

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



Report by:
Evangelical Fellowship of India
805/ 92 Deepali Building Nehru Place
New Delhi—110019 INDIA

Email: mail@efionline.org

“.....The minorities are as much children of the soil as the majority and the approach has been to ensure that nothing should be done, as might deprive the minorities of a sense of belonging, of a feeling of security, of a consciousness of equality and of the awareness that the conservation of their religion, culture, language and script as also the protection of their educational institutions is a fundamental right enshrined in the Constitution.

... It can, indeed, be said to be an index of the level of civilization and catholicity of a nation as to how far their minorities feel secure and are not subject to any discrimination or suppression.”

- Supreme Court of India, in a judgment condemning repeated incidents of communal violence targeting minority communities, August 2016.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Sincere acknowledgements and appreciation to the individuals and organizations who have contributed to this report: To the leadership and the team of **Evangelical Fellowship of India**.

We would also like to thank the local activists and organizations who facilitated our desk and field research. In particular, we thank Dr. John Dayal, Fr. Ajay Singh, Rev. Sam Francis, Dr. Mrs. Indira Iyengar, Dr. Amiya Jal, Rev. Patsy David, Mr. Jitendra Rathor, Mrs. Surinder Kaur, Mrs. Sonia Daniel, Mr. Deepak Narula, Jagdish Sahu, Amit Manwatkar, Global Council of Indian Christians (GCIC), Chhattisgarh Christian Forum (CCF), Christian Legal Association (CLA) and the United Christian Forum (UCF).

CONTENTS

4 STATISTICS

8 DATA ANALYSIS

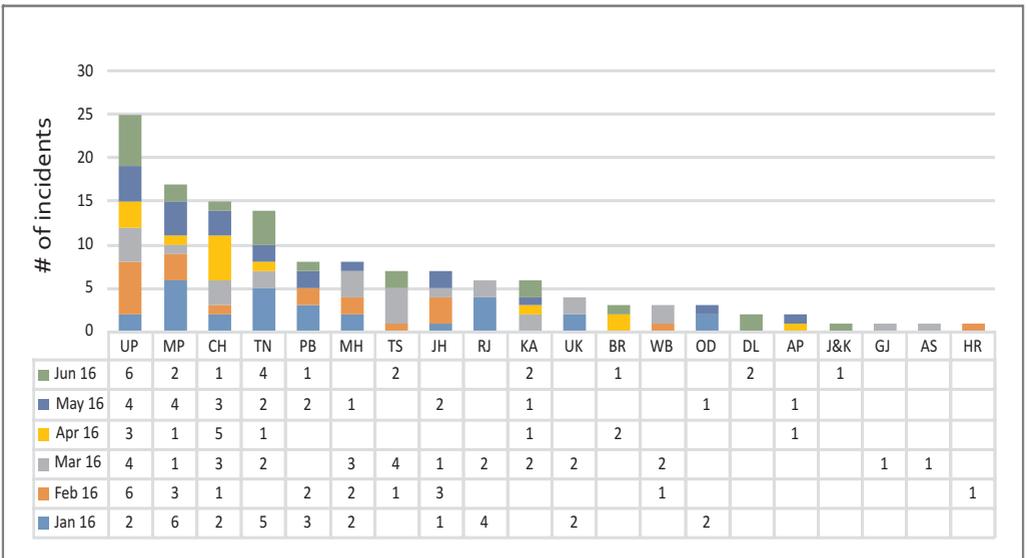
13 DETAILS OF INCIDENTS



STATISTICS 2016

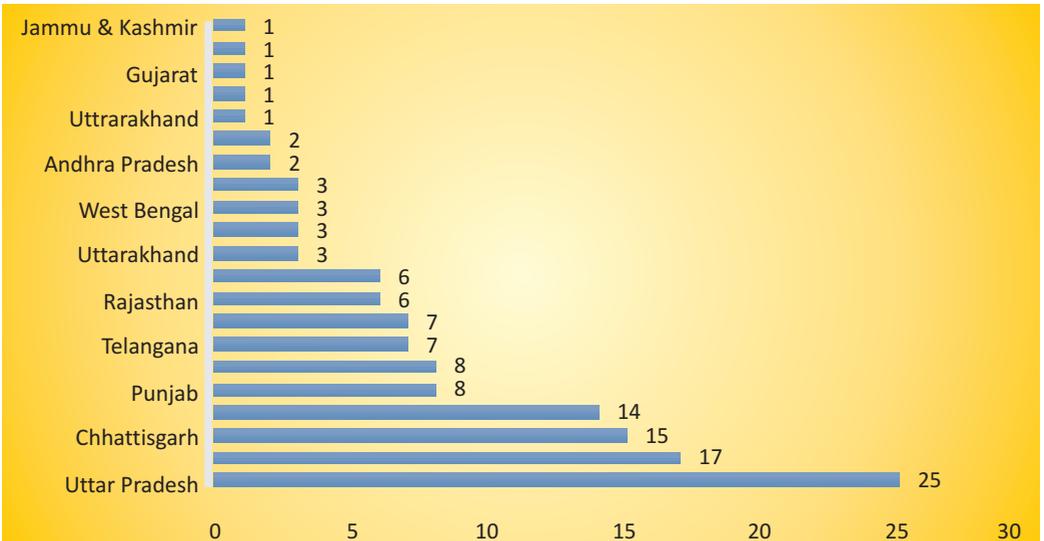
MONTHLY DISTRIBUTION OF INCIDENTS ACROSS DIFFERENT STATES

| Months | UP | MP | CH | TN | PB | MH | TS | JH | RJ | KA | UK | BR | WB | OD | DL | AP | J&K | GJ | AS | HR | Total | |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|
| Jan 16 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 2 | | 1 | 4 | | 2 | | | 2 | | | | | | | | 29 |
| Feb 16 | 6 | 3 | 1 | | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | 20 |
| Mar 16 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | | 2 | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 28 |
| Apr 16 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | 2 | | | | 1 | | | | | | 14 |
| May 16 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | 2 | | 1 | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | 21 |
| Jun 16 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | | 2 | | | 2 | | 1 | | | 2 | | 1 | | | | | 22 |
| Grand Total | 25 | 17 | 15 | 14 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 134 |



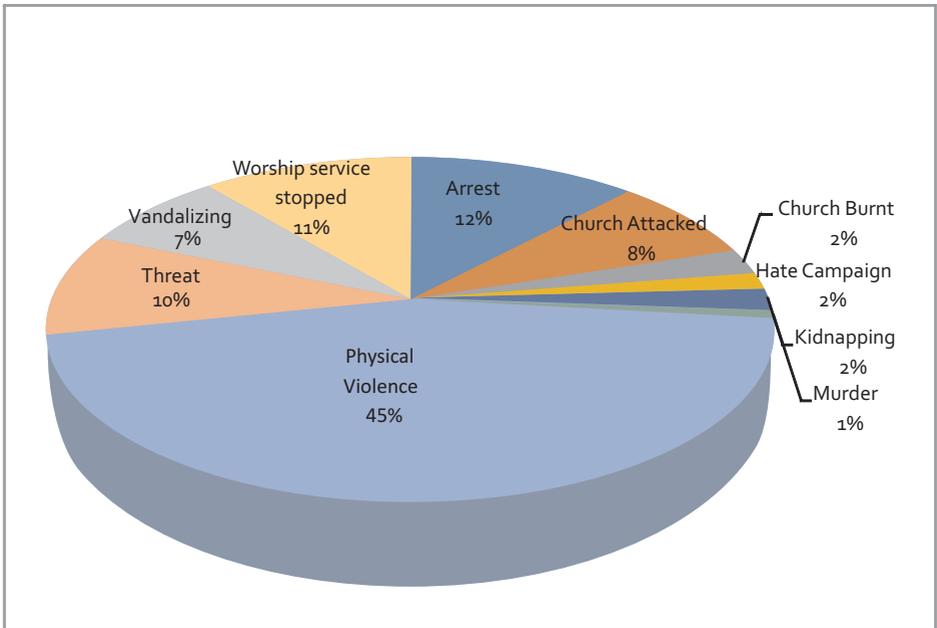
STATE-WISE LIST OF INCIDENTS

| STATE | # Of Incidents |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Uttar Pradesh | 25 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 17 |
| Chhattisgarh | 15 |
| Tamil Nadu | 14 |
| Punjab | 8 |
| Maharashtra | 8 |
| Telangana | 7 |
| Jharkhand | 7 |
| Rajasthan | 6 |
| Karnataka | 6 |
| Uttarakhand | 3 |
| Odisha | 3 |
| West Bengal | 3 |
| Bihar | 3 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 2 |
| Delhi | 2 |
| Uttrarakhand | 1 |
| Haryana | 1 |
| Gujarat | 1 |
| Assam | 1 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 1 |
| Grand Total | 134 |



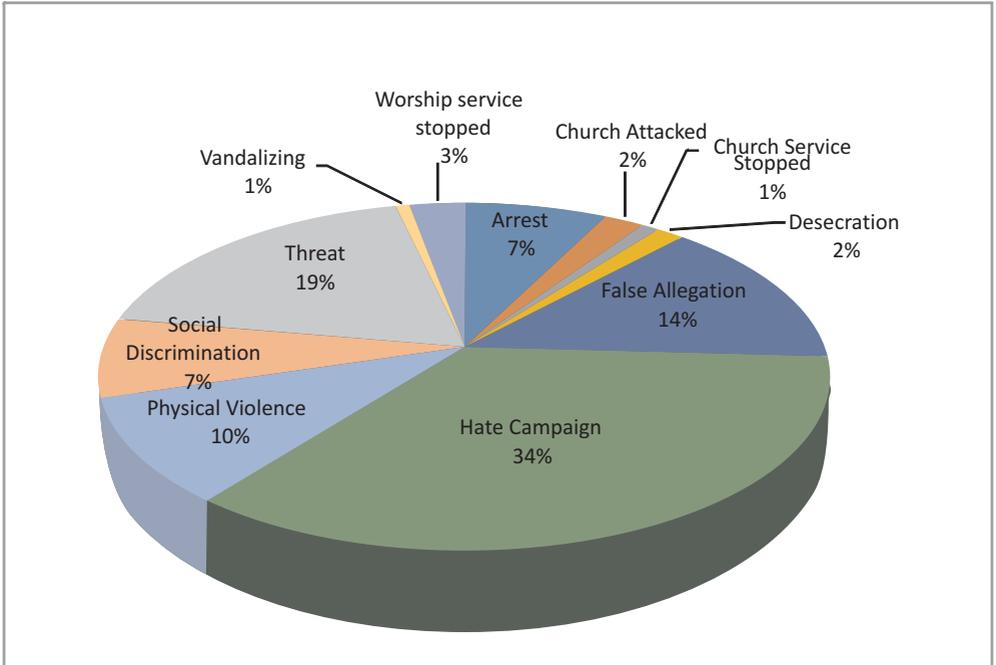
TYPES OF VIOLENCE

| Type | # of incidents |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| Arrest | 16 |
| Church Attacked | 11 |
| Church Burnt | 3 |
| Hate Campaign | 2 |
| Kidnapping | 3 |
| Murder | 1 |
| Physical Violence | 60 |
| Threat | 13 |
| Vandalizing | 10 |
| Worship service stopped | 15 |
| Grand Total | 134 |



