Uikey, 45, suffered head injuries and was bleeding profusely; Prakash Malgaam had his shoulder cap fractured, and Pastor Kumre sustained shoulder and hip injury. An FIR has been filed by Christians (01/017) at Korchi Police Station.
3. In a shocking incident on 26 January 2017, near Kondlahally, Molakalmuru Taluk, Chitradurga District Karnataka, Pastor Basavanna, who leads the Atma Prayer church, was severely assaulted by a mob belonging to the Hindu Jagran, a Hindu group. Basavanna was celebrating his daughter Tejashree's birthday and had invited about 100 Church members and guests for a prayer meeting and celebration organized in the Church hall. While the celebration was still on, fundamentalists belonging to the Hindu Jagran barged into the prayer hall carrying petrol and kerosene bombs with them. They dragged Basavanna outside the Church and started to punch and kick him. The mob chanting, 'Jai Shri Ram' (Hail lord Ram) broke and burnt the Church equipment (amplifier, sound system, drums etc), Bibles and other Christian literature. The eye witnesses later reported that Basavanna was beaten so ruthlessly that they thought he would die. The attackers took him by force to the local Hindu temple where sindoor was put on his face and he was pressured to perform Hindu rituals. Basavanna sustained several internal injuries on his head, chest, and arms. He is a resident of Thungurahalli village, which is 11 km from where the incident took place. An FIR has been filed by Christians (No. FIR No. 09/2017) at Molakalmuru Police station.
4. On Jan 27, 2017, a Cross situated at Carter Road, Bandra (West) was desecrated at about 10.30 p.m. when some vandals broke the crucifix. The Cross which was damaged is more than a century old and drew many Christians and also non-Christians in the locality. The Christians approached the Khar Police station and demanded an action. An FIR was filed by Christians (FIR No. 173/14) at Santa Cruze Police Station.
5. On Feb 24, 2017, Raghuram, a Christian, was beaten up for not giving donation for the social work in the village in Kondagaon, Chattisgarh. It was reported that he was targeted for being a Christian. The mob also ransacked his house. An FIR has been filed by Christians (FIR No. 82/2017) at Keshkal Police station.

6. On February 24, 2017, Hindu extremists attacked a 'Peace Festival' organised by a collective of 12 Churches in Badarpur, Delhi. On the last day of the two-day festival, a mob of about 250 - 300 attacked the 1700 people seated for the program. Shouting slogans of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" (Hail Mother India), they assaulted those seated in the crowd and on the stage, vandalizing the property including the sound system, stage, chairs and tables. Many were injured in this attack. Pastor Emmanuel Masih, the Pastor of Satsang Yeshu Ka Darbaar suffered injuries to his nose and mouth. The program had to be discontinued and resulted in a huge financial loss for the organizers. A case was registered later, against unidentified miscreants.
7. On March 3, 2017, a church pastored by Pastor Kalayrasan was set on fire in Tiruvarur, Tamil Nadu. It was reported that there were threats in the past because of him conducting service. An FIR has been lodged (104/2017) was filed by the Pastor at Kodavasal Police Station.
8. On April 05, 2017, Pastor Sikandar was at his home along with his wife and daughter when a boy came, sent by attackers, on the pretext of some people wanting to converse with him outside his home in Vaishali, Bihar. The moment, the pastor stepped out, the group attacked him with swords and verbally abused him saying stop carrying out religious conversion work in the place. The attackers took away the pastor's mobile. Members of the mob continued to call the pastors children to threaten them from conducting the church services. Pastor Sikandar is associated with India Pentecostal Church. An FIR has been filed (No. 225/17) by Christians at Hajipur Police station.
9. On April 03, 2017, Pastor Joshua Lukas and his sister Sujatha and her husband Naveen Kumar were attacked as they met in the house of Mrs. Bhagyamma, a member of the church congregation in Yelahanka, Bangalore Rural District, Karnataka. As they were gathered for prayer, a group of Hindutva extremists, led by a person identified only as Rajan entered in to Bhagyamma's house and started to beat Sujatha and Naveen Kumar saying that they have come in the village to convert Hindus. An FIR has been filed (No. 80/2017) by Christians at Doddaballapur Circle.
