

Briefing

India

Religious Discrimination and Violence against Christians

ANNUAL REPORT 2006



Christian Solidarity Worldwide **Voice for the Voiceless**

PO Box 99, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3YF

T: 020 8942 8810 **E:** admin@csw.org.uk **W:** www.csw.org.uk

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 281836

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Recommendations.....	3
Legislative Restrictions on Religious Freedom.....	4
Religiously-Motivated Violence against Christians	7
Catalogue of Atrocities.....	9
Andhra Pradesh.....	9
Assam	13
Bihar.....	13
Chhattisgarh.....	13
Gujarat	15
Haryana	16
Jammu and Kashmir	16
Jharkhand.....	17
Karnataka.....	18
Kerala.....	24
Madhya Pradesh	25
Maharashtra.....	32
Manipur	33
Orissa	34
Punjab	35
Rajasthan	36
Tamil Nadu.....	38
Uttaranchal.....	38
Uttar Pradesh	39
Notes	41

Executive Summary

The widespread ongoing discrimination against Dalits and tribals forms the context for substantial social and political animosity towards religious conversions in India. Although impinging on all religious groups, the religiously-sanctioned caste system is associated primarily with Hinduism, and is perceived by Hindu nationalist or extremist groups, known collectively as the Sangh Parivar, to be proper to Indian society. Therefore, the embracement of other religions by Dalits and 'low' castes, in attempts to escape the stigma, dehumanisation and discrimination associated with their caste, attracts considerable opposition, which is manifested in legislative restrictions upon religious freedom, and social pressures, which often erupt into violence.

Despite India's secular constitution and detailed legislative provisions for religious freedom and tolerance, such ideals remain distant from the political agenda of the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which in 2006 held power in the state governments of Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and formed part of ruling coalitions in Bihar, Karnataka and Orissa. Each of the states in which the BJP held sole power either introduced (in the case of Rajasthan) or strengthened existing anti-conversion legislation in 2006, and there was a correlation between these states and those in which anti-minority violence was at its worst, prompting widespread suggestions that the nature of BJP governance has facilitated and fuelled anti-minority prejudices and attacks. The ideology of 'Hindutva', espoused by the BJP and its parent organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), encompasses a vision of India as a Hindu nation in which minorities must be assimilated to the Hindu religion, race and culture.

However, despite the avowed opposition of the Congress Party to the passage of anti-conversion legislation in BJP-ruled states, the Congress government of Himachal Pradesh state passed an anti-conversion law on 29 December 2006. This led to a loss of confidence among religious minorities in the secular credentials of the Congress Party, and prompted suggestions that it was sympathetic to a 'soft' Hindutva agenda.

Political commentators in India have increasingly suggested recently that the Sangh Parivar has developed a special focus on the issue of religious conversions from Hinduism, as part of its strategy to regain political ascendancy. The result, particularly in the states in which the BJP holds power, has been the vilification, alienation, discrimination and persecution of the religious minorities perceived as foreign to Indian culture; that is, Islam and Christianity. The Christian minority has suffered widespread attacks, particularly in BJP-administered states, where there is a culture of impunity for religiously-motivated violence.

Recommendations

CSW requests that representations are made to the government of India, concerning both legislative restrictions upon religious freedom, and the extent of attacks against the minority Christian community in India. In particular, CSW requests that the Indian government is called upon:

- To take measures towards the repeal of state-level anti-conversion legislation in Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh;
- To extend the benefits of reservation policy for the Scheduled Castes to Christians and Muslims of Dalit background;
- To take measures to address the consistent problem of impunity for perpetrators of religious violence, including considering the development of a system of ombudsmen;
- To further develop a programme of reform in the police and judiciary, in order to guarantee transparency and independence from political interference;
- To take measures to curb Hindu extremist groups involved in the perpetration or incitement of violence against religious minorities.

Legislative Restrictions on Religious Freedom

India is a secular state with detailed constitutional provisions for religious freedom. Article 25 provides for freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practise and propagate religion. Article 19 further protects freedom of speech, expression and association. Article 51 imposes a positive duty on citizens to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood transcending religious boundaries.

However, the religious freedom of Dalits and tribals in particular, remains subject to two specific forms of legislative restriction. Since the iconic Dalit political leader, Dr B.R. Ambedkar, urged Dalits to 'quit Hinduism' and to seek freedom from caste in theoretically egalitarian faiths, religious conversions have been perceived by some Dalits as an important route to emancipation. However, this is obstructed by so-called anti-conversion legislation, which has become closely associated with the political agenda of Hindu nationalist groups and which is currently in place in seven states, and by the exclusion of Dalit converts to Christianity and Islam from the system of affirmative action, known as 'reservation'.

Anti-Conversion Legislation

State-level Freedom of Religion Acts, known colloquially as 'anti-conversion laws', are increasingly becoming a hallmark of state governments espousing a Hindutva agenda. Most of the laws have been passed by BJP administrations; however, although the Congress Party has usually strongly opposed the legislation, the most recent anti-conversion law to be passed was enacted by the Congress government of Himachal Pradesh.

In 2006, anti-conversion legislation became an increasingly prominent issue, with every state in which the BJP held sole power either passing a new law or strengthening existing anti-conversion legislation. The opposition of the Congress Party to this legislation has been severely weakened by the Congress-led passage of an anti-conversion law in Himachal Pradesh.

Anti-conversion laws are currently in place in seven states: Orissa (1967), Madhya Pradesh (1968), Chhattisgarh (which inherited the Madhya Pradesh law when it was created out of the former state in 2000), Arunachal Pradesh (1978), Gujarat (2003), Rajasthan (2006) and Himachal Pradesh (2006).

The status of the respective laws, as of March 2007, is as follows:

- *In force*: Orissa, Madhya Pradesh (2006 amendment not yet ratified), Chhattisgarh (2006 amendment not yet ratified), Himachal Pradesh;
- *Introduced but not formally implemented*: Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat (2006 amendment not yet ratified);
- *Introduced but pending ratification by governor*: Rajasthan;
- *Repealed*: Tamil Nadu.

With the exception of the Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh anti-conversion laws, which are identical, each of the seven laws and their amendments contain slightly different nuances. However, each law ostensibly aims to prohibit conversions by 'force', 'fraudulent means' and 'allurement' or 'inducement', although these categories are ill-defined. Each law also imposes legal formalities on religious priests conducting 'ceremonies' for conversion and would-be converts.

The following concerns are applicable to each of the laws:

1. Contrary to the justification sometimes given for anti-conversion laws,¹ there is no evidence that they alleviate inter-religious tensions. Indeed, with specific reference to the Christian community, there exists a correlation between those states with anti-conversion legislation and those with the highest rate of religiously-motivated violence against Christians. In these states, notably Madhya Pradesh, anti-Christian attacks often happen with the complicity or sympathy of police. It is worth noting also that the laws contribute towards stigmatising religious conversions and, by extension, a wide range of religious activities. In Madhya Pradesh state, the majority of attacks against Christians are committed in connection with accusations against alleged 'conversion activities' or 'attempts to convert' on the part of the victims, as though these were impermissible activities. Such justifications often appear to guarantee the impunity of the assailants.
2. There is no evidence among any religious minority of forced or fraudulent conversions; this is shown by the lack of prosecutions under anti-conversion laws, and brings into question the necessity of these laws.
3. The laws impose severe restrictions on the constitutionally or internationally protected rights to freely adopt, change, profess, practice, teach and propagate religion. Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which is binding upon India, protects an individual's 'freedom to have or adopt a religion of his choice', while Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) provides for an individual's 'freedom to change his religion or belief'. Of particular concern are the requirements upon religious priests to either seek prior permission (as in Gujarat) or to send an intimation to the district magistrates, when performing ceremonies for religious conversions, and the imposition of similar legal formalities upon the potential convert. As a result of this, combined with social pressures, the political influence of Hindu extremist groups and the realities of the hierarchical caste system, potential converts may face practically insurmountable obstacles to religious conversions.
4. The conditions under which conversions are construed as illegitimate are defined sufficiently vaguely as to allow a wide range of religious activities, including charity or education, to be portrayed as attempts to convert. This leaves such activities in a position of legal vulnerability and susceptibility to social pressure or, as in many cases, violent assault.
5. The various religious parties and the nature of conversion between them is defined inconsistently and asymmetrically, leaving some religious groups vulnerable to the unequal administration of justice. The recent amendment to the Gujarat law defined the Buddhist and Jain religions as 'denominations' of Hinduism, thereby exempting them from the conditions imposed by the law but failing to recognise their distinct religious identities. The Arunachal Pradesh law specifically targets conversions away from 'indigenous' religions, defined as Buddhism, a form of Hinduism and animism. The Himachal Pradesh law exempts from administrative requirements any person 'revert[ing] back to his original religion', a thinly veiled reference to 're-conversions' to Hinduism (see point 6 below). Past legal judgements in India have given an 'open' and flexible definition to Hinduism, leaving it in a dominant position.
6. The terminology of 're-conversion' to Hinduism (*ghar vapsi*; also translated 'homecoming') is widely used within India, including by Hindu fundamentalist groups to describe their own proselytism. However, it is not included in the purview of any anti-conversion law, with the implication that 're-conversions' carry a certain legitimacy lacked by other religious conversions. This is compounded by evidence of state government involvement in the organisation of 're-conversion' ceremonies, such as in Gujarat in January 2006. The arising assumption is that the

¹ The 'Statement of Objects and Reasons' in the Rajasthan Freedom of Religion Bill 2006 states that: 'In order to curb such illegal activities [as unlawful conversions] and maintain harmony amongst persons of various religions, it has been considered expedient to enact a special law for the purpose.'

authorities empowered to give permission for religious conversions would be more sympathetic to these 're-conversions' than to conversions away from Hinduism.

The penal provisions are particularly harsh in the more recent laws, exceeding even those given for causing death by negligence. In the Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh laws, the penal provisions are increased substantially for those convicted for converting Dalits (Scheduled Castes) and tribals (Scheduled Tribes). This is often adduced as evidence that the prevention of the lower castes from adopting a new faith and thereby leaving the caste system, is a chief aim of this legislation.

Religious Discrimination in Reservation Policy

Dalits who embrace Christianity or Islam are currently excluded from the legal category of 'Scheduled Castes', which is used of other Dalits, including those who convert to Buddhism or Sikhism.² Members of the Scheduled Castes are eligible for a set of affirmative action benefits, including quotas of reserved places in public sector education and employment, under the system known as 'reservation'. Additionally, Scheduled Castes are covered by specific legislative protections against the particular forms of violence, discrimination and humiliation suffered by Dalits, including the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

The exclusion of Dalit Christians and Muslims from the Scheduled Castes category represents a significant disincentive for Dalits to embrace Christianity and Islam, and therefore obstructs their freedom to adopt a religion according to their choice. This is in contravention both of Indian constitutional protection against discrimination on the basis of religion (Articles 14, 15 and 25), and of international standards on religious freedom.

The legality of the 1950 Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, which restricted membership of the Scheduled Castes to those professing the Hindu religion (although Sikhs and Buddhists have subsequently been admitted to the category), is being contested in a Supreme Court challenge, filed by the Centre for Public Interest Litigation, in writ petition no. 180 of 2004. This case refers specifically to the status of Dalit Christians. At the court hearing on 23 August 2005, the government announced it was mandating the Justice Ranganath Mishra National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities to examine whether a person belonging to the Scheduled Castes should lose this status on converting to Christianity or Islam, on the basis of their socio-economic circumstances. This investigation would inform the response given by the government to the court. The Mishra Commission continued its investigation throughout 2006, with the case being repeatedly adjourned.

This issue has been the subject of widespread advocacy campaign among Dalit and Christian civil and human rights organisations, throughout 2005-06, urging the government to amend the legislation in order to extend the requisite affirmative action to disenfranchised Dalit Christians and Muslims, and to safeguard the right of Dalits to freely adopt a religion according to choice.

² The nomenclature, 'Scheduled Castes' is the formal designation of those 'below' the fourfold Hindu caste system. The term was enshrined in Section 305 of the Government of India Act, 1935. The religious scope of the category has twice been amended, in 1956, to include Mazhbi Sikhs, and in 1990 to include Neo Buddhists.

Religiously-Motivated Violence against Christians

Christians in India faced widespread and violent attacks in India throughout 2006. The states of Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka saw a particularly high rate of attacks, which were often committed with impunity or, in some cases, with clear police complicity.

The attacks varied in nature and severity, including murders, rapes, physical assaults, arson attacks, mob beatings and vandalism of churches and charitable establishments. The vast majority of attacks were either perpetrated or incited by Hindu extremist groups, notably the RSS and its subsidiary organisations, such as the Bajrang Dal. Some attacks have been perpetrated with the tacit or overt encouragement of BJP politicians.