TYPES OF VIOLENCE

| Type | # of incidents |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| Arrest | 10 |
| Church Attacked | 3 |
| Church Service Stopped | 1 |
| Desecration | 2 |
| False Allegation | 19 |
| Hate Campaign | 46 |
| Physical Violence | 13 |
| Social Discrimination | 10 |
| Threat | 25 |
| Vandalizing | 1 |
| Worship service stopped | 4 |
| Total | 134 |



DATA ANALYSIS

Alarming Government Impunity Underpins Continuing Persecution Of Christians In 2016 By Non-State Actors

An ominous and all-permeating impunity and occasional complicity of the administrative and police personnel mark the spurt in violence against Christians in the states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, which top the list of hate crimes against Christian in India in the first half of 2016, the second year of the government of Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi.

A review of the incidents recorded by the Evangelical Fellowship of India's Religious Liberty Commission [EFIRLC] from New Year Day 2016 to 30th June, and confirmed in independent fact-finding surveys by important civil society groups, source this violence, coercion and statements intimidating Christians to village and town units of the Bajrang Dal, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram and several newly formed groups affiliated to the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh. The political wing of the RSS, the Bharatiya Janata party, is now in power in the Union government in New Delhi and in most major states.

According to the data available, and it needs be made clear that this is carefully corroborated and authentic data and may be just a fraction of the violence on the ground, There were 134 separate incidents of violence in the first six months of 2016 across in 21 of the 29 States and seven Union Territories of the country. March was the most violent month, and vandalizing and burning of churches and prayer halls and forcibly preventing worship were the most rampant crime against the community. Inevitably, the church members were assaulted, brutalised, and the women molested. One person was murdered.

While Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh have a history of anti Christian policies and violent non-state agencies targetting the community, there has been a startling rise in such targetted violence in Uttar Pradesh, which faces elections early in 2017, and in the southern State of Tamil Nadu, governed by Mr. Modi's ally, the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam with Miss Jayaram Jayalalithaa as the Chief Minister. It needs be recalled that the undivided Madhya Pradesh, of which Chhattisgarh was then part, was among the first ones to enact laws proscribing and criminalising evangelisation and conversions, Miss Jayalalithaa enacted a similar law, but later withdrew it in the face of a strong protest from the Christian community which had a political sway in some districts.

In June 2016, the All India People's Forum, AIPF, a major civil society group, sent a team to Chhattisgarh and specially to the region of Bastar. In its report, the AIPF team quoted testimonies of several Christians in the Bastar district that spoke of systematic attempts to persecute Christian minorities; foment communal division and violence in Adivasi villages; bend pro-Adivasi laws to communal ends; and allow Hindutva groups to dictate to the police and administration.

AIPF's investigators, who included academics and other experts, found several villages in Bastar district – including Karmari, Bade Thegli, Sirisguda and Belar – resolutions adopted under Section 129 (c) of Chhattisgarh Gram Panchayat Act have been wrongly invoked in violation of the spirit of the law to restrict non-Hindus from residing in the village, practicing and propagating their religion, or building places of worship, even though the Bilaspur High Court has quashed such gram sabha [village council] resolutions in the case of both Karmari and Sirisguda.

Section 129 (c) of the Chhattisgarh Gram Panchayat Act, in keeping with the model of self-governance mandated by the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 (PESA), says, "The Gram Sabha shall have the power to safeguard and preserve the traditions and customs of the people, their cultural identity and community resources and customary mode of dispute resolution." Instigated by the Bajrang Dal and VHP, this provision is being used to equate Adivasi customs and culture with the Hindu religion and prohibit non-Hindu practices. Section 55 of the same Act has provisions to prevent land alienation in Scheduled Areas, stipulating that prior permission of the panchayat is needed to build new houses, change the design of houses and so on. This too is being misused to withhold permission for construction of churches, community bhawans and so on."

The Bilaspur High Court on 16th October 2015 had struck down such interpretations, ordering that "the impugned resolution shall not come in (sic) exercise of fundamental right to preach and propagate of (sic) religion and their faith" (W.P.(C.)No.1759 of 2014 CG Christian Forum and others Vs. State of CG and others).

AIPF said "It is evident from the testimonies that the role of the police and administration is extremely lax. On some occasions the police have openly sided with the Bajrang Dal, refusing to protect the Christians. On one occasion the police and administration even failed to turn up having convened a gathering of Hindus and Christians, and possibly informed the Bajrang Dal that they would not turn up, thus setting the scene for organized mob violence against the Christians. On the occasions where the district administration and police have intervened, it has not been to enforce the rule of law and uphold the Constitution and arrest the Bajrang Dal mischief-makers; rather the ineffectual mode of

'dispute resolution' has been adopted. "

EFIRLC's own field workers, and those responding to a National Helpline co-founded by the EFIRLC have given chilling narratives of attacks, molestations and arson from many regions.

A few illustrative cases are given here:

Pastor, pregnant wife and children assaulted. Scriptures burnt at Bastar, Chhattisgarh: Religious fanatics attacked a church and tried to set a pastor and his pregnant wife on fire after thrashing them at remote Tokapal in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region. The pastor and his wife managed to escape after they were beaten up and doused with petrol. The attackers destroyed the electronic equipment at the church besides thrashing the pastor's children and setting ablaze scriptures and furniture. The FIR stated the assailants were well-armed and even tried to burn the pastor's house.

Pastor and wife grievously injured in attack: Pastor Simon Tandy and his wife were attacked by Hindu extremists in what was made to look like an accident on February 5, 2016 near Kanker, Chhattisgarh. The incident took place almost a week after Pastor Simon and his wife were threatened of dire consequences by Hindu extremists as they disrupted the worship service in the Church that is pastored by Pastor Tandy on January 31, 2016. The police intervened and made sure that Pastor Tandy was unharmed. The attackers however left after issuing a warning. On the day of the second incident Pastor Tandy was on the way to Kanker with his wife when his two-wheeler was allegedly rammed into by the Hindu extremists who fled the spot. At the moment Pastor Tandy was admitted in Raipur since it was not possible to treat him at Kanker given the basic facilities there. He continues to be critical. His house meanwhile is being visited by Hindu extremists who are threatening his wife not to take any legal action.

Madhya Pradesh: 13 people, including six women, from Dehar village in Dhar district were arrested during a prayer meeting on alleged charges of conversion levelled by local Hindu groups. Among those arrested were a blind couple and their 3-year-old minor son. The Christians were kept under arrest at the Kukshi Police Station and were charged under sections 151, 153 A of the Indian Penal Code and under the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act. 7 people including the blind couple and their son were bailed out on January 16th, while the others were bailed out on January 20th.

Christian believer threatened to renounce his faith in Christianity in Gondia, Maharashtra: Rajesh Kure, a Christian, from Gondia city of Maharashtra was threatened by Hindu extremists who also initiated a social boycott against him in order to convert him into Hinduism. Mr. Kurre who has faced regular threats from Hindu extremists is fearing

for his life after being threatened that he would be killed if he did not convert to Hinduism. He was also verbally abused and manhandled. No FIR has been registered.

Pastor viciously attacked and grievously injured during the church service in Theni, Tamil Nadu: A Pastor from Kambam, Theni District, and Tamil Nadu was attacked and injured by a Hindutva activist. The pastor a Pentecostal Church in Kambam was attacked while he was carrying out the Church worship service. He was wounded grievously in the head, and was admitted at the government hospital for emergency treatment.

Pastor abused, humiliated, paraded in Orai, Uttar Pradesh: Hindu extremists kidnapped, beat up, and humiliated Pastor Avdhesh Savita in Orai town, Jalaun district, Uttar Pradesh. Pastor Savita was kidnapped by members of Yuvavahini (a Hindu extremist outfit) posing as policemen. He was taken to Bajrang Dal head office in Orai town from his native village of Rendhar. He was beaten up on the way there and once he reached the Bajrang Dal office, the combined members of Bajrang Dal and Yuvavahini beat him up even more. They then proceeded to shave half of his head, his eyebrow, half of his moustache, put him on a donkey and paraded him for more than half an hour before the police intervened. Charges of forced conversion levelled against Pastor. The police finally registered an FIR against unknown Bajrang Dal members. The district convener of the Bajrang Dal is absconding.

Christians attacked in Odisha: On January 19, 2016 Christians in Digal village in Mottu village, Podia block, Malkangiri district in Orissa were beaten up in the presence of the police by local Hindu radicals. They were going towards the police station, where they had been summoned, when they were ambushed and beaten up by local radicals insisting that people who worship Jesus Christ should not live in the village. The mob was led by the village head. The police did not help them.

Women's meeting stopped in Anuppur, Madhya Pradesh: A women's prayer meeting organized at Anuppur, Madhya Pradesh was disrupted by RSS members who barged into the private meeting, misbehaved with the women participants and used abusive language. The police when they finally came arrested 4 women who were leading the meeting and took them to the Venkat Nagar police station. The police however warned the women not to pray together but in their own homes.

Christians Missionaries severely beaten and arrested in Churu, Rajasthan: 11 Christians including 3 women were beaten up and later handed over to the police in Sardarshahr, Churu, Rajasthan. The incident took place when a visiting team comprising of 9 Christians from North east India (including 3 women) and two Christians from Punjab were invited to pray for a sick girl in ward number 13, Sardarshahr. As soon as local Hindu extremists got to

know about this, they gathered a mob of more than 400 people, ambushed the house, beat up the Christians and handed them over to the local police.