10. On April 21, 2017, in village Khainkona, Chattisgarh Pastor Siril Hadde, pastor Arun Kujur, and a Christian by the name of Mukund were conducting a prayer meeting at Chamru Korva's house. In the evening around 8:00 pm, Hindutva extremists, came and started to beat up the Christians alleging that forceful religious conversion was being carried out in Balrampur district. Five Christians were injured including both the pastors. Due to severe beating, the Christians ran towards the forest and stayed there till midnight for their safety. Subsequently, the same night all the Christians returned to their homes. Next day on April 22, 2017, those fanatics came again in the morning and beat up two other Christians with a pastor. An FIR has been filed No. 15/2017, on 23.04.2017 at Samari Paath Police Station.
11. On April 30, 2017, 12 Christians had gathered for a prayer meeting in Salem District, Tamil Nadu on occasion of birthday celebration of one of the believers' daughter. Around 5:30 PM, 9 Hindutva extremists and 3 villagers came and beat up the Christians. Pastor Stalin Kumar and his son were severely beaten and Pastor Stalin's shoulder was broken. An FIRs have been filed by both the sides (No. 105 & 106) at Gengavalli Police Station.
12. A false complaint was submitted at the local police station on April 29, 2017 by Etwah Khariya, the head of the family against all the other members who have accepted Christian faith. In the complaint, he stated that he is being forced to convert his religion to Christianity and he is being threatened if he did not then there would be dire

- consequence. As per information, Etwā Khariya consumes alcohol and has been incited and swayed by the RSS extremists to file a complaint against the family members including Pastor Sanichar Urav. FIR NO. 0125, against the Christians at Gumla Police station on 29.04.2017.
13. On May 04, 2017, Hindutva extremists burnt the Deva Sabai church pastored by John Miller. There were many threats to pastor because of him conducting the worship service. An FIR has been filed No. 95 by Christians at Kumaratchi Police station.
  14. On May 7, 2017, before the worship service took place a photographer came to the Miracle Life Assembly of God church and started to take photos and videos. Anti-social elements reached the spot and started to use abusive language and didn't allowed the church service to continue in Thennampalayam, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Prior to this incident, church was conducting Vacation Bible School (VBS) from May 1 - 3. On May 3rd, a group of Hindutva extremists barged in to the church and started to beat up the Christians who were bringing their children for VBS. An FIR has been filed no. 415 by Christians at Sulur Police Station.
  15. On May 21, 2017, around 10:00 AM, a crowd of about 60 Hindutva extremists came and desecrated the Church in outskirts of Hyderabad, by destroying everything inside the Church including the Cross. It was inaugurated on 13th May 2017. The crowd was objecting to the property being used as a Church whereas it was sanctioned for a multi-purpose hall. An FIR has been filed No. FIR No. 169/2017 by Christians at Keesara Police Station.
  16. On May 16, 2017, some anti-social elements forcefully occupied a church building at Tarn-Taran in Amritsar, Punjab. They took away some belongings of the church and some they destroyed. Also, they tore up the Bibles. This church is being pastored by Sokha Masih. An FIR has been filed FIR No. 95 by Christians at City Tarn - Tarnan Police Stations.
  17. On 17th May, Christians from villages Devgaon, Kiskodo, and Bandapal, were brutally beaten by Hindutva extremists while they were gathered for a wedding ceremony in Kanker district, Chhattisgarh. The troublemakers barged in and accused the Christians of carrying out religious conversions. They physically assaulted the men and women and damaged their belongings. It is reported that some of the Christians were brutally beaten up. Also, the Christians have been prohibited to take drinking water from the village. The victims were admitted to the Narayanpur Health Centre. On 18th May, the Christians filed a complaint against the attackers at the Narayanpur Police Station. An FIR has been filed No. 08/2017 at Narayanpur Police Station.
  18. On June 7, 2017, at 11am pastor Baidyanath Kumar from Simariya village of Begusarai, Bihar, was conducting weekly prayer for the church members. In this prayer, there were 50-60 church members. About 25 persons barged into the room and attacked them, with a Revolver and iron rods, etc. In this attack Pastor received 15 stiches on his head, 3 near his nose, both legs were fractured. Likewise, most of their family members were severely injured and were threatened with their life. In this attack Pastor's wife, father, two brothers and sister-in-law also received injuries and were admitted in the hospital along with other injured people. An FIR has been filed no. FIR No. 201/17 by Christians at Baroni Police Station.