Many attacks, across all states, occurred in connection with an assumption of the illegitimacy of religious conversions or religious proselytism, in line with the ideology of Hindutva, espoused by extremist Sangh Parivar groups and the BJP, which held power, either singly or in coalition, in nine states. This trend was especially true of states with anti-conversion legislation in place, particularly Madhya Pradesh, where social pressures against religious conversions appear to have been legitimised by the anti-conversion law. However, Karnataka was a notable exception, with many attacks being accompanied by accusations of illegal conversions, and some Christians even being detained on this basis, despite no anti-conversion law existing in the state. The widespread opposition to conversions highlighted the need for Christians to adopt a sensitive approach to proselytism in areas with a communally-charged climate. However, the violent backlash against a broad range of religious activities and institutions, including schools and other charitable establishments, especially those working among Dalits and disenfranchised castes, gives considerable cause for concern.

In numerous incidents, attempts were made to pressurise or coerce Christians to 're-convert' to Hinduism. This also reflects the Hindutva perception that Hinduism is proper to India, and represents a 'default' religious position.

In several states, particularly those ruled by a BJP administration, there was a consistent pattern of impunity for attackers, with common reports of police negligence, bias or violence. In most cases, assailants were released on police bail and faced no effective disciplinary action; on other occasions, police refused to register attacks committed against Christians, almost certainly as a result of prevailing political sympathies. Following an attack on a Christian prayer meeting in Bothli village, Chhattisgarh, on 25 June, in which an eight-month pregnant woman was injured, police refused to take action against the perpetrators, claiming they had received orders not to register complaints from Christians. Following an arson attack in Matiapada village, Orissa, on 16 January, two Christians arriving at the police station to register the case were instead detained under the state anti-conversion law, and police refused to include in the First Incident Report (FIR) the name of the village head, despite the persistent claims of the victims that he had led the attack.

In other cases, police have been directly complicit in violence or humiliation against Christians, on the basis of their religious affiliation. In Kasa, Maharashtra, on 15 June, four tribal Christians were mocked and kicked by police, as they attempted to follow up an FIR which they had earlier registered, on an incident of religious hatred. Additionally, in separate incidents in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, police attempted to coerce Christians to 're-convert' to Hinduism, thereby indicating an insupportable religious prejudice.

Women were particularly vulnerable to religiously-motivated violence, in some cases committed in retribution against their husbands. The gang-rape of two women, one of whom was heavily pregnant, in Nadia village, Madhya Pradesh, on 28 May, allegedly took place at the instigation of the village head, in reaction against the refusal of the women's husbands to surrender their faith. The vulnerability of other Christians is highlighted by the fact that numerous attacks took place within homes.

Many attacks were propelled by disinformation campaigns and fabricated charges. The assault on Pastor K.K. Jwala and three other Christians in Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh, on 20 August, was highly orchestrated, with a BJP Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), photographers and a large crowd awaiting the men when they were brought to the police station. The complainant was unknown to Jwala, and never emerged to substantiate his allegation of forced conversion, once the case had attracted the attention of human rights groups. Fabricated charges also drove a mass attack on a Christian charitable institute in Thyagarathi village, Karnataka, on 14 October. Police contributed directly to disinformation against Christians, following a Bajrang Dal attack on carol singers in Jalampur, Chhattisgarh, on 24 December.

Catalogue of Atrocities

This report is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of incidents, as it is likely that further attacks took place and have not been reported, owing to numerous factors, including communication difficulties, the reticence of church leaders in notifying police or NGOs, and deficiencies in the reporting mechanisms in some states. However, it provides an overview of the nature and extent of religiously-motivated violence against the Christian community across most states in India.

Andhra Pradesh

Nizamabad, 12 January: two pastors beaten by Sangh Parivar mob

Pastor M. Aaron and Madhu Kumar, of the Indian Pentecostal Church, were beaten by a mob of Hindu extremists numbering up to 100, while distributing Christian pamphlets during a convention of Bible students in Nizamabad Polytechnic. Their pamphlets were also burnt. The mob was led by Jaipal Reddy, a full-time worker from the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), a student wing of the BJP, and consisted of ABVP and RSS members. Pastor Aaron claimed that his attackers were carrying inflammable materials, intending to burn him alive.

Police registered a case against ten assailants, and attributed responsibility for the attack to the ABVP and RSS.

Domakonda village, Nizamabad, 13 January: pastors beaten by RSS

Ten members of the RSS stormed into the house where a birthday party of a Christian girl was taking place, and pulled the Christians outside the house before beating them. Pastor Nagani Swami David was kicked in the chest and abdomen, and fell unconscious. Thuddam Anil, Vanka Raju, Raikala Dayakar and Ramagalla Ramesh suffered stomach injuries. The attackers then transported Pastor David on their motorbike to the Pochamma Temple, where they left him. They then went to the police station to allege that they attacked him because he had been tearing down pictures of Hindu gods.

Police arrested and charged nine men in connection with the attack.

Badangpet village, Hyderabad, 28 February: Pastor Lavete Jacob beaten

Pastor Lavete Jacob was beaten with sticks by a mob of around fifteen assailants during the birthday celebration of a church member. He sustained a head injury and broken ribs during the attack, which lasted 20 minutes. Jacob's wife and daughters, and the fourteen year-old girl celebrating her birthday, were also beaten as they tried to defend him. The attackers tore down Christian posters and took away Bibles, threatening the Christians and telling them to leave the area.

Five men were arrested after a complaint was lodged with the police, but all were released on bail. Jacob had also been beaten on 18 February, and identified his attackers as the same on both occasions.

Nellore, 19 March: three Christians hospitalised after mob attack

A mob of around 30 attacked a group of Christians undertaking evangelistic work in the Pappula bazaar of Nellore, resulting in the short-term hospitalisation of three pastors, namely N. Nirmal Raj, T. Timothy and A. Ruben. In the analysis of local Christians, the attack was a reaction to the fact that a former RSS member was among the Christian team. He had reportedly been receiving threats since his adoption of Christianity.

A protest rally was held on 20 March by the United Pastors' Association of Nellore and the All India Christian Council, and a memorandum was submitted to local authorities, demanding the arrest of the attackers. Witnesses claimed that a man named Santosh Kumar, thought to be a member of a Hindu extremist group, led the attack.

A number of men were arrested and released on bail from the police station.

Rampur Thanda village, Nizamabad, 8 June: Pastor Prem Kumar murdered

Pastor Prem Kumar, a lay preacher of the Church of South India (CSI) in Nizamabad was murdered after being approached by a young man requesting him to lead a prayer service in the village of Rampur Thanda. Pastor Kumar agreed, but before setting out he asked his son, Sunil, to contact him every thirty minutes. After two hours Sunil lost contact with his father. The family organised a search party in the evening and discovered Pastor Kumar's body in a forest near Rampur Thanda. He was identified by his clothes, because his head was crushed beyond recognition.

Police initially denied any religious motive to the murder. The case remains under investigation.

Nizamabad, 10 June: Christian missionaries beaten by Hindu extremists

A group of Christian workers from the organisation, Gospel for Asia, were beaten while showing a film on social issues such as HIV/Aids. Their equipment was also smashed, causing damage of considerable value. The Christians were not proselytising at the time of attack, though they had been involved in low-key evangelism in the area. GFA teams have faced previous attacks in Andhra Pradesh during the past two years.

Tirupati, 25 June: four nuns threatened by extremists and arrested

Four Missionaries of Charity nuns distributing food to impoverished patients at the Ruya Hospital, Tirupati were threatened by a large Hindu mob and accused of converting people. They were subsequently arrested, allegedly at the behest of Hindu extremists. The incident was preceded by a protest involving representatives of a number of Hindu extremist organisations.

The nuns were detained for a number of hours before being released after the intervention of the local diocesan bishop. A case has been registered against those who threatened the nuns.

Patmagunta, Kamareddy, 21 August: Christian team abused by extremists

A missionary team from the Asian College of Cultural Studies (ACCS) was threatened by six young Hindu extremists while distributing Christian tracts in the Patmagunta slum, Kamareddy, and one member, known as Isaac, was beaten. The assault took place after he addressed the attackers in the vernacular language. The attackers also took away the Christian literature and identity cards of the team members. The team had previously been warned against distributing Christian materials by Hindu extremists, and some of their literature had been confiscated.

The leader of the team registered an FIR concerning the theft of identity cards.

Nandiwaddeman village, Mahabubnagar district, 22 September: Christians attacked and threatened by RSS

Three Christians, including Pastor Nagaiah, were attacked by around ten members of the Hindu extremist organisation, RSS, when putting up posters to advertise a Christian healing meeting. When they asked why they were being assaulted, their attackers said the Christians were becoming a nuisance

in the village. Having severely beaten Nagaiah, the RSS members threatened him and his family with death.

Pastor Nagaiah complained to the village *sarpanch* (chief), but his petition was disregarded. The *sarpanch* instead held a village meeting at which Nagaiah was accused of converting the villagers, and the Christians were instructed not to hold further prayer meetings. A local BJP leader, known as Veeresham, also threatened to videotape any Christians meeting together, and to report them to the Mandal Revenue Officer, in order that as Christians they would be stripped of their Scheduled Caste status and thereby deprived of their benefits under India's 'reservation policy'.³

Nizamabad, 29 September: church attacked by extremists

A mob of Hindu extremists attacked a church in Armor mandal, Nizamabad during an overnight prayer meeting. They used loudspeakers to accuse the pastor, Kavalla Shadrak, of disturbing the peace, and physically assaulted him and other believers. Pastor Shadrak sustained serious injuries as a result of the attack.

The pastor and representatives of the All India Christian Council (AICC) went to the police, where the attackers withdrew their charge.

Roadduvalasa village, Vijayanagaram district, 17 October: church set on fire

A church in Roadduvalasa village was set on fire by a Hindu extremist, known as Jaminder, while more than 100 church members were praying inside. Jaminder objected to there being a place of worship in the village other from Ammavari gudi, a Hindu temple. The church building and all the furniture and musical instruments inside were destroyed, although no one was hurt. A police complaint was filed, and Jaminder was arrested.

Nanchupally village, Nizamabad district, 3 November: pastors attacked by Hindu extremists

Pastor Praharsi and two other pastors were attacked by Hindu extremists, while praying with a family in Nanchupally village. The pastors were forced out of the village and one was seriously injured. The next day, the pastors submitted a complaint at a local police station, but the police did not go to the village to investigate. When the attackers heard that the attack had been reported they gathered a mob of 150 people and threatened to set the family's house on fire. The family fled the village.

Armor, Nizamabad district, 16 November: Christian school attacked by Hindu extremists

A group of 30 Hindu extremists attacked a Christian school run by Catholic nuns in Armor, damaging school property and threatening that they would strip the clothes worn by the nuns and parade them naked. It is thought that the attack occurred in reaction to an incident on the previous day, when the school had called a boy's parents to explain that he needed to wear school uniform after he had come to school in Ayyappa dress (clothing associated with a form of Hinduism popular in south India).

The nuns filed a complaint with the police who began investigating the case. However, the nuns were urged to withdraw the case by relatives of the attackers, who promised to cover all the cost of the damage.

³ India's 'reservation policy' awards a number of benefits, including some reserved positions in public sector employment and educational establishments, to members of the Scheduled Castes (SCs). Those who adopt Christianity or Islam lose their SC status and their entitlements under reservation policy.

Dubbaka village, Nizamabad district, 17 November: church burned down by Hindu extremists

Hindu extremists perpetrated an arson attack on the church in Dubbaka village, after pouring petrol over it. The villagers noticed the smoke, and extinguished the fire before serious damage was done, although the main doors were completely destroyed. Pastor Mylaram Joseph filed an FIR with the local police, who began investigating.

Pedda Demili village, Bamini mandal, Srikakulam district, 1 December: church burned down by Hindu extremists

Hindu extremists burnt down a church on the outskirts of Pedda Demili village. Pastor Vijay Kumar had built the church six years previously, and had been living there with his family. Three months before the attack, four villagers named Garla Jogulu, Palaka Rama Rao, Palaka Sanjeeva Rao and Palaka Parvathi reportedly asked the pastor to demolish the church and leave. They allegedly warned him, 'otherwise we know how to destroy your church and force you out'.

Pastor Vijay Kumar was not at the church at the time of the attack. At around midnight, villagers noticed smoke and flames, but by the time the pastor reached the church it had been destroyed, and insufficient water was available to extinguish the fire.