Construction of Church building stopped in Kaithal, Haryana: In Rajound village of Kaithal in Haryana, Hindu extremists have stopped construction of a Church building by putting pressure through local officers. The Church construction was taking place in Pastor Sharad Kumar's personal land. Kumar works with Friends Missionary Prayer Band (FMPB).

Makeshift church hall set on fire in Telangana: A makeshift prayer hall of the Christian community was set on fire by unknown people in Telangana's Gopanpally village of Nizamabad District. A FIR against unknown people has been registered in the case but no arrest has been made in this regard as yet. "The village Panchayat had objected to the construction of the prayer hall, following which unknown people burnt down the hall late at night on Friday"

ANDHRA PRADESH

On 24 April, in Cuddhaphah, unknown assailants attacked Monsignor Gallela Prasad, bishop of the diocese of Cuddapah, as he was returning from Karunagari (in Kadapa district), after celebrating the Mass. Monsignor Prasad was attacked while he was in his car, returning from Kadapa, about 425 km south of Hyderabad (the capital of Telangana). Unknown persons stopped the car, blindfolded the religious and his driver and then locked them in an unfamiliar place. Here they were beaten for hours throughout the night.

On 18 May, in Bolarum, Hyderabad, some 1200 Christians were rendered Churchless after the Army blocked roads leading to the Holy Trinity Church. The Church which is well over a century old, was built at the initiative of Queen Victoria and lies in the Army Cantonment area of Bolarum. The parish members have approached the Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar to resolve the issue.

Assam

On 21 March, in Digboi, Tinsukia, Hindu extremists severely beat up Pastor Absalom Nanda. Pastor Nanda was requested by a few people to pray for a girl who was unwell, however this was a trap and the very people who called him to pray for the girl, accused the Pastor of rape charges, soon after he went with them to pray. They stirred up a mob, which beat the Pastor up and injured him. He was admitted in Tinsukia Civil Hospital and was later arrested.

Bihar

On 5 April, in Patna, Bihar, 12 RSS members beat up a pastor for distributing Bible tracts

at Barh. On April 5, assailants surrounded Pastor Deepak Kumar and pressured him to abuse the name of Jesus Christ. When he refused to comply, they took hold of him and began to beat him severely. He was beaten with rods, sickle, slippers and belt for a period extending to 4 to 5 hours. When the pastor started to bleed profusely to the extent that his clothes were soaked in his blood only then the attackers stopped. An FIR has been filed.



On 10 April, in Nabinagar, Aurangabad, 15 Hindu extremists disturbed a Christian convention and beat the Christians present. The incident took place on the third day of the Christian convention. The attackers not only beat the Christians and the pastors present but also abused them with filthy language and threatened them with grave consequences if the Church in the area was not shut down.

On 5 June, in Kas Mahal Road, Patna, around 25 members of the ABVP (Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad), the right wing student wing of the RSS, stormed a Sunday worship service. The attackers beat up the Christians present including women and children, as a result many Christians suffered grievous injuries and had to be hospitalized later. The lady Pastor Meera Rani was also beaten up by the mob and suffered fracture and a cut under her ear. Her condition was reportedly quite serious. The police arrested one attacker but the ABVP members continue to threaten the Church.

CHHATTISGARH

On 1 January, in Lakhanpur, Sarguja, Pastor Johan Kujur was arrested after local Hindu extremists accused him of carrying conversions in the village. The Hindu extremists not only manhandled the pastor but also pressurized the police to take action against him. The local leaders of the Hindu extremists also rallied in front of the Police station to not to release the pastor.

On 14 January, in Bamhani, Mahasamund, local police arrested Lalaram Sahu, a Christian, while he was distributing Christian tracts after having received complaint

against him from local Hindu groups. He was later produced before a magistrate in the local court and was charged under Section 295(A) of the Indian Penal Code. The Police confiscated 580 tracts from him as evidence against him.

On 5 February, in Kanker, Hindu extremists attacked Pastor Simon Tandy and his wife in an incident, which was made to look like an accident. The attack took place almost a week after Pastor Simon and his wife were threatened of dire consequences by Hindu extremists as they disrupted the worship service in the Church that is pastored by Pastor Tandy on January 31, 2016. The police intervened and made sure that Pastor Tandy was unharmed. The attackers however left after issuing a warning. On the day of the second incident, Pastor Tandy was on the way to Kanker with his wife, when Hindu extremists allegedly rammed into his two-wheeler, injuring him and fled the spot. Even as Pastor Tandy was in the hospital, he and his family were threatened by local Hindutva leaders not to register a case.

On 4 March, in Dhawalpur, Gariyabandh, a mob of around 40 people belonging to the RSS attacked 3 evangelists, Satish Kumar Gideon, Nehru Lal and Subhas Lal. The Evangelists from the India Field Council of Baptist Mid Mission were attacked on alleged charges of conversion. After beating the 3 Evangelists, the attackers took them to the Mainpur Police station where they filed a complaint against them. The Police officials detained the evangelists till late night and then let them go ordering them to come again on next morning for questioning. The next day, after warning the evangelists, to not to visit the area the police released them.

On 6 March, in Kachna, Raipur, Christians

were beaten up and a prayer service disrupted by around 25 people belonging to Bajrang Dal. The attackers trespassed into the Church around noon, as Sunday worship service was going on at the Kachna Church, and started to beat up the people inside. The attackers also vandalized the church premises and raised anti-Christian slogans. Even the women and children among the congregation of around 65 persons were not spared and it was reported that the attackers even attempted to tear off their clothes. The Police have registered a First Information Report against unknown men and three motorbikes belonging to the attackers have been seized from the church premises on which the attackers had come.



On 17 March, in Dhamtari, Around 45 people belonging to the Dharam Sena beat up Pastor Raju Sahu even as he was returning home after a prayer meeting. The attackers then called the Bhakara Police station near Dhamtari and handed the Pastor over to the police demanding that he be charged with forcibly converting villagers to Christianity.

On 3 April, in Kawardha, Hindu fundamentalists mobbed and threatened a Pastor asking him to discontinue the Sunday worship services in the area. The Hindutva activists arrived at the Church soon after the Sunday morning worship service and also accused the Pastor of carrying out forcible religious conversions. The next day the Pastor made a complaint at the Kukdur police station.

On 17 April, in Tokapal, Bastar, Religious fanatics attacked a church and tried to set a pastor and his pregnant wife on fire, after thrashing them. The pastor and his wife managed to escape after they were beaten up and doused with petrol. The attackers destroyed the electronic equipment at the church besides beating the pastor's children and setting ablaze scriptures and furniture. The FIR stated the assailants were well-armed and even tried to burn the pastor's house.

On 20 April, in Sukma, Dantewada, Jaisingh, a 55-year-old Christian, was beaten up and tortured by 4 people for embracing the Christian faith. Jaisingh, who had embraced Christianity 2 years ago, was stopped near Murthoda on Dantewada road, by the Sarpanch (Village Head) Pardeshiram, along with 3 others - Ram, Dinesh and Sonu. They applied/pressed burning coins on his back first and later on his tongue. They

wanted him to abandon his faith and when he refused to do so, he was subjected to this ordeal and was also forced to pay Rs. 5051 as penalty.

On 24 April in Katholi village, Kanker district, Christians were attacked and beaten up after they refused to renounce Christianity and accept Hinduism. The attack injured several women and children as well and the 37 Christians (seven families) had to flee from their homes in order to save their lives. The Christians had to travel through the night in injured condition to reach Bhanupratappur, 52 kilometers from their village. Six of the Christians including a three-year-old girl, who had been hurt badly as a result of the attack, were given first aid at Bhanupratappur. An FIR was filed at the Korar police station.

On 29 April in Katholi village, Kanker District, Christians who had earlier fled from their homes on 24 April were forced to flee again as Hindu extremists targeted them, angry that the Christians had filed an FIR. The police had brought the Christians back to their homes under protection, on 28 April. But the Christians had to run for their lives as Hindu extremists attacked them yet again.

On 11 May, in Dhamtari, Umesh Patel, a young Christian was arrested for distributing tracts. According to local Christian leaders, Umesh was targeted by Shree Ram Sena, a violent Hindu extremist group, after they sighted him distributing tracts. They beat him up mercilessly and took him to the police station where the police, under pressure from Shri Ram Sena members, charged Umesh under the section 295 A of the Indian Penal Code. When Christians approached the police station to file a complaint in the matter, they reportedly saw the local police

inspector sitting and having snacks with Shri Ram Sena members, the same group which had beaten Umesh Patel and had dragged him to the police station. The police inspector did not entertain the Christians and refused to file their complaint.

On 15 May, in Bastar, four men beat up Kamli Kawasi, 22 years, till she became unconscious. The men reportedly came to beat her brother. The family was reportedly targeted because they are Christians. The attackers alleged that because the family has become Christians it has brought bad fortune on the village. Kamli was beaten so badly on her face, abdomen, chest and other parts that she was unconscious for two days.

On 20 May, in Rabindranath Tagore Ward, Jagdalpur, Municipal authorities demolished the Zion Prayer House Church and Community Hall. Pastor Daniel Kashyap serves as the Pastor of the Zion Church. According to him, the Municipal Corporation broke the altar and did not even give time to carry out the artifacts and furniture of the Church to safety.

On 5 June, in Balrampur, Christians were attacked during Sunday prayer meetings by a mob of around 30 - 35 RSS and Vishwa Hindu Parishad members who disrupted the Sunday worship service being carried out at the home of Mahender Singh at Aara village, Balrampur District. Pastor Alvis Bara, who was leading the meeting, was beaten up badly. Women and children were also targeted by the mob that behaved in an objectionable manner with the women present in the worship service. The mob was reportedly using foul and objectionable language against Christians. The mob took Pastor Bara and a few others and paraded them to the police outpost (Bariyo Chowki)

while beating them. Pastor Bara and two other people were kept in the police lockup for more than two days before being released on bail. No action has been taken against the attackers yet.