  19. On 16th of June 2017, Pastor Sakharam Pawra and his Son, Anil Sakharam Pawra aged 19, were beaten up by anti-social elements on account of their Christian faith. This happened early morning. Pastor and his son were so severally beaten up that his son

- fell unconscious. When Christians tried to take him to the hospital, they were obstructed by attackers saying that we won't let him go anywhere rather will ensure that he dies here. At this, Christians reacted aggressively and then only they could take Pastor's son to the Civil hospital of Jalgaon district in Maharashtra. Later, attackers went to the police station and filed a complaint against Christians stating they were abusing Hindu gods. Subsequently, in the evening, Pastor also went to the police station filed an FIR sharing the entire details. So far, no arrests have been made. FIRs have been filed by both the sides against each other at Yawal Police Station. FIR No. 483/17 filed by Christians.
20. On June 23, 2017 at village Arra, village sarpanch and other villagers beat up evangelist Sadhuram and his wife Ratay, in District Kanker CG. Villagers threw out their household things and forced Christians to forsake their faith and leave the village, failing which they will have them killed. An FIR has been filed at PS Amabeda by Christians. (No. 10/17) at Amabeda Police station.
21. A Christian woman and a mother of two , aged 26, was brutally raped and beaten up to the point that she nearly died on account of her Christian faith on July 04, 2017. She was abducted and taken to a secluded place by two persons of the same village. She was forcibly made to drink alcohol, beaten up and raped many times over from afternoon to evening by the two. Next day, the woman went to Laksar police station to make a complaint, she was made to wait since morning to evening but no complaint was registered. Then, Police took her to the village council where she was pressurized to resolve the issue through a compromise. Only after the intervention of local Christian leaders a criminal complaint was finally registered. A copy of the FIR has not been received by her . However, the accused have been arrested and legal proceedings are ongoing.
22. On July 19, 2017, Pastor M.E. Jebaraj S/o Mr. Munyandi and his son Daniel Raj who is also a pastor of Advent Christian Church and Pastor Jebaraj's wife Mrs. Prema Elizabeth were brutally attacked in Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu. The accused are K. Hariharan and four other persons came to the pastor's house and verbally assaulted the Christians because of their faith. When the pastor tried to pacify them, they were attacked with sticks on the head and face. When the pastor's son and wife came to rescue them, they were also physically assaulted and threatened. The Christians were subsequently admitted at the local government hospital. Following the incident, when a complaint was made at Sirkazhi police station and on 20.07.2017 FIR No. 332 was registered following repeated interventions from local Christian groups.
- POLICE INACTION**
23. On Jan 08, 2017, after the worship service was completed an unidentified person came near the outer premises of Eternal Life Worship Hall at Saroor Nagar Mandal, Hyderabad, Telangana and tore off the placed flex boards which had church's name on it, kept at the entrance as a sign for giving directions so that people can locate the church in that area. The person made threatening comments to the Christian children who were outside at the time. The person warned that there should not be any church and it needs to be closed otherwise there will be dire consequences. Immediately after that, he left the place. Members of the congregation made regular complaints to the Saroor Nagar police station however no action was taken.
24. On Jan 29, 2017, two Christians, Amalsay Markam and Sukhlal Markam, were assaulted at Bakenga in Kondagaon, CG. They were paraded in the whole village making forcibly hold the saffron flag,



- worship village gods, made to eat prasad and were put through shuddikaran (process of Gharwapsi) with water sprinkling. There were around 60-70 members of RSS and Bajrangdal led by Mesuram, Roopsing, Suresh, Budduram and Saggiram. They have warned to persecuted Christians to renounce their faith in Christianity by next Sunday (5.01.2017) otherwise there would be dire consequences. On several occasions, the Christians approached the local police station and also, they had given a written complaint but it was not accepted. Hence no action was taken by local police.