The following day, the pastor went to the police station to file a complaint. However, police declined to assist him, on the grounds that the sub-inspector was not present.

Malkapur village, Sangareddy, 4 December: media team attacked by police

A Christian media team was assaulted by the sub-inspector of Kondapur police station while showing an evangelistic film in Malkapur village. The team had sought permission from the village head in advance of the screening, and villagers had been given prior notice. The sub-inspector interrupted the screening and asked what was happening. The team explained, and without any provocation he assaulted one of the team members, identified as Spurgeon. A local pastor, named Nelson, tried to explain further, but the sub-inspector ordered the team to leave immediately.

The following morning, Pastor Nelson informed the team that villagers were planning to burn their vehicle so they left the village immediately. Representatives of the AICC asked the police to discipline the concerned officer, although it is not known whether this happened.

Hyderabad, 21 December: school attacked by Hindu extremists

Hindu extremists forced their way into a Church of South India (CSI) school, vandalised the property and physically assaulted the pastor who managed the school, the Rev. A. Bennet. On the morning of the attack, an Ayyappa devotee (a form of Hinduism popular in southern India) entered the school, demanding that one boy should be allowed to wear Ayyappa dress, rather than the school uniform. Around 30-40 other Ayyappa followers then entered the school and vandalised the property. They demanded that the Rev. A. Bennet publicly apologise for expecting the boy to wear the uniform. When he refused, they dragged him into an office and forced him to write an apology. The mob chanted anti-Christian slogans before leaving.

The police were called, and placed a guard at the school to prevent further incidents.

Assam

Haldibari village, Kokrajhar district, 14 November: nine Christian families forced from their homes

Nine families were forced from their homes by adherents of a Bodo tribal religion, because they had converted to Christianity. The attackers destroyed six of the nine homes and the Christians were forced to shelter in a primary school. The Christians had attended a Pentecostal meeting the previous day, which had upset the villagers. They met on 14 November to discuss this, allegedly at the incitement of RSS members. The attacks began that afternoon in Haldibari village, and then spread to nearby villages Moflabari, Jamdugari and Basdari.

District authorities sent security forces to protect the families in the school. They were later able to return to their homes, as other villagers objected to the forced evictions. A case was registered against 25 alleged attackers, seven of whom were arrested and subsequently released on bail.

Bihar

Elha village, Rohtas district, 29 November: pastor's wife raped

Mrs Neelam Paswan, the wife of Pastor Shriram Paswan, was abducted and raped in a field near her house by a local resident, Kamlesh Singh Yadav, allegedly under the instigation of Hindu extremists who wanted to disrupt Christian activity in the area. Yadav was caught by villagers when trying to flee, and said that he had been asked to rape Neelam by someone but whose identity he refused to disclose. He managed to escape before the police came to arrest him, and could not be located.

Chhattisgarh

Kosa Nala, Bhilai district, 18 June: pastor and wife beaten and arrested

Around 25 alleged members of the Dharam Jagran Sena raided the Hosanna Church in Kosa Nala during a service, and physically assaulted Pastor David Raj. He was then dragged out of the church, where a rubber tyre was put around his neck and set on fire. The pastor's wife, Ratna Jyogi, was also severely beaten, and his Bible was stolen, together with his mobile telephone and 3000 rupees (approximately £35/€50/\$65).

Pastor Raj was forcibly taken to Supela police station, where he was detained. His wife was later arrested by a male policeman at night and brought to the police station. The couple were charged on the following day under sections 295A(i), 153A(ii) and 34 of the Indian Penal Code, and under sections 3 and 4 of the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act. The district magistrate initially rejected the bail application filed by the lawyer representing the couple.

The charges were allegedly filed on the basis of statements fraudulently obtained from two frightened Christian women, who reportedly believed they were signing a document to confirm their presence at the venue when the incident occurred. In reality, the statement alleged that Pastor Raj and his wife had offered the women material incentives of money and a motorcycle to convert to Christianity. Local Christians dismissed the viability of this allegation, on the basis of the poverty of Pastor Raj and his wife.

The attack took place an hour after representatives of the National Commission for Minorities departed the state, following their investigation into anti-minority attacks. Local Christian sources suggested that the timing of this attack was evidence of Hindu extremist contempt for the investigation.

An FIR was filed against the attackers, and three men were subsequently arrested but immediately released on bail. Pastor David Raj and his wife were released on bail on 22 June but have been required to report regularly to the police while their case is pending.

Bothli village, Durg district, 25 June: prayer meeting attacked by extremists

A group of around 30 alleged members of the Hindu extremist Dharam Jagran Sena raided a prayer meeting being held by six Christian families, shouting anti-Christian slogans and brutally beating those present. Among the main victims was an eight-month pregnant woman, who was rushed to hospital with internal injuries. However, the hospital declined to treat her and she was discharged.

Police also refused to take action against the perpetrators. The attack occurred in the wake of a number threats from the Dharam Jagran Sena received during the previous month. When the Christians attempted to register a complaint about this, the Hindu extremists began to harass them. Police allegedly refused to take action on the basis that they had received orders not to register complaints from Christians. Christians have continued to experience harassment in the village.

Dantewara, 5 August: orphanage attacked by Hindu extremists

Approximately 50 Hindu extremists attacked the Christian House of Hope orphanage in Dantewara and beat its director, Suresh, with clubs and bamboo sticks. The attackers threatened Suresh with death if he did not stop his work at the orphanage. A number of the children were also questioned and threatened.

Attempts to lodge a complaint with the police failed.

Bamhni village, Bastar district, 9 November: attack on Christians incited by local BJP politician

At a meeting called to address threats against Christians, a BJP politician and his associates attacked six Christians, including a pregnant woman. Puran Patel and other Hindu extremists had been subjecting local Christians to threats and harassment for more than a year. On 3 November, he and some associates had confronted an evangelist, Ashok Baghel, from a neighbouring village while he waited at a bus stop after a prayer meeting. They held rods in their hands in readiness to strike him, but his bus arrived and he managed to escape harm. On 5 November, they had abused Christians attending a prayer meeting.

The Christians wrote a letter to the local council, asking them to provide protection; however at the meeting where this was being discussed, Patel started verbally abusing the Christians and then began assaulting them. The other extremists then began hitting the Christian men and women. Anup Mandavi, Mani Korram, Jaisingh Patel and Krishna Patel were severely beaten. Krishna's wife, Havan, was pushed against a wall and Anup's pregnant wife, Sukbati, was kicked in the stomach.

Police refused to register a complaint at the nearby police station. Only after challenges by the Chhattisgarh Christian Forum was a complaint filed against Patel. An investigation began, though no arrests are known to have been made.

Raipur, 17 December: pastor attacked by Hindu extremists

A mob of around 50 members of Hindu extremist group, Dharam Raksha Sena, beat a pastor and accused him of forcible conversions. Pastor Philip Jagdalla was attacked as he returned to his home from his church, then dragged to the police station. A complaint was lodged against him under Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code for offending religious sentiments. When representatives of the

Chhattisgarh Christian Forum went to the police station to seek bail for Pastor Jagdalla, a mob of extremists surrounded the building, shouting anti-Christian slogans.

Pastor Jagdalla was sent to the hospital for medical treatment, and was able to lodge a counter-complaint against his attackers. However, the false allegations against the pastor were printed in local newspapers.

Jalampur, Dhamtari district, 24 December: carol singers beaten and arrested

Pastor James Ram and 20 other Christians were beaten and arrested, after singing Christmas carols in Jalampur. The attack was perpetrated by members of the extremist group, Bajrang Dal, who stormed the church, beat a number of the Christians and destroyed hymnbooks and Bibles. Five of the Christians were injured, one reportedly losing the ability to hear, while another sustained a fractured hand. Pastor Ram and ten others were arrested for forcibly converting impoverished Hindus, charges they denied. Pastor Ram was released late that night; the others were released on the evening of Christmas Day.

One of the Christians, Santosh Yadav, registered a complaint against one of the attackers, Pandu Lal Sona, though he is not known to have been arrested. Sona had registered the original complaint against the Christians.

The incident was reported in a number of national newspapers, including the Times of India, which quoted the police superintendent, Bharat Singh, as saying, 'the missionaries were caught bribing poor Hindus in a slum colony to convert to Christianity'. Christian leaders refuted these allegations, and accused police of disinformation, saying the extremists were merely reacting against the Christians singing Christmas carols.

Gujarat

Vankadi village, Dahod district, 20 September: missionaries attacked, arrested and falsely accused of attempted murder and forcible conversions

The day after the Gujarat Legislative Assembly passed an amendment to the state's currently inactive anti-conversion law, a group of around ten Hindu extremists wielding sticks and knives physically assaulted eight Christians (including two women) from the Indian Missionary Society (IMS). Pastor A. Arun Daniel, his wife and six other Christians were returning by motorcycle from Divya village where they had visited the home of a fellow Christian, when they arrived at a makeshift roadblock. They were attacked and their valuables were stolen. The two women suffered serious injuries. Although the Christians initially thought they had been ambushed by robbers, the attackers continued beating them, verbally abused them for their preaching and threatened them to stay away from the village.

Because the attack happened late at night, the victims did not attempt to file an FIR immediately. However, the next morning a policeman arrived to escort them to the Devgarhbaria police station where they were informed that a complaint had been lodged against them. Police initially refused to register a counter-complaint against the attackers, threatening the Christians when they persisted in their request to do so. Following the intervention of the Gujarat High Court, a complaint was finally lodged against nine attackers and against Police Sub-Inspector R.S. Sharma of the Devgarhbaria police station for torturing the Christians.

On 24 September, the eight were arrested on charges of forced conversions, attempted murder and carrying firearms. The complainant Kanji Budha Nayak, who was among the original attackers, alleged that when he resisted IMS attempts to convert him, one had opened fire on him. The Christians were released on bail on 29 September.

The case is ongoing, and one of the officers at the Devgarhbaria police station was transferred.

Shihor village, Bhavnagar district, 20 October: Christian school harassed by state government

The Shri Sachhidanand Vidhyalaya school, run by the Catholic Community at Valavad, was ordered to vacate their premises by the district collector of Bhavnagar. This was perceived to be because Hindu extremists, with support of BJP MLA Sunilbhai Oza, were unhappy that so many of the school's pupils were from the Hindu community. Leaders from Hindu extremist group, Jan Jagaran Manch, were allegedly involved in pressurising the collector to place the school under government management. The school filed an appeal, and the eviction was stayed by the Gujarat High Court on 10 November, while the case was investigated.

In spite of the stay, the school continued to be harassed by the police and extremists, and filed a complaint at Shihor police station on 17 November. In response, the district collector and the Western Gujarat Electricity Company, in association with members of Jan Jagaran Manch, issued an order to demolish the school. At the next High Court hearing on 29 November, a further stay was issued to prevent the demolition.

The school, which provides education to impoverished children on a non-discriminatory basis in the area, had previously been under investigation for alleged forced conversions by the police, under pressure from Hindu groups. The school complained of continued harassment by the police, despite the stay.

Haryana

Lakarpur, Faridabad district, 20 December: Christian couple attacked

A Christian couple, Rakesh and Suman Sen, were attacked in their home by around 50 members of Hindu extremist group, Bajrang Dal, who were aggrieved that the couple had allowed their church congregation to meet in their house. They warned that if it happened again, they would force the church members to chant the names of Hindu gods. The couple registered a complaint with the police, and the village leader apologised for the attack, and assured the church that no further attacks would happen.

Jammu and Kashmir

Kathua, 3 September: pastor attacked by Bajrang Dal following allegations of forced conversions

Shortly following the release on bail of two pastors and five Christian students on charges relating to the failure to register locally (a legal requirement in the state) and forcible conversions, one of the pastors, P.R. Anthony, was beaten by a group of around 40 Hindu extremists during an attack on his church. The attack was reportedly led by local Bajrang Dal leader Sushil Sooden.

A disinformation campaign reportedly preceded the attack, with Hindu extremists holding rallies against Christians in the area and local Hindi newspapers alleging that Christians were forcibly converting Hindus. The attackers subsequently filed a case against the Christians, who were released on bail.

Local police intensified their presence in the area following the attack. It is not known whether a case was in turn registered against the attackers.

Pulwama, 11 September: Christian School attacked by Muslim militants

A mob of Muslim militants, estimated to number between 250-300 and drawn largely from among students at the nearby Government Degree College, attacked the Good Shepherd Mission School in Pulwama, shouting anti-Christian slogans and throwing stones which destroyed the boundary wall. The school is run by Father Jim Borst, a Dutch missionary, and has faced ongoing opposition from Muslim extremists. The attack followed persistent failed attempts to expel Fr Borst from the area.