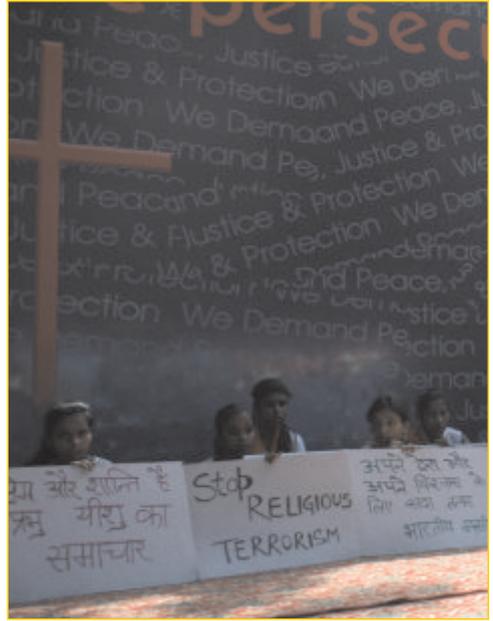
DELHI

On 4 Jun, in Delhi, Police detained Pastor Rajpal Yadav and Mr. Mahesh at the Aman Vihar Police Station for the purposes of questioning and later released them. The incident took place when Pastor Rajpal Yadav was leading a Vacation Bible School program at Prem Nagar in Delhi. Almost 200 children were in attendance in the program when all of a sudden nearly 40 Bajrang Dal people surrounded the venue and started shouting anti-Christian slogans and interrupted the program. The Bajrang Dal people vandalized the venue and many of them filmed the entire proceedings. Pastor Yadav and Kumar were later taken to the police station but were subsequently let go.

On 26 June, in Delhi, Authorities threatened to demolish a Church in Uttam Nagar area of Delhi. Pastor Sunil Masih and his son Aric Masih have been conducting worship services in the House of God Believers Church for the past 8 years now.

GUJARAT

On 14 March, in Mohapada, Tapi, local villagers led by Hindu groups raised objections to the renovation carried out at a local Church. The Church has been in existence since 10 years. The Hindu groups accused the Christians of carrying out illegal conversions and demanded that the Church renovation work should be stopped



immediately. The Christians were told that there is no space for them in the village and that the villagers do not want a Church there anymore.

HARYANA

On 15 February, in Rajound, Kaithal, Hindu extremists stopped construction of a Church building by pressuring local authorities into action against the Church. Pastor Sharad Kumar who Pastors the Church was constructing the Church building on his own land.

JAMMU & KASHMIR

On 21 June, in Kathua, Pastor Shiv Dutt from Ramkote village was threatened by Hindu extremists to stop the worship and prayer meetings in the village. Pastor Shiv Dutt pastors the Brethren Assembly Billawar Church He has also constructed a prayer hall

on a land belonging to him. It is not the first time that Pastor Shiv Dutt has been threatened with dire consequences.

JHARKHAND

On 31 January, in Madgodwa, Hantraganj, Chatra, a group of missionaries were kidnapped, detained and threatened by Hindu extremists for some time. The kidnappers later released the Christians but warned them sternly that they should not enter the village again.

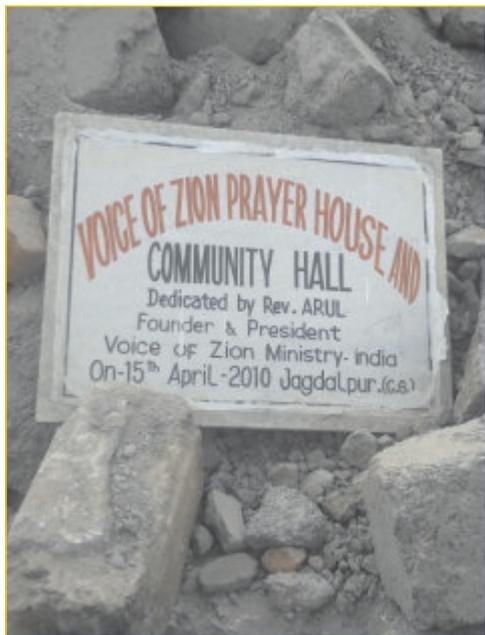
On 15 February, in Katras, Dhanbad, around ten unidentified men entered the Believers Church and assaulted a woman cleaning the Church. Nitu Devi, a Church member, was cleaning the Church premises and got severely injured in the attack. An FIR has been lodged against the attackers in Katras Police station.

On 21 February in Amjora, West Singhbhum, A Christian named Ponj (50) was brutally beaten by three local extremists who entered his house and accused him of carrying out religious conversions in the area. A complaint was lodged at the Jagarnathpur police station but no FIR has been registered.

On 24 February, in Pandra, Keredari, Hazaribagh, a group of people belonging to the Sarna Community barged into a three-day convention organized by local Christians and beat up the Christians present. The convention was scheduled to be from February 24 - 26, 2016 but was stopped on the first day itself. Seven people got injured in this sudden attack. According to reports from the local Christians some of the attackers were police personnel. The next morning a mob of around 100 people gathered at the local police station and raised slogans against Christians alleging them of conversions.

On 17 March, in Sagarkatta, West Singhbhum, Pastor Budhram Birwa was detained and questioned by the police. Local villagers had complained against him alleging forced conversions. After intervention from local Christian leaders, the police released him.

On 13 May, in Hunter village, Palamu, Sixteen Dalit Christians were beaten up and forced to flee their homes. The Christians, who have been following Christianity for more than 9 years, were summoned before the village council and questioned as to why they were worshipping Jesus Christ. They were told to worship Hindu gods and when they refused, the hands and legs of the Christian men, were tied up and they were brutally beaten. Women and children who



attempted to save the men were also beaten up.

On 14 June, in Hunter village, Palamu, Hindu extremists beat up Gunni Bhuiya and threatened to kill him. Bhuiya was one of the Christians who were beaten up sticks a month ago at the same village after they refused to denounce Christ. Christians in the area are living in fear as Hindu extremist have not only forbidden them from worshipping but also have boycotted them socially and economically and constantly threaten to kill them. The Police too threaten the Christians of a fine if they continue worshipping publicly.

KARNATAKA

On 11 March, in Jayapore, Koppa, Chikmagalur, a mob of Bajrang Dal members attacked and beat up Pastor Keshava K (38). The Pastor was invited to pray for a sick person by a family staying in Jayapura town near Koppa. The inviting family had also arranged for a car for the pastor to travel to their house. Pastor Keshava travelled to the house for prayers along with his wife Latha (38), and 2 Christian women Rathamma (56) and Sashikala (35). As soon as they reached the house and started to pray, Bajrang Dal members entered the home and started beating up Pastor Keshava. At that time, the family who had invited the pastor withdrew and let the Bajrang Dal members beat him up. The Bajrang Dal members then handed the Pastor, his wife and the two women to the police at the Jayapura police station where more than 200 members of the Bajrang Dal surrounded the police station demanding action against the Christians.

On 20 March, in Hassan, a Christian family and two Christian workers were harassed, intimidated, and beaten by the police, Hindu extremists and village Panchayat leaders who accused them of carrying out forceful religious conversions in the area. A false case of conversion was registered against two Christians Sidhesh and Karan and they were called to the police station and detained and beaten there by the police. Christian leaders who went to rescue them were not allowed to see them. After threatening the two Christians the police let them go close to midnight. On the same day another Christian family identified as Nagraj were also threatened and intimidated by the village Panchayat leaders and Hindu extremists.

On 21 April, in, Tumkur, members of ABVP, a radical right-wing Hindutva student organization, disrupted a function organized by a Christian College. The ABVP members forcibly performed Hindu rituals in the college and carried out a procession when a teacher registered his protest against their bullying. The teacher was forced to apologize to the ABVP members who threatened violence while the Principal and the staffs of the college were mute spectators of the whole incident. The College belongs to and is maintained by the Church of South India.

On 26 May, in Bengaluru, a group of unidentified men barged into and ransacked the Faith Lutheran Church in Pillanna Garden, around midnight and ransacked it creating tension in parts of the city. Church authorities lodged a police complaint with KG Halli police station and sought protection.

On 6 June, in Kundapura, the Kandlur church near Basrur was found vandalized by

unknown miscreants. The statute of St. Anthony in the Church was destroyed and the glass enclosure of the statue was broken. This was the second such incident within 15 days in coastal Karnataka.

On 19 June, in Belagalpet, Hanagal, Haveri, a Sunday Church service was disturbed by a mob of Hindutva fanatics. Later that night, they secretly broke into the Church and installed idols in order to provoke the Christians.

MADHYA PRADESH

On 8 January, in Dutera, Keolari, Seoni, Local authorities demolished the Aakriti Convent School, a Christian educational institution, with the help of Hindu extremists. The school was started by Pastor Sumit Bihuniya in 2001. The construction of the school commenced after completing all legal formalities and obtaining clearances from the local authorities. But local Hindu extremists had starting opposing the school for some time and Pastor Bihuniya had been receiving threats. After the demolition, the pastor left the village with his family members because of threat to their lives.

On 8 January, in Katafod, Satwas, Dewas, Police arrested 8 Christians on charges of forced conversions. The Christians were arrested after a prayer meeting at a local Christian's house was disrupted by Hindu extremists. The police came soon afterwards and arrested the Christians.

On 9 January, in Satna, Pastor Anil Jaiswal was attacked and severely beaten by 4 Hindu extremists. The beating was so severe that he had to be hospitalized after the attack. The attackers threatened and warned him

against preaching. Earlier, on 2nd October 2015, Anil Jaiswal had been arrested by the police on charges of forced conversions. The arrest had taken place at a school located at Majhgawan, a small town in Satna district. Two other Christians i.e. Stephen Rajkumar and Harilal were also charged under the Madhya Pradesh freedom of religion act at that time.

On 11 January, in Bhagwanpur, Khargone, Hindu extremists forcibly stopped a Christian meeting scheduled to take place from 18th-21st Jan 2016. The extremists also stopped construction of a Church building in the same village with the help of local police. The Hindu group alleged that after the construction of the Church building, massive conversion of Hindus to Christianity would take place in the area.

On 14 January, in Dhar, 13 Christians, including six women were arrested during a prayer meeting on alleged charges of conversion levelled by local Hindu groups. They were participating in a prayer meeting at the Dehar village that is the border of the



Dhar and Bharwani districts of Madhya Pradesh. Among those arrested were a blind couple and their 3-year-old minor son. The Christians were kept under arrest at the Kukshi Police Station and were charged under sections 151, 153 A of the Indian Penal Code and under the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act. 7 people including the blind couple and their son were bailed out on January 16th, while the others were bailed out on January 20th.