25. On 12-03-2017 while worship was going on at the Deeper Life Bible church from Sahtah Village of Hazipur- Vaishali district of Bihar, at around 10:30 near about 60-70 Hindutva extremists came inside of the house and started taking video of the people and threatened people for not to come next time for the worship and while going back they took sound system along with them. Couple of days later, again Hindutva extremists came in the village and started to beat Christian families. Many attempts were made by the Pastor and Christians to seek local police's help but they did not respond at all. Later when Christian leader got together to meet SP and DM. Though SP asked directed local police station to look into the matter and take the complaint however despite filing the FIR, there were more incidents of violence which continued against Christians and local police did not provide any help. Hence, Church services had to be stopped and some of Christian families along with pastor had to move out of the village.
26. Two missionaries, Ajay and Assyria, were distributing bible tracts got beaten up by 20 Hindutva fundamentalists at Har Har Mahadev chowk in Begusarai, Bihar. They were falsely alleged of carrying out religious conversion work through allurements and were taken to local police station. A case was filed against them with the same accusation. When the missionaries tried to clarify that they were just distributing bible tracts police would not listen to them rather was under the pressure of Hindutva fundamentalists, booked them on the false allegation.
27. On 29th March, 2017, four Christians, out of which two were pastors, namely Mahesh and Michael were forcibly taken to Shamshabad police station in Agra, UP. Christians had visited a village for a prayer meeting. On the way back, they were stopped by the Hindutva extremists, who were more than hundred in number. Christians were physically assaulted and verbally abused with false allegation that they are carrying out religious conversion work. Local police were under tremendous pressure of Hindutva fundamentalists and would not listen to Christians. Hence, an FIR was filed against Christians.
28. On April 3, 2017, in Burhanpur, MP, Christians were threatened and physically assaulted because their Christian faith. And, they were warned by Hindutva extremists if they forsake Christian faith then they will be ostracized from the village Mandwa. The Christians approached local police station and tried to give a complaint in writing but police took that three days and did not turn that into an FIR and no action was taken by police to protect Christians and to hold the culprits accountable.
29. On June 19, 2017, at 11:30 am, Christians had gathered for the Sunday worship service in the house of a fellow Christian, when unexpectedly close to 80-90 villagers incited by Hindutva extremists, including women, barged into the house and disrupted the prayer meeting in Abasing village, Rayagarh Block, Gajapati district, Odisha. All the Christians, men and women, were manhandled and were demanded that they can't run a church in the village if they continued there will be dire consequences. In the whole commotion one of the

Christians was injured and admitted in the hospital. The Christians approached the local police but police did not provide any help. Rather, police made an agreement in favour of villagers stating Christians outside of that village cannot enter and Christians were not at all involved while making the agreement.

#### **FALSE AND MALICIOUS CASES FILED AGAINST CHRISTIANS**

30. Two Christians including a Pastor were beaten up by Hindu extremists and the police and were arrested at Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh. Pastor Bahadur Singarh from village Mohodipadakalla, Thana Raipuriya and Kallu Sarkota from village Naharpura had participated in a prayer meeting at Ballu Garwaal's house in village Bodaeta. Following the meeting, around 3 pm, they both went their way. Singarh was on his motorbike when 10-12 people belonging to Seva Bharati stopped him and started to assault him. After hitting him, they asked him where Kallu was and forced him to take them in the direction that Kallu had left for. They met Kallu on the way and beat him too. "The attackers were carrying a Rosary and a Bible with them," said Bahadur. The extremists assaulted the duo before the villagers before taking them to the Raipuriya police station where they were beaten once again by the policemen. The attackers mobilized a mob that pressurized the police to detain them for the night. The next day (26 January) they were presented at the Petlawad court and were charged with under section 153A of the Indian Penal Code (Promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion). FIR No. 12/17 at Petalwaad Police Station on 25.01.2017.