Police arrived at the school and were able to protect the staff and students and disperse the crowd. A number of students involved in the attack were arrested. The school was closed for five days to dissipate tension following accusations that it was trying to convert Muslims with the offer of education.

Kathua district, 12 November: pastor attacked by Hindu extremists

Pastor Pawan of the Good Shepherd Community Church of an unknown village in Kathua district was attacked by a group of around 25 members of Bajrang Dal, carrying swords and knives, while he was holding a worship service in his church. The attackers demanded that he come out of the church, but some women inside the church prevented him from leaving, fearing for his life. The extremists then forced their entry to the church and stopped the service. Pastor Pawan tried to telephone the local police but the attackers confiscated his phone.

Two policemen arrived subsequently, and took the pastor to the police station. He tried to register an FIR, but the police were initially obstructive. They refused to act on the FIR, and failed to provide the pastor with a copy. He continued to be threatened by Bajrang Dal activists and ceased to conduct prayer services.

Mamoosa village, Barmullah district, 21 November: Christian murdered by suspected Islamist militants

Bashir Ahmed Tantray, a Christian convert from Islam, was shot and killed in Mamoosa village by two militants, believed to be Islamists. Tantray worked for the state government in Srinagar, and volunteered with various Christian organisations. He was returning from visiting his sick father in the village, when his attackers shot him at point blank range. His family buried him according to Muslim rites, for fear of further reprisals. It is believed by both Christians and Muslims that he was killed because of his faith and involvement in alleged 'conversion activities'.

The attackers remained unidentified and there continued an atmosphere of fear in the area.

Jharkhand

Singhbhum district, 20 March: fifteen Christians attacked by Sangh Parivar

A Sangh Parivar mob assaulted fifteen Christians belonging to the Friends Missionary Prayer Band. According to local sources, the Christians were then told that they would be denied access to local water supplies.

Dubalia, Ranchi, 21 May: Christian family forced out of village by animists

A newly-converted Christian, Santosh Karmali, was forced by tribal animist believers during a meeting of the Dubalia panchayat (village council) and the Central Sarna⁴ Committee to sign a document forfeiting his right to the land of his family. Karmali had belonged to a Sarna religion prior to his conversion.

⁴ 'Sarna' is the collective name for the animist tribal religions practised in Jharkhand.

Karmali's wife, Shiva Devi, was tansured, lime powder was applied to her face and she was paraded around the village. The family was then forced out the village, and the Sarna samiti committee took possession of the family land.

Sandeep Oraon, general secretary of the Dubalia tribal group, stated that the accusation would be spread throughout the village that Christian humanitarian efforts were aimed solely at converting tribal people. No further details on this case are known.

Karnataka

Bantaguri, Mangalore, 16 April: pastor and wife beaten by Bajrang Dal

A group of between 10-15 men thought to be from the Bajrang Dal attacked the Believers' Church in Bantaguri, Mangalore district, during their Easter Sunday service. The attack resulted in a head injury and fractures in both hands for Pastor V.P. Paulouse, and his wife was also severely beaten. The church hall was ransacked and later, the pastor's house and car were vandalised. The Christians were threatened with further attacks if they should continue meeting to pray.

An FIR was registered at the Bantwal town police station, but those subsequently arrested were alleged by members of the church to have had no involvement in the incident. Following public interest in the case, police assured Christian leaders that such an episode would not be repeated.

Balmatta, Mangalore, 16 April: Prayer hall ransacked, Christians threatened

A mob of between 25-30, believed to be Bajrang Dal members, vandalised equipment and threatened women and children during a raid on a prayer hall of the Living Faith Ministry in Balmatta, Mangalore. Prior to the assault, around ten men wielding cricket bats had visited the location. The attack took place after the men had left the meeting, and a special event was taking place for women and children. The assailants locked the doors, threatened the Christians present and smashed furniture, musical instruments and other equipment, causing an estimated 150,000 rupees' (approximately £1770/€2560/\$3250) worth of damage.

An FIR was lodged against the attackers at Kadri police station, for unlawful assembly, rioting with weapons, vandalism, house trespass, criminal intimidation, and defiling a place of worship. Six arrests were made, but Christians asked to identify these men confirmed that they had not been involved in the attack, and all were released. No further arrests have been made.

Thovaracare village, Tumkur district, 8 June: Christians threatened with death by Bajrang Dal

Seven members of the Bajrang Dal broke up a prayer meeting in Thovaracare village and chased away the pastors Ravi and Umesh, threatening them with death if they should return. They also threatened the other Christians present with beatings and death if they should return to their church. A mob of around 40 Bajrang Dal members waited for the return of the two pastors that evening, though they had returned to Tumkur. They then searched the houses of Christians to ensure they were not hiding the pastors.

The village panchayat forged a compromise between the Bajrang Dal and the Christians, and the police were not involved.

Bethumangala, Kolar Gold Field, 9 June: church bulldozed by Hindu extremists

Hindu men destroyed a church in Bethumangala with a bulldozer, after threats failed to coerce the Christians into leaving the area. Pastor Aaron had been ordered by the leader of the attackers, a man named Minirathana, to cease his work and leave Kolar Gold Field; when he refused, he was beaten. The attackers then left and returned shortly with a bulldozer. The land was subsequently sold to Minirathana by its owner.

Although Pastor Aaron registered a complaint with the police about the attack, no action was taken against the assailants. Instead, the police sub-inspector and the local MLA ordered the pastor under duress to accept a compromise, which he did not accept.

Namthi village, Devangere district, 11 June: pastor arrested and beaten

Independent Christian pastor Sundar Rao was seized by a mob of around 150 people after leading a prayer meeting, and forcibly taken to Namthi police station, where he was severely beaten with the apparent complicity of police. He was forced by his attackers to sign a blank piece of paper, and was also informed that land he had purchased for the construction of a church would be used for the building of a temple. Rao remained in the police station overnight, fearing the crowd outside the building. The following morning, a BJP MLA arrived to urge police not to release Rao. However, he was released during the afternoon of 12 June, with no protection, and was assaulted by a mob outside the building. Although he embarked a bus, this was stopped and he was beaten again.

Police refused to register a case when Rao's wife went to the police station on 13 June. A case was eventually registered by the Devangere district police headquarters. A number of attackers were arrested but released on bail.

Shivanapura district, 15 July: church complex vandalized by extremists

The Shivanapura Marthoma Mission complex, near Bangalore, was damaged in a rampage by a number of Hindu extremists. The attackers threw stones, smashed windows and locked the residents of the mission in their rooms. A number were trapped in their residential quarters, including the pastor, the Rev. Alexander Tharakan, his wife, their two-year-old daughter and his elderly mother.

The mission, which provides various charitable services for the poor and is the location of a weekly church gathering, had been the subject of threats from local Hindu extremist groups previously. The residents could not identify their attackers as they were locked inside. The follow-up to this incident is not known.

Shimoga district, 17 July: three Christians attacked during hospital evangelism

Three Christians from the Harvest Full Gospel Church were assaulted by around 20 Hindu extremists belonging to the RSS and BJP, as they visited patients, prayed with them and distributed Christian literature at the Megan Government Hospital. The attackers alleged that the Christians, identified as Daniel, Manju and Umesh, were forcibly converting patients. It was reported that the hospital had not given permission for religious material to be distributed.

The Christians were taken to the Doddapete police station, where they were arrested for visiting the hospital and distributing Christian literature. They were released on bail on 22 July. Police then interrogated the pastor of the their church, the Rev. Prashant Kumar, about alleged 'conversion activities'. No further information is known about the progress of this case.

The inter-communal tensions in the area have continued following this incident.

Baglkote district, 17 July: Christian students attacked and detained

Four students at the Gospel for Asia Bible College in Bijapur district were beaten in their house by members of the Hindu extremist group, Rama Sena, during a placement in Baglkote district. The men, known as Jagannath, Simon, Santosh and Vijay, had been visiting houses in the area to distribute Bibles.

The attackers took the students to Galgali police station, where a complaint was made about their proselytism activities and alleged conversion of Hindus. Their Christian materials were presented as evidence. Police arrested and imprisoned the men, who were released on 19 July following the intervention of Dalit leaders and Christian pastors. A previous request for their release by a local pastor had been rejected by one officer, who claimed, "It is good for them to be in jail. Otherwise Rama Sena activists may even kill them".

Soulanga village, Devangere district, 27 July: pastor beaten by extremists

Pastor Venkatesh Nayak was severely beaten, allegedly by Hindu extremists in his village. The precise circumstances of the attack could not be confirmed. Some reports have suggested that he was threatened with death by a police officer, and that his wife and young child were threatened by a mob of extremists. Following the attack, Inspector P.S. Murganavar from Namthi police station offered protection to Pastor Venkatesh.

Mardala district jail, 4 August 2006: Christian prisoner attacked by extremists

A Christian prisoner, Mr Chetraven Rajan, was attacked by around 15 members of the Bajrang Dal who had entered the Mardala district jail where he was being held. The attackers allegedly berated him for bringing a foreign deity into India. Prison officials failed to intervene during the attack, and refused to take him to hospital.

Mr Rajan had previously received threats from extremist Hindu groups, as a result of his involvement in Christian social work with a particular focus on Dalits. Reports suggest that extremist groups may have been involved in framing him for the crime of inciting his wife to commit suicide, because of their opposition to his activities.

Although Mr Rajan had clearly been physically assaulted and said he would be able to identify his attackers, no case was registered against them. Following the intervention of Christian leaders, he was relocated to Mysore Sub-jail.

Ambedkar Beedhi, Kolar district, 15 August: Christians beaten by extremists and police

Inspector Shiva Kumar and a mob of Hindu extremists disrupted a prayer meeting at the house of David Narayanaswamy in Ambedkar Beedhi, Malur town. Mr Narayanaswamy and the speaker at the meeting, the Rev. Peter Muniappa, were taken outside and punched in the face. A number of others received the same treatment. The Christians were then taken to the police station where the Rev. Muniappa was severely beaten by the extremists and police. Inspector Kumar threatened two Christian women, Tabitha Timothy and Manjula Narayanaswamy, telling them that they must not meet to pray again. The police took photographs of the Christians which were later shown on a local television channel, which claimed that David Narayanaswamy and the others were converting Hindus.

The Rev. Muniappa and David Narayanaswamy were held in police custody until the following day, during which time the police allegedly forced them to sign a confession which stated that they had been converting people to Christianity. The two men were released in the morning of 16 August.

Soulanga village, Devangere district, 16 August 2006: Christian pressurised by police to 're-convert' to Hinduism

Santosh Nayak, a 22-year-old Christian, was pressurised by police officers to 're-convert' to Hinduism and told that if he did not, his life would be in danger. Three days later, on 19 August, he fled his village without telling anyone. He was located on 23 August.

Kolar district, 20 August: pastor and his assistant beaten

Approximately ten Hindu extremists, reportedly members of the RSS, entered the Good Shepherd Community Church at 7.30am, during the Sunday morning service and began beating the pastor, Nelson Jayaraj. When his assistant, Angam Kainthong, attempted to stop them, he too was beaten. Mr Kainthong suffered internal injuries. As they left, the attackers warned Pastor Jayaraj against holding further church services.

A police complaint was filed against the attackers. No further information is known about the progress of this case.

Dakshina Kannada, 21 August: pastor and two Christian leaders arrested

50-year-old Pastor Joseph was attacked at 10pm in his home by a number of Hindu extremists who accused him of not bowing to Hindu gods. His possessions were loaded onto a tractor and he was taken to a police station. On his arrival he was arrested, but was released by the police soon afterwards.

On 23 August, two local Christian leaders, Pastor Johnson and David Chacko made arrangements to travel to the police station to discuss what had happened. However before they left Mr Chacko's home, Hindu extremists attacked them and dragged them to the police station where they were arrested. They were released shortly.

Belthur, Bangalore, 1 September: pastor beaten and forced to bow before Hindu deities

Pastor John Prabhu of the Assembly of God church in Belthur was dragged from the home of a local Christian and beaten by a group of about 25 Hindu extremists. They took him under duress to a nearby Hindu temple and forced him to bow before statues of Hindu deities. When he initially refused to do as they wished, they spat in his face. The mob then took the pastor to Kadugodi police station, where he was held for questioning for a number of hours and not given the medical treatment he required. The attackers also brought with them someone who levelled a false allegation of forcible conversions against Pastor Prabhu.