On 19 January, in Anuppur, a women's prayer meeting was disrupted by RSS members. The RSS members barged into the private meeting, misbehaved with the women participants and used abusive language. They also informed the police that conversions were going on. The police came and arrested 4 women who were leading the meeting and took them to the Venkat Nagar police station. Distressed by the behavior of the RSS members and the subsequent action of the police, the women who were attending the prayer meeting went to the police station in a combined group and confronted the policemen. This action resulted in the release of the 4 leaders of the prayer meeting. The police however warned the women not to pray together but in their own homes.

On 11 February, in Shahdol, Pastor Ashawan was detained by the police on alleged charges of kidnapping and conversion. He was arrested by the police at the complaint of a lady whose husband had accepted the Christian faith. She charged Rev. Ashawan of kidnapping her husband and converting him forcefully. After intervention from the local Christians and on the basis of a written application submitted by the husband of the lady (who pressed charges) along with around 40 Church

members, the police let Pastor Ashawan go. No case was filed against the Pastor.

On 18 February, in Mhow, Hindu extremists surrounded the house of Pastor P Rajhmani in order to attack him. The pastor locked himself and his family in the house because of fear. The same group of people has been keeping an eye on him and has been threatening of killing him and his family.

On 21 February, in Neemgarh, Khargone, a group of Bajrang Dal members barged into the house of Pastor Tulsiram Ahirwar, of the IET Church and beat him up. They warned him not to continue worship services. No complaint has been filed by the Pastor.

On 15 March, in Pipariya, Hoshangabad, Hindu extremists disrupted a prayer convention. Nearly 1000 Christians including many pastors had gathered at the annual convention of the Indian Evangelical Team, when a mob of Hindu extremists descended at the venue and disrupted the meeting. They forcibly removed the tent that had been erected for the meeting and tried to chase away the Christians. The convention organizers chose not to file a complaint with the police.

On 27 April, in Satna, The Police entered a church during a wedding ceremony following a complaint by activists of a radical Hindutva outfit that the bride and the groom had been unlawfully converted to Christianity. Accompanied by the Hindutva activists, a Kolgawan police team entered the church and arrested 10 people, including the Pastor, the groom's parents and even some of the guests at the wedding. The police stated that though the couple had converted to Christianity on their own accord about four years ago, the district

authorities had not been informed, which is a crime under the state's anti-conversion legislation.

On 2 May, in Satna, Hindu extremists announced that they would carry out a campaign to stop Hindus from attending Sunday prayers at Churches because Pastors "trick them into conversion". The announcement, that was made on May 2, 2016, was well reported in the national media. Satna district has seen many incidents in the recent past where Christians have been targeted, sometimes violently, by right wing groups. A week before the announcement, on April 27, Bajrang Dal people had stormed into a Church and had forcibly stopped a Christian wedding alleging 'conversions'. Laxmi Yadav, a member of the Madhya Pradesh Backward Classes and Minority Welfare Department who enjoys the status equivalent to a minister of state, was present at the spot, when the Bajrang Dal members had stormed into the church. Yadav later told the media, "This is the first case in the country when Christians were caught red-handed converting and marrying OBCs. We will reconvert them, purify them after sprinkling Gangajal and hold a Hindu marriage for the couple. I am seeking legal opinion on whether sedition charge could be invoked against the Christians for waging a war against the country."

On 4 May, in Jobat, Alirajpur, a mob of 500 people, led by Hindu extremists, attacked the Siyyon (Zion) Church. The mob damaged the entrance of the Church and also pelted stones at the Christians present. The Hindu extremists had alleged to the police that Nigam Raymond and his brother Nirmal Raymond had damaged saffron flags put up near the Church, for the Hindu festival of

Ram Navami. Even though the police had registered a case against the Raymond brothers and were conducting an investigation, a mob of 500 led by the District President of the BJP, Rakesh Agarwal, surrounded the Church and started pelting stones. Pastor Emmanuel Ariel of the Church of North India explained that the flags were probably torn because of strong winds, however the BJP President led the mob of RSS workers, Bajrang Dal people and Vishwa Hindu Parishad members and not only stoned the Church and Christians but also attacked Christian women. Rev. Ariel said, "all this happened before the eyes of the police officers, who stood by as silent spectators." BJP president Rakesh Agrawal and others have been booked on charges of rioting, defiling place of worship and misbehaving with women under Jobat police station area.

On 17 May, in Sagar, A Christian cemetery was severely damaged by the Municipal Corporation. The cemetery was located in the Shivaji ward of the city. The municipal corporation was supposed to be working on the renovation of a canal using heavy machines and during the process the workers damaged the nearby cemetery extensively. Graves were reportedly broken and skeletons and bones were seen out in the open. An enquiry has been initiated by the Additional District Magistrate, while the media has alleged that there is no presence of any canal anywhere near the cemetery.

On 22 May, in Aber village, Satna, Police arrested Evangelist V A Antony, his wife Prabha, Praveen Choudhary and her 4-year-old son, on alleged charges of forcible conversion and hurting religious feelings. Evangelist Antony was threatened by five people including two plain clothed

policemen at village Aber before the beginning of the worship service. The extremists abused him and shouted anti-Christian slogans. Later that day, while the Christians were on their way back from the Sunday worship service, policemen in plain clothes apprehended them as they blocked their car using a SUV. They asked Antony to come out, slapped him and asked him to leave the area. They continued trailing the car along with another car full of Hindu extremists. The Christians were then taken to the Kolar police station where they were arrested and sent to judicial custody. They were bailed out 2 days later.



On 10 June, in Jabalpur, Vijay Choudhari and Kanghi Choudhari were beaten by Hindu fundamentalists while they were returning home from a cottage prayer meeting. They were then taken to the Gorakhpur police station where they were forced to give false statements against a pastor. They were threatened and beaten and because of which they gave false statement stating that they were given money for conversion. Both were released the next day.

On 19 June, in Gorakhpur, members of Dharam Sena, a Hindu extremist group, broke into a private residence and assaulted the people present including the guests who were visiting the family. The attack that took place on the residence of Ravi Ahirwar was without provocation. Two pastors: Bharat Kumar Wadhvani and Vijay Paul, were severely beaten and sustained serious eye and ear injuries. Moses Edward, another Christian who was visiting Ravi Ahirwar, was also beaten up. The Christians were then taken to the Gorakhpur police station and were beaten all along the way. At the police station an FIR was lodged against the Christians and they were charged under sections 295A and 34 of Indian Penal Code.

MAHARASHTRA

On 15 January, in Gondia, Hindu extremists threatened Rajesh Kurre, a Christian, and also initiated a social boycott against him in order to convert him into Hinduism. Mr. Kurre who has faced regular threats from Hindu extremists fears for his life after being threatened that he would be killed if he did not convert to Hinduism. He was also verbally abused and manhandled. No FIR has been registered till date due to fear.

On 31 January, in Vasai, police arrested Sebastian Martin, a Pentecostal pastor, on the charge of practicing witchcraft. The pastor is the founder of Ashirwad prayer center. He was arrested along with two other Christians after the Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti (MANS), an organization dedicated to "eradicate superstition" in India, complained against him.

On 20 February, in Dingara, Buldhana, A Christian family was assaulted at a Panchayat meeting summoned at the behest of the villagers. Roop Singh and his family were summoned before the Panchayat after being accused of conducting a weekly prayer meeting in his house for the past three years. After being beaten by the villagers, the family along with their pastor approached the local police station to file a complaint against the villagers. However, the Police refused to accept their complaint and instead suggested that they settle the matter through a 'compromise'. The villagers have since restricted the entry of any pastor to the village and Singh's family has been warned of dire consequences, if any prayer meeting ever takes place in his house in the future. The family was also threatened and manhandled by the villagers about two months prior to this incident.

On 21 February, in Nadsud, Raigarh, Hindu extremists severely beat up Shivram Pawar, a local Christian from the village. An FIR was lodged against the attackers at the local police station.

On 4 March, in Shahada, Nandurbar, an unidentified attacker beat up Rev. Anand Patel, 68 years. Rev. Patel belongs to the Suwarta Alliance Church. The incident took

place around 9 am in the morning. The pastor approached the police to file an FIR but the police refused to file the same.

On 9 March, in Pune, unidentified miscreants burnt Bibles and other Christian religious books at a grotto located at St. Sebastian Nagar in Daund. Daund is located about 80 kilometers from Pune city. The grotto is part of the St. Sebastian's Church and the Bibles, Hymnals and Prayer books in many languages were kept in the grotto for use by the worshippers. Fr. Denis Joseph, parish priest of St Sebastian's church, told the media that a local resident, Raymond Dias, saw thick black fumes emanating from the front of the grotto around 5 am. The police visited the spot and verified the incident.

On 13 March, in Nasik, Hindu extremists attacked Pastor Babu Suryavanshi and took him to the Ghoti police station alleging forced conversions. The attackers also demanded that Babu Suryavanshi stop the worship services that he has been conducting in the area. The police questioned him, while the attackers surrounded the police station, demanding, that the police take action against him. Pastor Suryavanshi was let go after questioning.

On 26 May, in Mumbai, angry protesters demonstrated against the "unjust administrative decision to take away land belonging to a historic church." The protests were triggered by Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) plans to demolish the cross inside the compound wall of Our Lady of Remedy Church, which was built by Portuguese missionaries in 1550. BMC maintains that the demolition is needed for widening the road, however Christian

leaders say that that the excuse has been used to grab Church properties in the past as well. The 466-year-old church, has been listed as a heritage property needing protection by the BMC itself. According to sources, more than 65 churches have had their land grabbed by the government in a city where land is a premium.

ODISHA

On 14 January, in Malkangiri, a local Church was completely destroyed by a mob consisting of local villagers and some drunken people, according to reports received. A Christian who tried to stop them was beaten up very badly. Local Christians were threatened with dire consequences that their lands, houses and ration cards would be snatched away and they would not be allowed to stay in the village.

On 19 January, in Mottu, Podia, Malkangiri, Christians were beaten up in the presence of the police by local Hindu radicals. The Christians in Mottu village were called by the police to a certain location. On reaching, they were ambushed and beaten up by local radicals insisting that people who worship Jesus Christ should not live in the village. This radical mob was led by the village head. The Christians were beaten in front of the police who did not help them.

On 6 May, in Rourkela, Pastor Abraham Biswas Surin (64), from the Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church in Khunti, Jharkhand was found dead. His body was discovered near a railway bridge near the city of Rourkela, about 200 Kilometers from Khunti. According to reports, the Pastor's

throat had been cut and several wounds were visible on his body. The possibility of this being a robbery was ruled out as investigators found the pastor's ring, cell phone, watch and wallet on his body. The murder weapon, a long handled knife was also recovered near the body.