31. Pastor Agheshwar Verma, 26, was arrested on 25 January 2017 in village Gorah, district Bemetara in Chhattisgarh on frivolous charges. Pastor Agheshwar was charged under the Chhattisgarh *Tonahi Pratadna Nivaran* Act, 2005. "He was arrested on-
- purpose just one day before the Republic Day, knowing well that it's a National holiday and Agheshwar will not be able to secure bail," said the sources, who was all the while pursuing the case with the lawyer. Agheshwar was sent to the Bemetara jail and was held for eight days until 1 February when he received bail. Agheshwar, who is disabled, leads worship service in his village where reportedly close to 10,000 people gather every week in two services on Thursdays and Sunday. FIR No. 19/2017 at Nandghat Police Station on 16.01.2017
32. On Feb 01, 2017, two Christians were attacked by 8 villagers and beaten up brutally at village Silati in the Kondagao, Chhattisgarh. At around 12:30 pm the attackers came and accused them of forceful conversion and defiling Hindu Gods. Subsequently, attackers submitted a written complaint at Dhanora Police Station of the same. Christians are the members of Eternal Joy Church, pastored by Sagram Salam. It is running in that area since last 2 years and there are about 45 members who participate in Sunday worship service. FIR No. 11/2017 at Dhanora Police Station on 2.02.2017
33. On March 29, 2017, four Christians, out of which two were pastors, namely Mahesh and Michael were forcibly taken to Shamshabad police station in Agra, UP. Christians had visited a village for a prayer meeting. On the way back, they were stopped by the Hindutva extremists, who were more than hundred in number. Christians were physically assaulted and verbally abused alleging that they carry out religious conversion work. A complaint was filed against Christians as the Hindutva extremists put pressure on the local police. FIR No. 77/2017 at Shamshabad Police station on 29.03.2017. Copy is still awaited.
34. On April 09, 2017, pas. Amar Singh Solanki of Indian Evangelical team was conducting a worship in one of the believers' house along with two invited Pastors - Pastor Kishor

- Barela and Pastor Prabhakar Solanki in Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh. When the worship was going on at 12:30 pm members of Hindutva activist came along with local police to the believers' house and they stopped the worship and arrested three pastors and few Other Christians also and took them to the Piplod police station. FIR No. 98/2017 at Piplod Police station on 09/04/2017.
35. United Christian Church Graveyard Committee, Jagdalpur manages a Christian Graveyard at Karkapal, Thakur Anukuldeo Ward, Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh. This graveyard is in the possession of the Christian community for last 108 years. Mansingh Parmar had a plot and house adjacent to the cemetery. He objected construction of the boundary wall and demolished a part of it. When office bearers of the cemetery committee objected, he made an agreement with them and paid Rs. 50,000/- towards compensation. He later submitted a letter to the TI, Bodhghat Police Station wherein he stated that a passage to his plot, adjacent to the Christian cemetery, Hatkachora was blocked due to construction of the boundary wall. When he protested he was threatened by a group of 50-60 Christians and Rs.5 lacs were demanded. Sarv Hindu Samaj, Jagdalpur also made a complaint to the local administration and Jagdalpur Municipal Corporation, stating that the Christians have constructed a boundary wall in an adjoining encroached area of the cemetery and have thus blocked a road. FIR No. 05/2017 at Bodhghat Police station on 07.04.2017
36. Allem Deva Sahayam, a pastor, has conducted regular Prayer meetings in Thirupati in a certain place every year with due permissions from the Local authorities. This year also they seem to have obtained permission from the Local authorities and the Police, also paid Rs. 40,000/- Challan to the Municipal authorities for a prayer meeting to be held between 19th April-2017
- to 22nd April-2017. Elaborate arrangements were made for this prayer meeting that includes large promotions. Members of the Shiv Sena group have threatened the local Police anticipating communal violence and falsely filled a complaint against Mallem and others to the Local SP Smt. Jayalakshmi, who immediately took the action and booked the Pastor and others under IPC Sec-153A and Sec-294 with CrPc/131/2017 thus obtaining a Non-bailable Warrant against the Pastor. The local Police ensured that the Prayer meeting was cancelled. The Shiv Sena group seem to have taken the extracts of a Video of Mallem from the Youtube, in which he seems to be condemning the attack on one of the Christian evangelist's Dr Swamy who was attacked by the VHP in Hyderabad few months back. Claiming that Bro. Mallem was creating hatred amongst the people of Thirupati. FIR no. 131/2017, filed on 17.04.2017 at Titupati East.