Guttigar village, 3 September: elderly evangelist ambushed and beaten

Christian evangelist Varghese Thomas (60) was ambushed and beaten by around fifteen Hindu extremists when he stopped to assist a man who appeared to have fallen off his motorcycle. When Mr Varghese stooped to see whether he was injured, the man threw chilli powder into his eyes, temporarily blinding him, when fifteen men emerged from the bushes and beat him with sticks and clubs. They accused him of offering incentives to convert others, a charge which he denied. He and his wife were threatened with 'a cruel death' if they continued preaching, and their valuables were stolen by the attackers.

The attack occurred as the two were travelling to a meeting convened by village council member Jyothi Premananda, to bring together Mr Varghese and those Hindus who objected to his Christian activities in the village. Mr Varghese had been meeting regularly with a small group of Christians in the area.

Varghese Thomas and his wife filed a complaint at the police station in their locality, but no arrests are known to have been made.

Akkiallur, Haveri district, 3 September: pastors harassed and accused of forced conversions

A mob of approximately 150 people, led by Hindu extremists connected to the RSS and including reporters and police officers, stormed a meeting at a house church attended by pastors Santosh George and Madhu Mohan of the Marthoma Mission. They vandalised a scooter belonging to the mission and demanded that the pastors bring out all the Christian literature kept in the house. This they confiscated and claimed as evidence that the Christians were forcibly converting Hindus. The assailants also photographed the pastors and three young children, with the image later appearing in a local newspaper.

The pastors were then detained by the police, despite the absence of a law prohibiting conversions in Karnataka and the lack of evidence of untoward activities. Police claimed they were held for their own safety. Although police initially issued non-bailable warrants against the pastors, the magistrate of Haveri court granted them bail on a bond of 150,000 rupees (approximately £1740/€2595/\$3380).

A compromise was reached between the parties, including a condition that the Christians should not undertake open evangelistic preaching among non-Christians.

Thyagarathi village, Sagar, 14 October: Christian workers attacked and arrested on false charges

A mob of 500 villagers stormed a Christian-run home for the destitute, after seeing false reports about the centre on local television channels. It is believed that Hindu extremists were behind fabricated allegations that the Christians were involved in trafficking human organs, forcibly confining residents of the centre and over-dosing their medication, though the police reported that the complaints were made by local residents.

The Christians received minor injuries when the villagers attacked the facility. Eight were arrested for wrongful confinement and were held overnight by the police. They were released the following day, on the condition that the institution would remain closed for a month. The police could find no basis for the allegations, although they found that the home had failed to comply with certain administrative requirements.

Kurumaradikere village, Chitradurga district, 29 October: Christians forced to worship Hindu deities

Tribal villagers prevented Pastor Revanna Naik and his congregation from worshipping on 29 October and forced to bow before and worship Hindu deities. This was thought to be in retribution for the Christians having declined to participate in the Diwali festival on 21 October. Three of the Christian families had refused, so the local council chief allegedly ordered the rest of the village to ostracise them. The local police chief ordered Pastor Naik not to enter the village again, to placate village leaders. Following the attack, he went into hiding, in fear of further reprisals. It has been alleged that a local politician, Raja Naik, encouraged the village leaders to harass the Christians.

Bevainahalli village, Chitradurga village, 6 November: Christians forced to bow before Hindu deities

Two Hindu priests and a mob of around 20-25 extremists from the RSS and Bajrang Dal approached every house in Bevainahalli village, threatened the Christians and ordered them to the village temple. The Christians who protested were physically assaulted by the extremists. At the temple, one of the

priests started denouncing Christianity, and demanded that the Christians 're-convert' to Hinduism. The Christians were then marched into the temple, and forced to bow before Hindu gods and goddesses. The Hindu priest applied kumkum to their foreheads, and compelled them to eat prasadam, as signs of acceptance of the Hindu faith.

A police inspector, K.L. Krishna was present, but did not intervene to stop the attack, although he subsequently commented that he ensured the safety of the Christians and made certain that no violence occurred. Previously, Bajrang Dal activists had publicly slandered Christianity in the village.

Lakkavalli village, Chickmagalur district, 12 November: Christians harassed by extremists

A group of Hindu extremists, with links to the BJP, visited the house of Pastor C. Samuel John; reportedly to threaten him. When a Christian neighbour, Pramod, intervened to say Pastor John was away that day, he was physically assaulted. He informed Pastor John about the attack, and police were called, but the attackers had fled before they arrived. The following day, the extremists returned and accused Pastor John of forcibly converting Dalits, and issued a threat that converts to Christianity would not be allowed to join any churches in the local area. The leader also warned Pramod's mother that her other son, Prashant, would be attacked soon, because he was a Christian.

Pastor John had previously been harassed and accused of inducing Dalits to convert to Christianity, but it is unclear whether a formal complaint had been made to the police. No evidence was provided, when the allegations were brought before the village head on 8 November.

Mysore, 30 November: staff at Catholic School attacked by extremists

A mob of 50 Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) members entered the Avila Convent Catholic Girls' High School in Mysore, verbally abused and severely beat members of staff, and broke a statue of the infant Jesus. They accused the headmistress, Sister Francina, of asking a man, identified as Buta Singh, to distribute Christian literature at the local Hindu Sadvidya School, though both denied the allegation. However, the mob responded by beating Singh and trying to assault Sister Francina. The staff tried to rescue her from the extremists, but they were severely beaten.

After the police initially asked all parties to convene at the police station, Sub-Inspector Shanta Ramu said this was unnecessary. He warned Sister Francina that it was an offence to carry out conversion activities at the school, appearing to show bias towards the Bajrang Dal and VHP. Although more than 50 staff members filed complaints against the attackers, the police are only known to have arrested one Bajrang Dal member, Sanjay, for defacing the statue.

Honavar, 5 December: sequence of attacks against Christians by Bajrang Dal

Bajrang Dal members attacked two Christians in Honavar, following the arrest of Bajrang Dal member, Chandrashekar Naik, for an attack against a Christian, Mayaeshak Baila. Naik had accused Baila of forcibly converting villagers, before beating and kicking him. Naik then picked up a wooden stump to further beat Baila, however onlookers intervened and Baila was able to escape and report the matter to the police. Naik was arrested, but quickly released on bail.

Later that day, other Bajrang Dal members assaulted Joseph Lopes and Agnel Dias, who were visiting Christian homes in Honavar. The attackers dragged the two men to the police station and accused them of preaching the gospel with the intent to forcibly convert villagers. The Christians were held and questioned overnight. The police inspector claimed they were held for their own safety, because further Bajrang Dal members had gathered outside the police station.

Guruparahalli, 14 December: Christian sisters beaten for refusing to 're-convert'

Extremists broke into the house of three Christian women to pressurise them to convert to Hinduism, and attacked them when they refused. The women, Jyothi (20), Nandhini (18) and Jalaja (16), who were sisters, had converted to Christianity a few months previously. Since then, Ramesh, one of the extremists, who lived near them, had been opposing them and pressuring them to 're-convert'. On 14 December, the extremists broke into their house, threw a Bible and other Christian literature onto the floor, stamped on it, and replaced a Christian calendar with one of Hindu god, Sai Baba. They pressurised the women to convert to Hinduism and then applied vermilion to their foreheads as a sign of 're-conversion'. When the girls refused to comply, the extremists beat them; they pulled Jalaja's hair, dragged her across the room then threw her against the wall. The older sisters were beaten brutally, one of whom fainted as a result. This assault continued for four hours, from 10pm to 2am.

The attack followed warnings from extremists against attending church and reading literature. They had found Nandhini reading the Bible on the morning of the incident, and threatened the sisters that they would return that evening.

The girls later took a taxi to their uncle's house in Bangalore, fearing further reprisals. Their uncle lodged a complaint with the police, and Ramesh was arrested. He was released on bail on 20 December and the police investigation continued.

Jalahali, Bangalore, 17 December: school vandalised and teachers and archbishop attacked

A mob of over 100 extremists ransacked St Claret High School and College, a Catholic school in Jalahali, and attacked a security guard and two school staff, Father Jacob Arackal and Father Joseph Eppen. The mob stormed the school and the local church with sticks, stones and bricks. They tied up the security guard, and when Father Arackal and Father Eppen came to investigate, they were attacked with sticks. Father Eppen was hospitalised. Police were called, but did not arrive until after the mob had dispersed. When they arrived, they were reportedly more interested in arresting the priests than the mob.

The mob had been protesting about accusations made against, Father Mathew Theruvanmoola, headmaster of the school, of sexual misconduct and forcibly converting students. Staff at the school strongly denied these accusations, and believed that they were fabricated by Hindu extremists to discredit the Christians.

The following day, Archbishop Bernard Moras of Bangalore was attacked by a mob of parents, while visiting the school with Father C. Francis and Father Anthony Swamy to inspect the damages and visit the injured priests. As they approached the school, a mob of hundreds of angry parents stopped the car, dragged out the archbishop and his companions and vandalised the car. The crowd grew to an estimated 2000 people, who then ransacked the school premises once more.

No action is known to have been taken by police.

Kerala

Kattakkada, Kerala, 9 July 2006: Christians attacked by Hindu extremists

Several Christians, including Pastor P.V. George, were attacked by Hindu extremists during a controversy about the presence of non-regular members at a Pentecostal church in Kattakkada, near Thiruvananthapuram. The attack on the Christians, which took place after police ordered them to leave the church, resulted in the hospitalisation of Mr Samuel and Mr Jaykumar.

The attack occurred in the context of a controversy surrounding the church, which had long been opposed because of its proximity to a Hindu temple. After a Hindu extremist organisation, identified as the Organisation for Hindu Unity, made a complaint to the police about the church, non-members were barred from attending. The church was also the subject of a mass petition to the district collector, resulting in an order that the church be closed. The church leadership has been attempting to prevent the closure of their church through legal means.

Kottayam district, 14 December: pastor threatened with murder by Islamist

Pastor Paul Ciniraj Mohammed was telephoned by an Islamic extremist, and threatened with murder. He took the threat seriously because the caller mentioned Bashir Tantray, a Christian who had been murdered, reportedly by Islamic militants, in Jammu and Kashmir in November. He had previously been attacked in March 2006, and in April 2005, his prayer hall had been burnt down by Hindu and Muslim villagers and an associate had been attacked after conducting a baptism.

Madhya Pradesh

Chapri village, Jhabua district, 25 January: tribal pastors beaten by police

A group of seven local police from the Kalidevi police station, Jhabua district, entered a Christian home in which a prayer meeting was due to be held, where they severely beat the two tribal pastors leading the meeting. Pastors Raj Singh Ambliya (at whose home the meeting was being held) and Hateh Singh Rawat of the Philadelphia Church of Chapri, were then taken to the police station, with police repeatedly threatening dire consequences if they continued to gather for prayer or any other kind of 'Christian activity', and mocking their faith.

The men were then detained by the police, during which period they received further beatings, aimed at the neck, stomach and hands. This reportedly took place in the presence of Sub-Inspector Samrath Devanji. As a result of the beatings, they were taken to a hospital the following day, where they were denied access to medical treatment on the grounds they required written permission from the police.

No action is known to have been taken against the police involved in this incident.

Jabalpur, 26 January: communal violence against Christians

Three Christian leaders belonging to the Church of the Nazarene were arrested in Jabalpur on 26 January, for the forced conversion of tribals. According to sources in India, as the arrests took place, the pastors were being attacked and beaten by a mob, which had been incited by anti-Christian disinformation and sloganeering by Hindu extremists.

The arrests of Pravin Pawar, Sanat Pawar and Maclin Masih, were made after a group of Hindu extremists accosted around 23 tribals from Dindori, who were due to travel from Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, to a Christian convention in Nagpur, Maharashtra. The tribals were forced to sign affidavits, stating that they were being forcibly taken to Nagpur by the pastors, against their will. The three pastors were then arrested on the strength of these statements, following pressure from the Hindu extremists, and charged under Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code and Article 4 of the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act. The police also confiscated Christian literature and a number of other documents.

Regional media reports alleged that the tribals were being taken to Nagpur to forcibly convert them. There are fears that these reports could incite further violence against the Christian minority in this area.

Bhopal, 28 January: Hallelujah church meeting attacked by Hindu extremists

At least six Christians were injured during an attack on a prayer meeting being held in the home of Freddy Prasad, a member of the Hallelujah church living in the Govindpura area of Bhopal. A group of at least 30 people, armed with hockey sticks and rods, threw stones at the building and shouted anti-Christian slogans, accusing the organisers of being responsible for 'forced conversions', before beating the participants in the meeting. Pastor Sam Francis, the leader of the church, sustained fractures in his hands and legs. Kidshore Sadhwani suffered a fractured hand and a head injury, and reportedly also developed a blood clot and began vomiting blood. Sam Francis' vehicle and Freddy Prasad's scooter were also damaged during the attack, and the window panes of the house were smashed.