PUNJAB

On 2 January, in Korara, Hiran, Ludhiana, a team of Christian students was targeted and beaten up by Hindu extremists while they were distributing Bible tracts and portions. Local Hindu extremists locked up one of the Christian students and beat him up. The rest of the students were beaten up as they tried to rescue their friend. All of them were then taken to the Jandiali police station where more than 50 Bajrang Dal people surrounded the police station and pressured the police to register a case against the students. It was only after local Christian leaders intervened that the students were allowed to let go after six hours of staying in the police station.



On 6 January, in Jalandhar, Pastor Harjot Singh Sethi and a Christian man identified as Honey belonging to Christ Power Ministries were threatened by an angry mob of around 80 people. The mob which is believed to be largely comprised of RSS members, disrupted a prayer meeting being conducted by Pastor Harjot Singh at Mr. Rajkumar's residence, who is a Christian and lives near Tanda Chowk in Jalandhar city. The mob not only disrupted the meeting but also locked up Pastor Sethi and Mr. Honey inside Mr. Rajkumar's house, raising slogans against them and accusing them of conversions. Somehow Pastor Sethi managed to inform local Christian leaders who then called the police, who came and took Pastor Sethi and Honey in their custody for their safety. They were later released.

On 6 January, in Rajpura, Four Christians including a pastor and his wife were attacked and severely beaten up by Sikh extremists. Pastor Darshan Singh (33), Swaranjeet Kaur (wife of Pastor Darshan Singh, 32), Sukhwinder Singh (28) and Gurmeet Kaur (55) were at Pastor Darshan Singh's house when the attack took place. The attackers used sharp weapon that resulted in serious injuries to the Christians. Pastor Darshan received deep cut on his head. The attackers also tried to run over Gurmeet Kaur using a Toyota station wagon (Innova). The Christians were initially admitted to the local government hospital but when their health condition deteriorated they were shifted to Christian Medical College hospital in Ludhiana.

On 8 February, in Jalandhar, Pastor Ankur Narula and the members of his Church were attacked. After finishing an outside assignment, Narula was on his way to his home, which is in the church compound,

when he was chased by around 30 men on cars and bikes. Narula's driver drove the car straight into the Church compound, where some church members were playing the game of cricket. Three Christians ran to Narula's aid as they saw the mob following Pastor and suspected threat. The mob quickly approached Narula with the intention to assault him, and when these three Christians shielded the Pastor, they were severely beaten along with Narula and sustained minor injuries. The three injured were hospitalized.

On 13 February, in Gurdaspur, Hindu extremists attacked Pastor Bua Masih while he was on his way back from a neighbouring village after conducting a prayer meeting at a Church member's house. Masih had undergone leg surgery in the past and was under medication for the same. Due to the assault, his stitches broke as a result of which he could barely walk and was under much pain.

On 25 May, in Jalandhar, Hindu Extremists severely beat Anoop Masih, a local Christian from the city of Jalandhar. Masih had earlier confronted a group of Hindu extremists desecrating a Christian graveyard. The attack on him was a retaliation of the confrontation. Masih was severely injured as a result of the attack and was hospitalized for a prolonged period and needed surgery for his wounds.

On 28 May, in Kotli Surant Malli, Gurdaspur, unidentified assailants attacked Mr. Arif Chouhan, a young Christian activist who was busy in organizing an awareness rally for the Christian community when the attack took place. The attack was so severe that his left arm and ankle were fractured.

On 28 June, in Panchkula, extremists beat up the organizers of a Christian prayer meeting at Ravidas Bhawan, Sector 15, Panchkula. The miscreants also tore up posters of the event. The local Christian community had earlier organized a three-day function at Aggarwal Bhawan at Sector 16 of Panchkula but later the program was shifted to Ravidas Bhawan. Many Christians were injured as a result of the attack. One of the attackers was caught after the incident while the others fled away.

RAJASTHAN

On 10 January, in Palan, Udaipur, Hindu fundamentalists brutally beat up 8-10 persons who were going to church. Two of them were critically injured during the attack. The attack took place when the victims were just 500 meters away from the church and were heading there for Sunday worship service. The Christians were beaten up in the presence of the police but no one came to their rescue. The police, including a Station Head (SHO) watched as Christians were beaten up and their vehicles damaged. Instead of getting them medical assistance, the beaten up Christians were taken to the local police station for questioning.

On 10 January, in Tonk, Pastor Rakesh Bhagora, who leads a Church in Tonk city, was beaten up along with members of his Church by a crowd of 25 plus people. The Church was having their regular Sunday worship when the attack took place. The mob of 25 plus people trespassed the Church property, disrupted the worship service and started beating Pastor Rakesh and other believers. The attackers damaged the Church property and took away the Bibles and literature from the Church and tore it.

Police followed the attackers and arrested Pastor Rakesh and his wife and took them to the Police station on alleged charges of conversion.

On 31 January, in Churada, Banswara, Pastor Galia Damor was beaten up by members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. He was on his way to lead Sunday worship service at the Church where he pastors and was travelling by the bus to reach his destination. As soon as he got down from the bus, four men came to him and demanded that he prays and heals a sick person then and there. When he suggested that they should take the person to a hospital instead, the extremists pushed him and beat him up with belts. They were shouting slogans against religious conversions in the village. Although the pastor has given a written complaint at the local police station, no action has been taken till press time.

On 31 January, Sardarshahr, Churu, 11 Christians including 3 women were beaten up and later handed over to the police. The incident took place when a visiting team comprising of 9 Christians from North east India (including 3 women) and two Christians from Punjab were invited to pray for a sick girl in ward number 13, Sardarshahr. As soon as local Hindu extremists got to know about this, they gathered a mob of more than 400 people, ambushed the house, beat up the Christians and handed them over to the local police. The crowd did not even spare the women and the uproar went on for about 2 hours. The Christians, who were falsely accused by Hindu extremists of having given large sums of money to people to convert, have chosen not to file a complaint despite being injured as a result of the attack.

On 20 March, in Dungarpur, local villagers

beat up Pastor Sumati Prakash Khardia and his family causing grievous injuries. The attack took place after Pastor Sumati attempted to rescue his niece who was being attacked and molested by people who have a history of enmity with Pastor Sumati. As the pastor intervened in the matter, he was beaten up along with his family and has been admitted in the hospital in serious condition. His family members too suffered serious injuries.

On 29 March, in Survan, Banswara, Pastor Dinesh Goda of India Gospel Church was summoned for questioning by the Pattan police station. Hindu extremists had complained against the Pastor for his Christian activities in the village.

TAMIL NADU

On 28 January, in Coimbatore, a group of 35 right wing members beat up Fr. Jose Kannumkuzhy and three members of Diocesan Pastoral Council. Fr. Kannumkuzhy and the three Christians, Lijo, Joseph and Stanley, were visiting the Assisi Snehalaya (abode of love) in Ettimada, 20 km south of Coimbatore. During their trip, they also had planned to visit the Ettimadai police station and were waiting outside when the attack took place. As they were sitting in their car, a mob appeared suddenly and started attacking them. They tried to escape in their car, but the mob followed them and caught up with them as they entered a national highway. Lijo, who was driving the car, approached a police jeep to seek help. However, the policemen refused to intervene. The mob attacked them with granite stones lying on the highway. They tore the priest's cassock and punched him. Not only this, they were made to walk nearly

2.5 kilometers while the attackers asked them to "call on their Jesus to protect them". The priest and the fellow Christians were admitted to nearby K G Hospital on the same day of the attack. Fr. Kannumkuzhy, who is 49 years old, was in the intensive care unit for a long time and is under severe trauma due to extensive head injuries. The three lay people were also hospitalized for a few days.

On 3 January, in Thiruvattar, a mob of around 50 Hindu fundamentalists attempted to erect a temple about 50 feet away from the local Church on a disputed land. The police however intervened and stopped the construction of the unauthorized structure. The next morning however, during a prayer service in the Church, the police inspector of the Thiruvattar police station, forcibly entered the Church premises with several policemen, disrupted the worship service, verbally abused the pastors and Church members present, and physically assaulted them, even caning them. It is reported that the police van was used to throw stones on the Church members. This sudden attack on the Christians resulted in serious injuries for many who were then admitted to the local District hospital at Thuckalay.

On 15 January, in Coimbatore, A Christian youth meeting being held at a banquet hall between Tirupur junction and Vanchipalayam was disrupted by a mob of Hindu extremists. The attackers tried to enter the venue of the Christian youth meeting forcibly but were stopped by the police in time.

On 17 January, in Erode, a Christian evangelist was brutally beaten by a mob of more than 100 Hindutva fundamentalists for sharing a Bible with a person who had willfully requested and accepted it from the

evangelist.

On 17 January, in Theni, a Pastor from Kambam, Theni District, Tamil Nadu was attacked and injured by a Hindutva activist. The pastor who belongs to a Pentecostal Church in Kambam, was attacked while he was carrying out the Church worship service. He was attacked on his head, with a heavy and sharp object and he bled profusely as a result of this injury. He was admitted at the government hospital and received emergency treatment.

On 12 March, in Kalapatty, Coimbatore, tensions prevailed, after persons belonging to radical Hindu outfits, vandalized a newly renovated church, which has been in existence since 1948 in the area. Hindu outfits had approached the court seeking a stay order on the renovation of the Church but the High Court had given permission for the church renovation and had directed the district police to give adequate protection. Hence the church was dedicated on March 9, 2016, amidst protests from persons who are said to be not from that locality. On the day of the incident, a group of 15 people pushed away the policemen on guard, vandalized the Church and damaged the compound wall, main door, furniture in the Church, and the altar. The Kovilapalayam police arrested five persons on March 15 and one among them, P Sampath (43) is the formal zonal secretary of the BJP. The other four were identified as R Kutty (34), S Sakthivel (29), N Vignesh (25) and K Devaraj (60). The four men are said to belong to a fringe Hindu outfit.

On 16 March, in Alangulam, Tirunelveli, A gospel meeting organized at a premises owned by a recognized church was denied permission to go ahead. The Church was told

that this was due to an apprehension of a possible adverse effect on the law and order situation in the area. It is reported that the authorities acted under pressure from a religious organization that had objected to the meeting being conducted, stating that it would hurt their religious sensitivities.