37. On April 15, 2017, a false complaint was made by the Village Administrative Officer number 11 of Alagu Samuthiram village against Christians on account of their Christians faith. It was alleged that Christians had entered restricted area by violating the order, carried out an agitation and spoke vulgar words against Sub-collector and Tehsildar, whereas Christians had gathered for their religious program being carried peacefully. It was a Good Friday services when Christians disturbed by Hindutva extremists and Tehsildar. They could not complete the communion service. Altar and holy communion were pulled, priests and men, women, nuns and children aggressively pushed away. FIR No. 217 at Chengalpattu Police Station on 15.04.2017.
38. On May 10, 2017, Pastor Balalakhandar and other Christians were arrested for organizing a Christian prayer meeting as a healing crusade in Mau district. About couple of days back before the program was supposed to start, Christians had approached local police seeking protection but were denied. When

- the program started on its scheduled day Christians and Hindutva extremists raised objection to prayer and called police from Thana Dakshintola Christians were accused that they do not have permission to conduct the and Christians prayer will cause law and order problem. FIR No.- 0187 at Dakshintola Police station on 10.05.2017.
39. On May 21, 2017, eight Christians were arrested, including two women, on false allegations of forceful religious conversion of 60 children. Incidents took place in Ratlam District, MP. Children gave their statements stating that they were going to a Vacation Bible School in Nagur, Maharashtra with their parents' consent and children themselves are Christians. The eight Christians have been arrested by GRP police.
- Similarly, On May 21, 2017, two Christians were arrested on false allegations of forceful religious conversion of 11 children. Incidents took place in Indore District at MP. Children have given their statements stating that they were going to a Vacation Bible School in Nagur, Maharashtra with their parents' consent and children themselves are Christians. Children had to spend till midnight in police custody. FIR No.- 0074 at Police Gwaltoli (Indore) on 22.05.2017 & FIR No. 0091 at Ratlam Police Station on May 23, 2017.
40. On May 24, 2017, Pastor Prabhu was conducting a prayer meeting at his residence in Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu. While conducting evening prayer some of the neighbours filed a false complaint of using obscene words and causing disruption in the peaceful environment at local Police station. Upon receiving the complaint, police came to Pastor Prabhu's Place and took him to the police station. FIR No. 102 at Kariyapattinam Police Station on 24.05.2017
41. On June 02, 2017, a pastor by the name of Akhilesh Panika, who is active in a church of district Dindori of MP, has been arrested for hurting the religious sentiments and was produced in CJM court on 02/06/2017. Also, it was falsely alleged that he was forcing a person to convert his religion as well as allured him with better facilities for living. FIR No. 335/17 at Dindori on 02.06.2017.
42. On 15th Sep 2017, Six Christians were invited for praying over the wife, who was ill taken, of a non-Christian. While prayer was happening locals, the anti-Christian elements, gathered from the surrounding area and subsequently, barged into the house accusing Christians of carrying out religious conversion work. All the Christians were beaten up. Later, police were called from Thethaitangar Station. A case has been filed against Christians with 153(1), 295(A) etc. Christians are from the different villages of Simdega, Jharkhand and other local Christians had taken out a procession in protest of arrest. A bail application was moved in the sessions court and Christians were granted bail on October 16, 2017. FIR against Christians - FIR No. 46/17 at GRT Tanar Police Station on Sep 15, 2017.
43. Pastor Juny runs a small hostel in their home with 4 children who are poor. One of them went missing on 10 Nov 2017, a 12-year-old girl in Damo, near Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. Later, the girl was found, and she said the reason for going missing was that she was afraid. Then her parents came, and the girl confirmed that there was no abuse or anything of that kind. Some local politicians are influencing the police and making it to be an issue. Unfortunately, coming under media pressure, the police filed an FIR against the Pastor on charges of molestation. A lawyer by the name of Babu is handling their case and applying for his bail. Pastor Juny was told that he is charged under the POCSO Act. Christians are in the process of moving for bail application. Hearing is likely to come up on 05 Dec 2017. FIR against Christians - FIR No. 0634 at Damoh Dehat Police station on 19 Nov 2017.