The Hindu militant group, Bajrang Dal, was believed to have been responsible for the attack, though members of the BJP state government attributed responsibility to a Bajrang Dal splinter group. On Sunday 5 February, members of the Bajrang Dal staged a procession against Sam Francis, during which his effigy was burnt and he was accused of converting the children in his church's orphanage.

Indore, 5 February: Christian evangelists beaten by RSS members

RSS members beat two Christian men for distributing Christian literature. They had locked themselves in a room of the church in the Kabeetkhedi area of the city, but their attackers forced open the door and beat them. One of the men was reportedly injured.

Police registered a case and began investigating the matter. However, no arrests are known to have been made.

Jabalpur, 17 March: Youth With A Mission students beaten by Hindu extremists

Four men interrupted a prayer meeting in a Youth With A Mission (YWAM) training centre in the city of Jabalpur, where they identified themselves as members of a government investigative agency and began questioning the trainees about YWAM activities. Shortly afterwards, twelve additional men entered the building, where they began to beat those present. Reportedly, six received minor injuries, and female trainees were subjected to sexual molestation. The attackers also destroyed Bibles and damaged electronic equipment, furniture and window-panes.

One of the attackers telephoned the owner of the house in which the training centre operated, reportedly identifying himself as a member of the Bajrang Dal. The police were telephoned and arrived to detain one of the attackers. The initial four intruders were also arrested but released on bail from the police station. Acting on the allegations of the attackers, police also registered a case against Mr Jacob, the proprietor of the house, under the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act 1968.

Naudara Bridge, 5 April: Christian school stormed by Dharam Jagran Sena

The Christian high school run by the Methodist Church at Naudara Bridge was stormed by members of the Hindu extremist group, Dharam Jagran Sena, who accused staff members of forced conversions. A former teacher, Ramakant Mishra, had arrived at the school just ahead of the DJS, claiming to have been forced by staff at the school to convert to Christianity. He filed a case against three staff at Omti police station on the same day. Similar claims had been made by Mishra in 2002 but were deemed by police to be unfounded. When he worked at the school, he allegedly threatened to make such claims if he was not promoted.

Police and the Madhya Pradesh State Minorities Commission launched an investigation into Mishra's claims, but found them to be false. No further action is known to have been taken.

Thaiyavali Chowk, 6 April: school staff assaulted by Dharam Jagran Sena

Christ Church Boys School at Thaiyavali Chowk was stormed by members of the Hindu extremist Dharam Jagran Sena angered by the school's decision not to close for the Hindu festival, Ram Navmi. The extremists accused the Christians of anti-nationalism, physically assaulted a teacher and threatened headmaster Lady Matthew. However, the school did not register a complaint with the police.

Jabalpur, 7 April: Christian protesters beaten by Dharam Jagran Sena

Members of the Hindu extremist Dharam Jagran Sena beat around 25 Christian protesters outside a police station, following the arrest of seven Christians under the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, the state's anti-conversion law. The Rev. Kishan Singh, pastor of the church whose prayer meeting had been broken up by police, led a group of Christians to the station, but they were blocked by a mob of around 80 people shouting anti-Christian slogans. The mob beat and kicked the Christians, with the police reportedly watching. The attack resulted in injuries to at least seven Christians.

Although the Christians reported the names of eight attackers to Superintendent Srinivas Rao, no action is known to have been taken against them. The seven Christians were released the following morning, though police continued an investigation against them.

Gwarighat, Jabalpur, 1 May: Christian social worker falsely charged of forced conversions

Social worker Sunil Kumar Rao claimed to be the victim of collusion between police and Hindu extremists to accuse him of forcibly converting people in violation of the state anti-conversion law. He was arrested while teaching a class of twenty children of manual labourers in a slum area of Jabalpur, and searched for incriminating materials as police accused him of intending to convert the children to Christianity.

He was taken to the Gwarighat police station, where a number of VHP and Bajrang Dal members arrived and allegedly manhandled him. Police then drew a number of items from his bag which had not been found during the first search, to provide evidence for the case against him. Rao claimed these items had been planted by police. Police then took statements from two men, Puralal Ahirwar and Dharmendra Ahirwar, pertaining to his alleged conversion activities by 'force' and 'allurement', but Rao claimed never to have interacted with either man.

Rao was released on bail after giving a statement.

Jabalpur, 2 May: pastor physically assaulted and arrested

An independent Pentecostal church leader, Pastor Andreas Soni, 60, was repeatedly slapped by members of the Bajrang Dal as he distributed Christian literature in Jabalpur, causing minor facial injuries. He was then arrested by Jabalpur Railway Police under the state anti-conversion law, after an FIR was registered against him by Inspector Akhil Verma for allegedly offering money to convert to Christianity.

The pastor was released on bail on payment of 5,000 rupees (approximately £60/€85/\$110). Following the arrest, Madhya Pradesh Minorities Commission member Indira Iyengar claimed that no evidence had existed to implicate Soni in 'allurement' to convert others, and asserted the right to propagate religion under Article 25 of the Indian Constitution.

Dhana Kamaria, exact date unknown: inter-religious wedding attacked by Hindu extremists

A marriage ceremony between a Christian man and a Hindu woman in Our Lady's Church, Dhana Kamaria, was disrupted by Hindu extremists, who physically assaulted and insulted bride Deepmala and brutally beat bridegroom Robin Das.

An FIR was filed against the attackers and the case remains under investigation.

Gaur Nadi, Jabalpur, 14 May: church attacked by Dharam Jagran Sena

An estimated 50 members of the Dharam Jagran Sena attacked Anant Jeevan Marg church in Gauri Nadi village, Jabalpur district, after the Sunday service on 14 May. The attackers threw stones at the building and vandalised furniture and equipment, while shouting anti-Christian slogans. They also beat church member Dinadath Tiwari, who had recently converted to Christianity, and assaulted Pastor Munnu Kujur, who denied that his church was converting people by force. His attackers threatened to throw acid in his face and to bomb his church if he did not stop converting people to Christianity.

The attackers accused the church of undertaking forcible conversion, and confiscated all the church Bibles as purported evidence of their distribution to convert people. They then brought Pastor Kujur to Barela police station where they lodged a formal complaint against him. He was detained under the Madhya Pradesh anti-conversion law but released after local Christians paid his bail fee.

Local Christian leaders filed a complaint against four assailants, namely Yogesh Agarwal, Sudhir Agarwal, Kedar Namdev and Indra Bham, who had also allegedly attacked a house church on 7 April. The case remains under investigation.

Nadia village, Khargone district, 28 May: two Christian women gang-raped

Two Christian women were gang-raped by a group of five Hindu extremists. One of the women was reportedly seven months pregnant at the time of the attack. The husbands of the two women, who attempted to defend their wives, were beaten with sticks. Family members were subsequently threatened with further attacks and death if the matter was reported to the police.

The attack took place in the context of Hindu extremists attempting to force a village Christian to renounce his faith. On the afternoon of 28 May, Gokharya Barela, husband of one of the rape victims, had been beaten and forcibly taken to neighbouring Sirvil village, where the panchayat (village council) forced him to drink alcohol, taboo for many tribal Christians, and demanded that he surrender his faith. When he refused, he was warned to leave the village. According to reports, the Sirvil village head, Pandya Patel, told villagers that they could rape Christian women, whom nobody would save.

Initially police refused to register an FIR against the attackers. The case was eventually registered at the intervention of the district administration, but no action has yet been taken against the perpetrators. Instead the police superintendent and district magistrate reportedly claimed they could take no action as this was a matter concerning religious conversions, and the police report did not acknowledge that a rape took place.

Mayapuri, Ujjain district, 4 June: prayer meeting attacked by Bajrang Dal & pastor detained

A mob of around 50 alleged Bajrang Dal members raided a prayer meeting held at the home of local Christian Ramesh Thakur, shouting anti-Christian slogans before accusing Pastor Jagdish Bharti of destroying the Hindu religion and demanding that he renounce his faith and worship the Hindu god Bajrang, or Hanuman. The attackers then forcibly took all 25 at the prayer meeting to a nearby Hindu

temple, where they compelled them to bow before the idols. The nine women present at the meeting were threatened with rape if they should continue attending Christian prayer meetings. The attack came after three months of close surveillance and threats against Thakur and Pastor Bharti by Hindu extremists.

Subsequently, police arrested fifteen of the Christians, and Pastor Bharti was charged with 'deliberate and malicious intention of outraging ... religious feelings' under Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code. Pastor Bharti alleged that police encouraged the Hindu extremists to physically assault him the next time he was found proselytising. He was released on bail of 20,000 rupees (approximately £235/€340/\$435) on 6 June. The fourteen others were released after four hours of interrogation.

Jabalpur, 6 June: Christian woman threatened by extremists in police station

Members of the Dharam Jagran Sena, led by Yogesh Agarwal, openly threatened and shouted anti-Christian slogans at a woman arrested under the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, allegedly on the basis of false charges. The Hindu extremists shouted that Christians should be kicked and killed, and were unopposed by the police who allegedly laughed with them.

The complainant, Guddu Usram, later confessed to the arrested woman, Meera Bai, that he had been forced by members of the Dharam Jagran Sena to register the complaint.

Meera Bai was later released on bail, after the fee of 5000 rupees (approximately £60/€85/\$110) was paid.

Jabalpur, 14 August: pastors arrested on fabricated conversion charges

Pastor Vinod Karsal and Sekhar Kashav, both of the Assemblies of God church, were threatened by a large mob representing the Bajrang Dal and Shiv Sena as they prayed with a church member in ill health. The mob reportedly gathered around the house when prayer and singing was overheard, and began shouting anti-Christian slogans.

A local Bajrang Dal leader filed a complaint against the pastors for offering incentives of 10,000 rupees (approximately £115/€170/\$225) and a job to anyone who converted to Christianity, a charge decried by Christian groups. Reportedly, the main evidence used to substantiate this charge was a number of Bibles and other Christian literature found in Pastor Vinod's property, which some sources suggest was planted by the attackers. While at the police station, the pastors were abused by prominent Hindu extremist Yogesh Agarwal, who had been involved in previous anti-Christian assaults in Jabalpur.

The pastors were released on bail the following day, with police claiming that they were detained overnight for their own protection. Police have kept the materials collected as evidence against the Christians, and have reportedly sought bribes from them.

Kila, Shivpuri, Sheopur district, 20 August: four Christians beaten, arrested and mistreated by police

Pastor K.K. Jwala and three other church members were attacked by a group of around fifteen Hindu extremists wielding hockey sticks, before being dragged forcibly to Sheopur police station, where they were arrested on a charge of forcible conversions. The attackers initially set upon the pastor, but also beat a number of Christians who tried to protect him. They took away Christian materials and stole the handbags of several women present. The attack occurred immediately after a service at the Sheopur Bible Fellowship church, and its perpetrators reportedly included Bharat Singh Sikarwar, Ram Lakhan Natakedi, Shyam Singh Jat, Devendra Singh Kushwah, Dharmendra Jat and Moh Sarfuddin Khan, a local BJP leader.

Pastor Jwala and three other Christians, identified as Anurup, Jejo and Raju Mathew, who were also injured, were taken to Kotwali police station and arrested under the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act 1968, following a complaint allegedly filed by Mr Manoj Prajapati, a man unknown to Pastor Jwala who never emerged to substantiate the allegations in person. A large crowd had assembled at the police station, including a photographer, which led the Christians to suspect the attack had been carefully organised. BJP MLA Durga Lal Vijay was awaiting the Christians at the police station, and Pastor Jwala alleged that he had orchestrated the attack and the charges. Pastor Jwala was physically assaulted by senior policeman Hukum Singh Yadav while in custody.

At midnight, police raided the home of Pastor Jwala and illegally brought his wife and two-year-old son to the police station for intensive questioning. The Christians were bailed on 21 August, and the police repeatedly failed to bring charges against them. However, the case remained pending beyond the 90-day limit within which charges must be brought.

Mangaon, Rewa district, 20 August: church vandalised by Bajrang Dal and pastor threatened

A group of around 50 Hindu extremists, allegedly Bajrang Dal members, threatened Pastor Vijay Kumar Mourya and vandalised his church, accusing him of having tried to convert people to Christianity illegally. The attackers gathered outside the church at 9.30am and began chanting slogans and Hindu prayers. At about 11am, when two members of the church brought their ill five-year-old son to the front of the church for prayer, a number of the extremists entered the building. One of these men took the child, twisted his arm and shouted, 'Stop this now! Leave this place, or the next time there will be bloodshed'. The attackers then vandalised the church.