On 3 April, in Sathiyamangalam, Erode, the leader of a radical Hindutva outfit disrupted a Christian prayer service. The attacker then forced the Pastor to accompany him to the local Police station and in the process assaulted him.

On 1 May, in Tiruppur, Hindu fundamentalists led by Tamil Selvan and Govindaraj, leaders of the Kundadam branch of the Hindu Munnani, forced themselves into the house of Pastor Yabez Bharathi and threatened the family. The mob surrounded the house and hurled abuses at the Pastor and his family. They demanded that the Pastor vacates the house and leaves, and that no Christian activity such as prayer be conducted in the area. The Pastor and his family had moved into their newly constructed house that evening itself. Pastor Yabez leads a Church near the area. The Christians contacted the local police station at Odiyoor and the police was able to control the situation.

On 9 May, in Kotagiri, RSS members accused a Pastor of carrying out religious conversions. The Pastor was then forcefully taken to the Kotagiri police station for questioning. According to reports, Rev. Henry was conducting VBS (Vacation Bible School) classes, when around 25 RSS members stormed into the St. John's Church. The RSS members created a ruckus and demanded that the Pastor be brought to the police station. The Pastor and the

children attending the Vacation Bible School were all taken to the Kotagiri police station for questioning.

On 15 June, in Coimbatore, Hindu extremists belonging to the Thotiyaturai village near Kundadam Police station attacked 4 Evangelists from the Hundred Village Ministries. The attackers accused them of conversion. Thereafter they were taken to the Kundadam police station. Later, the complaints against the Christians were found to be baseless. The attackers tendered a written apology stating that it was all a misunderstanding and that they now realized that the Christians had not indulged in any conversion work.

On 16 June, in Coimbatore, a group of 5 Christian women from Hundred Village Ministries were threatened by mob of around 400 village peoples from Kunchipalayanam village. The women group was conducting a week long Gospel Tract distribution at the Kunchipalayam village. A complaint signed by all the village people was submitted to the Pollachi West Police Station to stop the group from entering the village again. On the basis of their complaint, a CSR (Community Service Register) was registered against a local Pastor, a Christian believer and the women group. On June 17, the police threatened them that they would file an FIR against them with stringent provisions if they did not give in writing that they would not indulge in such evangelical activities in the Kunchipalayam village hereafter.

On 19 June, in Bhavanisagar, members of Hindu Munnani Group beat up Pastor Sagayaraj from Yeshuvin Patham Ministries, Erode. The attack took place around 5:30 pm when the Pastor and some local Christians

were stopped by a group of 10 people belonging to the Hindu Munnani. They slapped the Pastor on his face repeatedly and hurt his ears badly. The Christians were abused and threatened that they would be killed if they ever visited the area again.

On 26 June, in Coimbatore, Christian prayers were not allowed to be conducted at a private Christian home at Vedapatti. The police stated apprehensions of law and order as the reason for the denial. The Pastor reported that he had been conducting prayers in the adjoining areas for the past 7 years and that the Hindutva activists had been hounding the Christians wherever they went. All the while the police had never intervened to help the Christians.

TELANGANA

On 28 February, in Subhasnagar, around 40 Hindu extremists attacked Pastor Agran Shastry and Church members from Beersheba Mandir Church, Hyderabad. The attack took place while the Sunday worship was going on. The attackers beat Pastor Shastry using their shoes, paraded him through the streets, manhandled his wife and beat up the congregation members. A FIR was filed in the local police station. 4 members of the Hindu extremists group were arrested but later released on bail. Pastor Shastry gave an application in the police station for his protection as he fears for his life.

On 18 March, in Gopanpally, Nizamabad, a makeshift prayer hall of the Christian community was set on fire by unknown people. A FIR against unknown people has been registered in the case but no arrest had been made till last reports. "The village

Panchayat had objected to the construction of the prayer hall, following which unknown people burnt down the hall late at night on Friday," Nizamabad Superintendent of Police briefed the media.

On 20 March, in Chinthagudem, Nalgonda, ABVP and RSS members beat up Christians including a Pastor, on the outskirts of Nalgonda town. The attack took place when a prayer meeting at a private residence was going on. Pastor Prabhakar and another unnamed pastor were seriously injured during this attack and had to be rushed to the hospital for treatment. They received deep cuts on their heads.

On 20 March in Warangal, a Church was completely burnt by unidentified miscreants. The Church is pastored by Rev. Chintha Kranthi at Warangal.

On 24 March, in Secunderabad, around 20 Hindu extremists trespassed forcefully into a local Church (El-shaddai Avinu ministries), damaged the Church properties and beat up the pastors' wife. The attack took place in the late evening hours. The police did not entertain the complaint of the Christians. The attackers have been creating problems for the church and have threatened to remove the church from the area.

On 17 June, in Hyderabad, Hosil Pentecostal Church was demolished to facilitate widening of a road. The Hyderabad administration decided to tear down the church without informing its pastor. The Hosil Church has been in the area for two decades, and worship services were held every Sunday.

On 18 June in Hyderabad, A Pentecostal Church was torched two weeks after its

inauguration. The Pentecostal pastor had just built and inaugurated the building at the beginning of the month and it was reduced to dust by strangers. It had just been inaugurated on 2 June.

UTTAR PRADESH

On 5 January, in Kidki, Gautam Budh Nagar, Noida, Pastor Mary Masih, Bhola Singh, Pinki Singh (wife of Bhola Singh) and their two minor children were arrested on charges of conversion from Emmanuel Sewa Ashram. They were kept in the lockup for four days, before the Bisrakh Police Station, Noida produced them in court. The two minor children aged 7 and 5 years, were kept in the lockup for more than 48 hours and were made to sleep on the floor without any bed or blanket and no proper food or warm clothes were given to them. This resulted in both of them becoming sick. Hence they were released earlier. The orphanage itself has been targeted by an NGO that conducted raid on the said orphanage alleging the mistreatment of children and forced conversion to Christianity. Emmanuel Sewa Ashram denies these allegations. However, print and electronic media have covered this event, giving a very negative tone against the Christian community.

On January 29, in Orai town Jalaun district, Hindu extremists kidnapped, beat up, and humiliated Pastor Avdhesh Savita. Pastor Savita was kidnapped by members of Yuvvahini (a Hindu extremist outfit) posing as policemen. He was taken to the Bajrang Dal head office in Orai town from his native village of Rendhar. He was beaten up on the way there and once he reached the Bajrang Dal office, the combined members of Bajrang Dal and Yuvvahini beat him up even

more. They then proceeded to shave half of his head, his eyebrow, half of his moustache, put him on a donkey and paraded him for more than half an hour before the police intervened. Charges of forced conversion were alleged on Pastor Savita by a man called Sangam Jatav, who had approached the Bajrang Dal and was part of the mob that humiliated and beat the Pastor.

On 6 February, in Robertsganj, 20 Christians including a Pastor were attacked, manhandled and arrested. Pastor Sajju John was having a meeting with fellow believers when Dharamvir Tiwari, Ex District President of the BJP and leaders of the Hindu Jagran Manch (HJM) along with member of BJP and the HJM surrounded the house where the meeting was going on. They rounded up the Christians and had them arrested. The Christians were taken to the local police station where they were questioned. They were later released close to mid night after spending an entire day at the police station.

On 7 February, in Noida, Pastor Rampal and two Christians identified as Lalu Gautam and Ranjeet were arrested by the local police and taken to the Noida Phase 2 police station for questioning. They were arrested from Sector 93 in Noida where Pastor Rampal was conducting a worship service. He was about to serve the holy communion when the police came and took him along with the two Christians. They were questioned by the police on complaints received from local Hindu groups who were alleging that Pastor Rampal did not have permission to hold Christian meetings as the Church is not registered. The three were also taken to meet the local intelligence office for questioning. They were released later in the evening and no charges were filed against them.



On 10 February, in Ghazipur, Hindu extremists disrupted two peaceful Christian meetings. Both the meetings were held at two different house churches. On February 8 Pastor Jitendra along with his congregation were gathered in one such house when Hindu extremists disrupted the meeting and threatened the Pastor of dire consequences. On February 10, Pastor Jitendra was leading another house prayer meeting at a different location when the extremists attacked again. Pastor Jitendra and other Christians present were manhandled, verbally abused and their bibles were torn to pieces. Pastor Jitendra has been threatened by Hindu extremists in the past too and has been warned not to conduct house church meetings.

On 12 February, in Jaunpur, Itwari Devi mother of Pastor Nanhe Lal from Rakba village of Jaunpur district was found unconscious on the street after being assaulted by local Hindu extremist. Itwari has a piece of land that she had willingly

offered to Christians for the purpose of worship. Hindu groups in her village warned her several times in the past to, not to let the worship service take place on her land, but she did not deter. She was attacked and beaten, as a result of which, she fractured her left leg. Itwari's son Pastor Nanhe Lal conducts the service and ministers to the people there. This is the second attack on Itwari Devi in the last one year. Last year in the month of July, she was attacked when she was going to her neighbor's house in the night.

On 19 February, in Rai Bareilly, Pastor Santosh Kumar Shivpuri, 80, and eight others were severely assaulted. A mob of about 40-50 Hindu extremists attacked the house of Rampal where a prayer meeting was being conducted. The extremists hit them with rods due to which Pastor Shivpuri, Rampal, his wife and others were critically injured. Shivpuri fell unconscious because of the beating and was later carried to Kanpur for treatment. Rampal broke his hand in the assault and had to undergo surgery during which a rod had to be put in his hand. The police arriving on scene, spotted Shivpuri unconscious and left him at the mercy of his family to attend to him. The vehicles of the Christians parked outside were also damaged. Shivpuri was previously warned by the villagers to not to conduct prayer meetings in their village.

On 28 February, in Jamua, Jaunpur, Two Pastors were detained by the police. They were arrested at the complaint of a high caste Hindu of the same village. Pastor Vijay Bahadur and Pastor Lalta Prasad were taken to the Thanagaddi police outpost under Kerakat police station, straight from the Sunday worship service that they conduct under a temporary tent placed on Prasad's

land. 400 – 500 people gather for worship every Sunday on that land. A written application was filed against Pastor Prasad with the local District Magistrate alleging 'mass conversion taking place in Jamua village'.

On 9 March, in Sultanpur, Hindu extremists targeted and burnt the house of Pastor Ramprakash. This is not the first time that the pastor has been targeted by fundamentalists. The Church pastored by Rev. Ramprakash has been meeting in the area since 2000 and has been facing frequent threats and attacks.

On 13 March, in Mauaima, Allahabad, a mob led by RSS members and the village headman attacked a Sunday worship service and beat up Christians including the Pastor. The incident took place while the Sunday worship service was going on. Suddenly a mob led by local RSS leaders, village headman, district Panchayat head and the block development head barged into the premises, disrupting the worship service. According to the reports, slogans were raised against Christianity and the Christians were beaten up. The attackers especially beat up Pastor Brijesh who leads the Church and injured him severely. 3 – 4 more Christians have been seriously injured. No FIR was filed.

On 24 March, in Sultanpur, Pastor Ram Prakash was severely beaten by Hindu extremists alleging that he is carrying out religious conversion work. Pastor Ram Prakash was tied to a vehicle and dragged to some distance, and has been beaten to an extent that his leg was broken.

On 27 March, in Ouncha, Manipuri, Bajrang Dal members disrupted a private celebration

at a Christian's house following which a scuffle broke out. Bajrang Dal District convener, Suresh Yadav, led a group of around 15 men in three SUV's to the house of Santosh Jatav. Mr. Jatav and his family and friends were celebrating an Easter feast. The Bajrang Dal people forced their way into the house, calling it a raid against conversion, and created trouble, pushing the Christians around and assaulting them. The Christians present retaliated and in the fight that broke out some Bajrang Dal people received injuries and fled the spot.

On 8 April, in Baliya, a group of Hindutva activists disrupted prayers at a church. They forced the Christians present to shut down the church and leave the place. The attackers threatened the Christians that they would return on Sunday in greater numbers to chase them away if they do not leave before that.



On 9 April, in Jaunpur, Pastor Samuel was beaten by Hindu extremists and taken to an unknown location. The attackers had arrived at the church and specifically asked to see him. When the Pastor came out, they started beating him and his assistant. They kidnapped the pastor and took him to an unknown place before producing him at the Saraikhwaja police station.

On 11 April, in Tewardih, Cholakpur, Varanasi, Joginder, a Christian man, who leads a small prayer group of 25-30 Christians in the area, was brutally attacked by Hindu extremists. According to reports received, two people caught Joginder, while 6 people beat him mercilessly using lathis (long bamboo sticks). They kicked him and beat him with the lathis and tied him upside down on a tree. The attackers also inserted a lathi in his throat till he started bleeding. They then threw him in a pit thinking that he had died. People have been following Joginder for the last 2 years and have been demanding that he stop his prayer group.

On 3 May, in Dungapur, Shivrajpur, Kanpur Nagar, BJP and Hindu Vahini members trespassed and vandalized a private property alleging conversions. According to reports published by local newspapers, Chotelal Katheria, a Dalit, had organized a family function and had put up pandals (tents) to accommodate his guests. His relative Gulab Katheria arrived at the function with a few of his friends around 12 pm. Suddenly a mob consisting of BJP and Hindu vahini members descended at the house shouting slogans and alleging that Chotelal Katheria's family and a dozen more people were going to be converted. The police were accompanying the BJP members and arrested Chotelal, Surendra, Gulab Katheria and his friends: Chandrabhan,

Girish and Mukesh Gautam. The BJP and Hindu vahini members then proceeded to uproot the tents and vandalize the place. The arrested people were let off after questioning, and the police denied any substance to the charges of conversion as levied by BJP members.

On 8 May, in Allahabad, according to reports received from Rev. Daniel Masih, Pastor of the Assemblies of God Church in Allahabad, two of his colleagues were taken to the police station for questioning after a complaint was lodged against them alleging conversion and kidnapping. The Pastors were questioned at length by the police and then were let go as the complaint against them was found baseless.

On 15 May, in Faizabad, Pastor Santosh Kumar Masih and his wife Anjani Masih were beaten by RSS members and villagers. Pastor Santosh has been conducting worship services in the area for the last three years. In the recent past, he received threats from Hindu extremists in the area including some priests. A FIR has been filed and two attackers have been arrested by the police.

On 29 May, in Naupur, Jaunpur district, Hindu fundamentalists attacked and beat up Pastor Lalta Prasad and his wife. Both the pastor and his wife suffered multiple fractures as a result of the attack. The incident took place when the Sunday worship service was going on. Suddenly a group of Hindu fundamentalists with faces covered attacked the congregation causing the people to disperse and run. The attackers specifically targeted the pastor and his wife and the people who tried to rescue them were also beaten up. The attackers then fled the scene on their vehicles. Christian leaders allege that the authorities including the

doctors who checked the couple for injuries put fear in their heart and hence the pastor and wife decided not to press any charges.

On 9 June, in Kaushambi, a large Christian meeting was disrupted after the police arrested and detained 25 Christians on the charge of conversions. Large Christian prayer gatherings of up to 1000 plus people have been taking place in the area for the past one-year. Hindu organizations filed false complaints of forced conversions taking place in these meetings and hence the police arrested the Christians and stopped the meetings. The Christians were threatened not to organize any such meetings again in the area.

On 12 June, in Kushinagar, the Hindu extremists disrupted a Sunday worship service held at a local Church. The Christians were accused of carrying out religious conversion work and were threatened of dire consequences if they continued with the Sunday worship service in the following weeks.

On 12 June, in Salem Bhadrui, Lalganj, Pratapgarh, a worship service was stopped by a mob of Hindu fundamentalists. The local Christian leading the service was threatened and lightly assaulted along with other members. Since the incident, worship services are not being conducted in the Church anymore. The local union of Lawyers backed by Hindu groups of the area has given a letter of complaint to the SDM to take strict action against the Pastor on charges of conversion.

On 12 June, in Sitapur, a false case under Sec 342, 504, 354 and 3 (1) (xi) of the SC ST POA Act was filed against Pastor Mahesh Kumar Chouhan. The complainant alleged

that the Pastor had verbally abused another person on the basis of his caste and incited religious hatred. The allegations were refuted by local Christian leaders who said that this is a false allegation.

On 22 June, in Saharanpur, Pastor Raghu Nader, Christian Nader (wife of Pastor Raghu Nader) and a local Christian Aditya Kumar were severely beaten by a group of 12 Hindu extremists.

On 26 June, in Unchahar, Rae Bareilly, Hindu extremists disrupted a Sunday worship service and beat up the Christians. The attackers entered forcefully even as the Sunday worship service was going on. They proceeded to beat the believers including women, with lathis, damaged the church badly, and locked them all inside. Later, the Christians were taken to the nearest police station, were made to stand in a queue and were forced to bow down before idols present within the Kotwali Police Station premises. Four Christians were made to clean the garbage dumps before being allowed to return to their homes after midnight. No complaint was registered against the attackers or the Christians. The local media reported the incident adversely and alleged that the Christians were involved in forceful conversions.

UTTARAKHAND

On 21 January, in Dehradun, Pastor Radheshyam Saksena was summoned at Doiwala police station on alleged charges of forced conversion received by the police from unknown people. The Doiwala police warned him not to share his Christian faith in the area.

On 24 January, in Dehradun, Hindu extremists disrupted worship service and attacked Pastor Jaison who belongs to the Hope India Ministries. Around 40 people belonging to Hindu groups barged in and stopped the worship service. The Police soon followed and took Pastor Jaison to the local police station. At the police station, the policemen allegedly threatened Pastor Jaison and told him to discontinue conducting worship services on Sunday. He was kept in the police station premises and questioned throughout the day by the police and the local intelligence department. Pastor Jaison has been pastoring the Church in the area for the last eight years.

On 3 March, in Krishna Nagar, Roorkee, around 25 RSS members attacked a Christian meeting. The attack took place when Christians were having a community meal at the house of a local Christian identified as Rajender, who had invited Pastors and Church members from the Anglican Disciples Church of India for a fellowship lunch. Suddenly and without provocation, RSS members barged into his house, alleging that conversions were going on and started beating the Christians present including the women. The attackers targeted Pastor Vinod Tyagi, Assistant Pastor Sunil Masih and Mr. Ruben Singh in particular. Later nine Christians were dragged to the local police station where the police were pressurized by the RSS members to register a complaint against the Christians. The RSS also mobilized a crowd of around 500 people who surrounded the police station demanding action against the Christians. The police carried an investigation and not finding any incriminating evidence released the Christians. The Pastors fear for their lives and have given an application to the police for

their protection.

On 13 March, in Jagjitpur, Haridwar, Hindu extremists attacked, abused and attempted to beat up Christians. The incident took place after the Sunday worship service at the Indian Pentecostal Assemblies Church was over and the members were leaving for their homes. Suddenly sixty Hindu extremists, waiting at the main entrance of the Church created a ruckus. They shouted slogans against Christianity, verbally abused the Church members and tried to beat up several Christians. The police soon arrived at the spot and took the attackers as well as Christians to the police station, where the attackers alleged that Christians were involved in religious conversions. The police after a thorough questioning let the Christians go as the charges against them were found baseless.

WEST BENGAL

On 28 February, in Bandla, Hoogly, around 40 members from RSS and Bajrang Dal disrupted a Sunday worship service at the Assembly of God Church. Hindu extremists attacked the Church members and snatched their Bibles from them. They also beat up the women present in the Church. The next day on 29 February 2016, the same Church members were attacked by around 70 members belonging to the RSS and Bajrang dal, while a house Church meeting was going on in a Christian's house. They threatened the people present in the prayer service. The Church Pastor Saikat Sinha who was not present in both the incidents due to a death in his family, now fears for his life as Hindu extremists have threatened to kill him if they find him in any of the Church activities in the area. The Pastor has suspended the Church

services due to fear of Hindu extremists.

On 6 March, in Midnapore, A Christian man was attacked and beaten up by a mob of local religious extremists. The event took place when the victim was returning home after attending worship service at a local Church. Sources say that the villagers had objected to his attending Church several times and had warned him of dire consequence if he continued to do so.

On 24 March, in Malda, Maria Tudu, a Christian woman, was attacked by a group of 7 women from her village. Maria Tudu was attacked because she is a Christian. She is also facing social discrimination and is not allowed to fetch water from the public water tank.



Evangelical Fellowship of India
805/ 92 Deepali Building Nehru Place
New Delhi—110019 INDIA

Email: mail@efionline.org
www.efionline.org