Pastor Mourya was summoned for questioning by the police on 22 and 23 August, after allegations of attempted conversions were made against him by Bajrang Dal members. One of the accusers, whom Pastor Mourya had allegedly never met, claimed to have been offered financial incentives to convert. According to some reports, Police Inspector M. Pachouri later stated that local leaders of the VHP, affiliated to the Bajrang Dal, were pressurising police to register cases of forced conversions against Christians.

Bharghat village, Seoni district, 10 September: Christians attacked and arrested for alleged forcible conversions

A large mob of Hindu extremists attacked a small family prayer meeting led by Pastor Haroon Jonathan and physically assaulted those in attendance. The attackers are believed to have represented extremist splinter group Dharam Jagran Sena and were reportedly accompanied by police. Pastor Haroon and at least three others were arrested for hurting religious sentiments, promoting religious animosity and forcible conversions. According to reports, police claimed to possess an audio recording of Pastor Haroon urging people to dispose of idols or pictures of Hindu deities.

Pastor Haroon was detained on 15 October and remained in prison during the Hindu festival of Diwali from 18-26 October, as police had failed to register charges against him. He was released on bail, but his case was ongoing. His attackers issued a message calling for Pastor Haroon to be killed.

Balaghat district, 10 September: Christians attacked by Bajrang Dal and police

A group of at least 40 Hindu extremists allegedly belonging to the Bajrang Dal, allegedly accompanied by police, attacked fifteen Christians praying in the home of Rekha Bai Kawde, accusing them of forced conversion. Ms Kawde and two others, Durga Prasad Vanshpal and Suraj Lal Nivare, were taken to the police station, where they were physically mistreated and detained. Ms Kawde was reportedly pressurised to provide a statement claiming she had been forcibly converted.

Ghama Thana village, Jabalpur district, 12 September: pastor attacked and arrested while praying for sick villager

Pastor Venkatesh Kumar Sadhu was attacked by members of Bajrang Dal in Ghama Thana and arrested after his assailants issued a complaint of 'forced conversions' against him. Pastor Sadhu had been asked by a family in Ghama Thana village to visit their home and pray for a sick family member. Following the complaint made against him, he was questioned at the local police station. Representatives of the Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) telephoned the police station and he was released subsequently. Police stated there was insufficient evidence to support the charges brought by the Bajrang Dal but admitted they were under pressure by Hindu extremists to prosecute Christians.

Khedli village, Betul district, 22 September: two Christians beaten and arrested

Lakhan Pawar and Shailendra Pawar were attacked by a mob, reportedly comprising the village chief and members of the Bajrang Dal, while visiting Khedli village to pray with a fellow Christian. Lakhan Pawar was injured in the attack. Police were called, but arrested the Christians instead.

The attackers registered a case against the men of insulting the Hindu religion. They were released on bail on 26 September.

Nana Badvani, Badvani district, 24 September: two pastors beaten, threatened and accused of forcible conversions

At least 20 members of the RSS and Bajrang Dal forcibly entered a church in Nana Badvani where they severely beat two pastors, identified as Sukhlal and Jorsingh. Some of the attackers allegedly spat on a Bible and tore it up before telling the pastors they would forfeit their lives if they did not abandon Christianity. The pastors were then dragged to the local police station and accused by their assailants of eating beef and carrying out forcible conversions.

A member of the Madhya Pradesh Minorities Commission, Patras Habil, intervened and a compromise was reached with the extremists, who withdrew their complaint.

Khamaria, Jabalpur, 10 October: church convention attacked by extremists, despite police presence

Around 80 Hindu extremists from the Dharam Jagran Sena attacked the annual convention of a Pentecostal church in Khamaria, despite a police presence, and threatened to launch a bomb attack if the meeting continued. Although the police prevented the armed extremists from entering the meeting, they shouted abuse and accusations of forcible conversions for over 30 minutes, until the police assured them the meeting was over for the night, having asked the church to switch off the lights.

The senior pastor of the church, Augustine Rao, asked the police to intensify their protection so the convention could continue until its conclusion on 15 October. It is unknown whether this happened.

Paralia village, Shahdol district, 19 October: Christians beaten for refusing to 're-convert' to Hinduism

Two Christians, Santu Prasad Barmaia and Kunjun Prasad Barmaia, were beaten by a group of twelve villagers, after consistently refusing to 're-convert' to Hinduism and participate in Hindu festivals. Both men suffered internal injuries and, despite naming their attackers in their report to the police, no arrests are known to have been made.

The two men, the only Christians in the village, had faced persistent pressure from villagers to 're-convert', since adopting the Christian faith four years previously. In the past year, villagers had refused

to allow the men to use the village well. They were also abused for vandalising a Hindu temple, despite the police investigation concluding the allegations were false.

Khardu, near Umria village, 30 November: pastors attacked by RSS mob

Nine RSS members attacked Pastor Hatey Singh Gundiya and Pastor Gokul Gundiya with bamboo sticks, while they awaited a bus to Jhabua, where they were intending to sell produce at the market. The attackers accused the pastors of preaching, and two of the attackers, Karmu Damor and Mukesh Nath, carried out the assault, while their seven associates surrounded the pastors. Hatey Singh sustained injuries to his hands and feet, while Gokul's eyes were swollen from the attack. Onlookers intervened and stopped the beating, but the attackers continued threatening the two pastors until the bus arrived, even pursuing it to carry out further attacks.

The pastors went to the police station in Jhabua, and filed an FIR against the attackers under sections 323 and 504 of the Indian Penal Code, for voluntarily causing harm and insult with intent to provoke a breach of the peace.

Maharashtra

Ghosali village, Thane district, 29 January: Catholic school attacked by mob

A mob of Hindu extremists attacked the inauguration ceremony of a newly built Catholic school and hostel for tribals, by throwing stones into the crowd, breaking chairs and beating participants with sticks. The mob accused the staff of trying to convert people by offering education to their children, and reportedly chanted, 'Leave! We don't want Christians here!'

Three days prior to the opening ceremony, a VHP representative had allegedly called the police to urge that the Suryodaya Ashram school should not be opened. However, police did not inform the school of this, nor did they offer protection for the event. Although Fr Brendan Furtado telephoned the police, being beaten on his neck as he did so, they did not arrive for two hours.

Eighteen attackers were subsequently arrested and released on bail. The school feared a second attack, though police stationed 25 officers outside the school.

Nere village, Raigad district, 26 February: three pastors attacked by Bajrang Dal

Three pastors associated with the charity, Social and Evangelical Action for Love (SEAL), were attacked with crowbars by a Bajrang Dal mob of around 50. The Rev. K.M. Philip, the Rev. Biju Samuel and the Rev. Reggie Thomas were admitted into hospital after the attack.

Police registered an FIR against the attackers, who were released on bail from the police station.

Khopate village, Uran, 11 April: Christians severely beaten during VHP raid

A group of around 50 VHP members seriously assaulted two pastors during a raid on a large-scale prayer meeting at the Living Light Fellowship Church in Khopate village, Uran, which was attended by around 500 Christians. After videotaping around 30 minutes of the event, fifteen of the Hindu extremists seized the microphone from the Rev. Joseph and accused him of converting people to Christianity. They beat him and fellow pastor T. Shekhar, allegedly for over half an hour using chains, iron rods and sticks. The Rev. Joseph sustained a fracture in his right arm, a number of broken ribs and a bleeding head; Pastor T. Shekhar later required stitches to a head wound. They reportedly demanded to know the contacts of the pastors 'for conversion activities' and stole their mobile telephones. The attackers also threw stones at the assembled crowd and destroyed a number of Bibles.

Five of the pastors present were then forcibly taken to a nearby Hindu temple, the Shankar Mandir, where they were beaten after refusing to worship a Hindu god.

An investigation was undertaken by police at the behest of Vijay Kamle, police commissioner of Navi Mumbai. Police made a number of arrests and but all were released on minor charges.

Chopada, Pune district, 22 May: Christian stoned by Hindu extremists

Members of the Indian Evangelical Team (IET) church in Chopada, Maharashtra were ordered to stop praying by a group of Hindu extremists. When they refused, one of the Christians was stoned. At a subsequent meeting of the local panchayat, the case was not heard but instead villagers were incited by the chair to physically assault any Christians they should find in the local villages.

The Christians subsequently faced a false criminal charge of desecrating a Hindu goddess.

Kasa, Thane district, 15 June: four tribal Christians assaulted by police

Four tribal Christians were verbally and physically abused by policemen at the Kasa police station when they arrived to follow up an FIR lodged on 8 June. The FIR had pertained to an assault by members of the local Tribal Welfare Committee on Christians Baburao Mahala, Anil Chaudhry and two others under the names of Sunil and his wife Kalpana. Police taunted the Christians before asking them to demonstrate how they prayed. When they knelt, they were kicked and their faith was mocked by the police. Subsequently, the four were charged for a breach of the peace.

Following a complaint by the AICC, a police enquiry into the case was ordered. One sub-inspector was removed from his job, as requested in the complaint, but no further action has yet been taken.

Tilonda village, Thane district, 24 December: prayer service disrupted by extremists

A large mob representing Hindu extremist group, Vanvasi Kalyan Parishad, forcibly entered a prayer meeting attended by 400 Christians, shouting anti-Christian slogans and driving away many of the attendees. Fearing further violence church officials cancelled the event. Dr Abraham Mathai, vice-chair of the Maharashtra State Minorities Commission, had written to the police to ask for protection for the event in advance, but although police were present, they did not stop the extremists.

Manipur

Seikmaiing, I May: church buildings destroyed and Christians evicted

A church in Seikmaiing, Thoubal district, was burned down and further dismantled by Hindu villagers after the conversion to Christianity of a prominent village member. Some of the Christians in the village were also physically assaulted. Pastor Raghmani was subsequently forced to sign a resolution passed by the villagers demanding that he leave, and the Christians were given until 3 May to depart the village.

The incident followed the conversion of fortune-teller Memcha, which was greeted angrily by her husband Manglem and son Ibomcha. They had threatened to evict her unless she recanted her Christian faith, but she left the house and was baptised. Manglem threatened to kill Pastor Raghmani and his family for allegedly converting his wife to Christian faith. To force them out of the village, he and his son set the church on fire.

An FIR was registered at Kakching police station, but later withdrawn in order that a compromise could be found.

Orissa

Matiapada village, Jajpur district, 16 January: Christian homes burned

A group of around fifteen Hindu extremists, incited and led by the BJP village head, attacked Pastor Kulamani Mallick as he sat with his wife and child, before setting fire to their home. He temporarily lost the sight in one eye after it was hit by a stone. Other Christians in the village were beaten with sticks and stones or bricks. Pastor Mallick's home was destroyed, along with seven adjacent houses (six of which belonged to Christians), which also caught fire.

Kulamani Mallick, with his cousin Gunanidhi Mallick, attempted to register a case against their attackers at the local police station. However, police officer Jagannath Pareda told them to remove the name of the village leader from the FIR, and became very angry when they refused to do so. They were detained and questioned under the Orissa Freedom of Religion Act, accused of conversion activities. Their interviewer insulted and threatened them because of their Christian faith. Kulamani Mallick reported losing faith in the police as a result of the manner in which his case was treated.

Five men were charged with the destruction of a property by fire, though the village leader was not among them.

Koikonda village, Malkangiri district, 24 January: missionaries attacked under RSS incitement

Ten Christian villagers were injured during a mob attack on a Christian home, at which a worship event had taken place the previous evening, attended by fourteen Christian families and four missionaries of the Indian Evangelical Team (IET). Reportedly, members of the RSS held a village meeting on the morning, after having heard singing emanating from the house on the previous evening. Immediately after the village meeting, a mob of around 50 converged upon the Christian home, and demanded that the four IET missionaries come out of the house. They were severely beaten, together with other Christians in the house. Missionaries Vijay Kumar, who lost consciousness for three days, and Baldas Gopal, were hospitalised with serious internal injuries.

While village pastor Salvam Samu tried to lodge an official complaint on 26 January, police informed him they were 'too busy' to talk to him. One of the IET missionaries, Ramesh Sulah, registered a written complaint on the following day, but police failed to provide him with a carbon copy, as required by law. Fearing further attacks, the Christians did not meet together on the following Sunday.

Two men were arrested in connection with the incident and subsequently bailed, though reportedly the main assailants avoided arrest.

Nandapur, Koraput district, 20 March: church burned down

The church in Nandapur was targeted in an arson attack while its pastor was absent from the village. Local Christians suspected Hindu extremists to have been responsible for the attack. At the time of the report, the church leader was pursuing legal redress.

Gokulpur village, Bhadrak district, 4 October: Christian youth abducted, tortured and tonsured

Ranjan Dangua was abducted from his house, tortured and tonsured by Hindu extremists, allegedly in retribution for his adoption of Christianity. He was severely beaten, forcibly converted back to Hinduism and held in a temple and another unknown location, until he was able to escape, and raise the alarm with the pastor with whom he was staying. Christian families in the village had faced fierce opposition from Hindu extremists in neighbouring villages since several years previously. The police opened an investigation, and Ranjan was provided with protection.

This incident occurred two days after the VHP reportedly 're-converted' 129 tribal Christians in neighbouring Balasore district, in the presence of BJP leaders, including MLA Bhagirathi Majhi. The VHP state secretary, Gouri Rath argued that they had been forcibly converted to Christianity, and that they were only returning to their own religion.

Gudripadri village, Kandhamal district, 27 October: Christian arrested for causing 'disharmony'

Amit Kumar Raul was arrested at the 'Peace Festival and Healing Crusade' in Gudripadri village, after extremists representing the group, Hindu Jagaran Samukhya, started harassing him for selling literature, including the book, *Oh, You Hindu, Awake*. The extremists verbally abused Raul and physically assaulted him. They later returned with some police officers, who arrested Raul for causing communal disharmony, even though the Baliguda superintendent of police, Satich Gojvie, subsequently admitted he was only arrested to prevent communal violence.

Raul was not granted bail, and remained in prison for a number of days while the judge took leave for an unspecified period. This allegedly took place because the extremists were supported by strong political elements.

Prior to the event, extremists had threatened the organisers, even though permission had been sought from state administration. Raul's bookstall was one of many at the event, which was attended by more than 10,000 people.

Boriguma, Koraput district, 23 December: church burned down

Hindu extremists burned down a thatched church in Boriguma area, preventing church members from celebrating Christmas there. It remains unclear who exactly was responsible for the attack.

Punjab

Bathinda, 16 April: Easter Day church service attacked by Hindu extremists

A group of around five Hindu extremists bearing sticks, led by RSS member Sukhpal Singh, broke up an Easter Day event at the home of Kulwanth Singh of the House of Prayer, an independent Christian denomination, and warned the Christians against holding any further meetings. The attackers verbally abused those present, shouted anti-Christian slogans and vandalised some of the property. Reportedly, following this attack, Hindu extremists threatened other pastors around Bathinda to desist from Christian activities.

Kulwanth Singh attempted to register an FIR at the railway police station, but Station House Officer Gurjeet Singh refused to oblige. When they approached Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Birendra Kumar instead, he reprimanded the pastor for his Christian activities and told him that he required permission from the district magistrate in order to hold this event.

Local Christian leaders attempted to meet the SSP, but he refused to see them. On 4 May, after he was contacted by AICC leaders from Delhi, he recanted and extended permission for the Christians to hold services. Two Shiv Sena members and another man were arrested in connection with the raid, but released on the same day.

Panglia village, Kaputhala, 1 June: Pastor Harbans Lal beaten

Pastor Harbans Lal, leader of Happy Life Prosperity Church in Panglia village, was beaten unconscious by a mob of around 15-20 people. The alleged leader of the group, Tari, accused Lal of using evil spirits when he had prayed for his sister. Tari took Pastor Lal to his residence, where he was severely beaten and sustained serious head injuries.

Police were notified of the attack by Christian leaders, and undertook to resolve the situation.

Duggalwala village, Taran Taran district, 2 July: church attacked in presence of police

A mob of 20 people, reportedly led by Pyara Singh, Gurpreet Singh, Bachitar Singh and Ajayab Singh, entered the church in Duggalwala village during its Sunday service, ransacking the building and physically assaulting a number of the worshippers. Among those injured were Pastor Bagh Masih and a member of the congregation, Mr Bakshish, who was hospitalised. Later that night, around 50 men went to the hospital where Mr Bakshish was being treated, threatened him with death if he did not leave the hospital and then forcibly removed him. Pastor Bagh Masih had been receiving threats demanding that he leave the church.

The attack took place in the presence of police, who had been deployed following a High Court order to ensure the protection of the Christians, but they failed to intervene. Subsequently, police officers allegedly passed on a false report to their superiors, and refused to file an FIR. No action was taken against the perpetrators.

Rajasthan

January-March: institutions of Emmanuel Mission International repeatedly harassed and attacked

A number of institutions and staff of the Emmanuel Mission International (EMI), which operates various charitable foundations in Rajasthan and across India, endured considerable harassment from Hindu extremists throughout the period January to March.

On 25 January, the leaders of the organisation, Archbishop M.A. Thomas and his son Dr Samuel Thomas, received anonymous death threats and were warned that the Emmanuel Seminary should not hold its annual graduation ceremony for over 10,000 orphans and Dalit Christians, scheduled for 23-27 February. This ceremony had been the target of a serious attack in 2005. On 10 February, police in Kota notified Emmanuel Seminary that no security would be provided for the ceremony, and advised that the event be postponed or cancelled.

On 14 February, the EMI headquarters in Kota suffered an attack, after a copy of the controversial book, Haqeeqat (The Truth) was discovered on the premises. The book, which has been banned, reportedly contains derogatory references to Hinduism. The house officer of Bhimgunj Mandi police station registered an official complaint against M.A. Thomas, Samuel Thomas and other EMI staff, under Indian Penal Code sections 153(a), which prohibits hurting religious sentiments, and 295(a), which outlaws deliberately outraging or insulting the religious feelings of a community (both offences are

punishable by up to three years' imprisonment). On 20 February, the officer in charge of the Hope Centre Orphanage in Raipura, another EMI institution, and another officer, were detained without charges. During the arrests, police reportedly failed to intervene as an accuser beat one of the men.

Following these threats and harassment, EMI leaders decided to cancel the graduation convention. At the end of February, the licences of an EMI Bible institute, orphanage, school, hospital and church were revoked and, on 3 March, the Department of Social Welfare of Rajasthan ordered the freezing of their bank accounts. However, the Chief Minister has since intervened in this process.

On 3 March, extremist organisation Hindu Raksha Simiti printed an advertisement, offering a reward of 1.1 million rupees (approximately £14,200/€20,360/\$24,700) each, for the killings of M.A. Thomas and Samuel Thomas. Both men had gone into hiding. However, on 16 March, the latter was arrested in Noida, Uttar Pradesh state. Reportedly, police failed to adhere to proper procedure during the arrest, showing neither identity cards nor an arrest warrant.

The fact-finding team from the All India Christian Council concluded that the harassment has taken place with the complicity of the police and BJP administration. In particular, no action was taken against the published offer of a reward for the killings of M.A. Thomas and Samuel Thomas; neither was any protection offered so that the graduation ceremony could take place as planned.

Attacks on other EMI institutions also took place through February. On 2 February, a mob of Hindu extremists beat and stoned children, staff and local clergy at an EMI orphanage in Tindole. A child was reportedly killed as a result of the attack. On 10 February, a Hindu mob set fire to the EMI school and orphanage in Ramganjmandi, resulting in its total destruction. Reportedly, local police had warned the EMI authorities that they would not move to prevent the violence. On 22 February, an EMI primary school in Sanganer was attacked by Hindu extremists. On 24 February, a mob of Hindu extremists vandalised the Jhowara Emmanuel Secondary School and church building.

Kota district, 6 July: EMI orphanage targeted in arson attack

At 2am on 6 July, six youths tried to enter the female dormitory of an Emmanuel Mission International (EMI) orphanage in Kota district. After the girls raised the alarm, the youths set a tyre alight and threw it into the orphanage's generator room, destroying a generator panel and a transformer. The cost of the damage incurred was estimated to be 400,000 rupees (approximately £4570/€6750/\$8970).

Although an attempt was made to file an FIR at Udyog Nagar police station, the officers refused to do so. The orphanage, one of the institutions of EMI which suffered substantial harassment through 2006, was under the administration of the state government. Representatives of EMI alleged that since the take-over, Hindu extremists have regularly harassed staff and children at the orphanage.

Padla village, Banswara district, 13 August: pastors beaten by Hindu extremists

Several pastors were attacked by three Hindu extremists known for their anti-Christian stance, as they returned home from a conference hosted by the New India Church of God in Padla village, Banswara district. The attackers, Keshav Kihuri, Mithalal Katara and Ramlal Kihuri, verbally abused some of the conference delegates waiting at a bus stop, and pulled three other pastors from their motorcycles as they passed. One of the motorcyclists, Pastor Kunjuman Matthai, who had organised the conference, was beaten and some of his personal effects were stolen. Another pastor, Suresh Bhuria, was stripped of his clothes and beaten with an iron rod and stones. The attackers threatened to kill the Christians if they reported the incident to the police.

Police failed to register a case, despite representations made by the All India Christian Council.

Berapuda village, 29 October: pastor and father beaten and threatened

Around 50 Hindu extremists attacked Pastor Prakash and his father in Berapuda village, during a prayer meeting in his house. They were dragged from the house and beaten. The attackers physically assaulted other church members, and threatened them with serious consequences if they held future prayer meetings. The Christians lodged a complaint at the Bhamol police station, but no arrests are known to have been made. The Christians offered to make a compromise; whereby they would drop the complaint if their attackers agreed not to disturb them, but the compromise was not agreed.

Tamil Nadu

Chinnamalpuram, Erode district, 29 July: female church media team threatened

Four young female members of the Good Shepherd Community Church, identified as Deepa, Jhabarani, Sangeetha and Selvi, were subjected to threats and verbal abuse by a mob of around 50 people, while visiting Chinnamalpuram village. This followed an earlier peaceful screening of a Christian film in the village, which had taken place at the request of the wife of the village leader and other women.

The mob, led by two alleged members of the RSS, Selva Kumar and Rajesh Kumar, demanded that they desist from proselytism in the area and brought them to Malayampalayam police station. Police brokered a compromise between the attackers and the Christians.

Vellamody village, Kanyakumari district, 5 December: worship service interrupted by extremists, supported by local police

A mob of 200 extremists forced their way into a worship service led by Pastor Jesurathinam, demanding that the service stop and the prayer hall be removed from the village. The mob was led by a BJP leader, S.S. Mani, and other local leaders. They demonstrated outside the building for about two hours, claiming that there was a Hindu temple nearby and that there should not be a church in the village. When the police arrived, they told the pastor to stop the service.

Uttaranchal

Kasipur, 24 September: two Christians beaten and arrested for hurting religious sentiments

Mr Salvin and Mr Simon, two Christian missionaries involved with an organisation known as Full Gospel Pentecost, were dragged from a prayer meeting in their home and beaten up by a mob of around 50 Bajrang Dal militants, leaving them severely injured. The attack occurred as the two men were hosting a prayer meeting for around 20 local Christians. The extremists then dragged the Christians to the local police station, where they were later charged with hurting religious sentiments under section 298 of the Indian Penal Code.

The Christians were able to lodge a counter-FIR against their attackers but no arrests are known to have been made.

Uttar Pradesh

Ramchandrapur village, Sultanpur district, 24 January: pastor attacked by RSS mob and beaten in police custody

Pastor Ram Prakash and a number of others were assaulted by a mob of up to 200 Hindus, after Prakash was accused of converting local people to Christianity. Another Christian, Harish Chandra, managed to pull Prakash inside his house; however, the mob broke through the door and beat those inside.

Police arrived after having been called by Prakash, but he was arrested instead of his attackers. He was reportedly beaten while in police custody. Prakash was eventually released on bail, but Hindu extremists then accused him under Section 151 of the Indian Penal Code, for spreading communal tension.

Bareilly, 6 May: pastor threatened with death by local BJP leaders

A minor family dispute was capitalised upon by three BJP members who issued death threats to Assemblies of God pastor Mehboob Masih. The dispute over a drainage channel culminated in Ms Saroj Maurya accusing her six uncles and their pastor of attempts to forcibly convert her to Christianity. After her accusation was printed in the local newspaper, three local BJP leaders confronted Masih and threatened him with death if he should continue to hold prayer meetings. They also threatened to hold a Hindu worship ceremony in his house.

A senior policeman from the Fajeh Ganj police station reportedly visited the house of Masih and ordered him not to hold the prayer meeting scheduled for the following day. Masih submitted a complaint on 7 May, but police refused to give him a signed copy as required by law, and informed him that a case had been registered against him for attempted forcible conversion. A compromise has since been sought by the church, and the situation has been resolved.

Daksinwara, Sultanpur district, 16 July: pastor beaten by police

Pastor Om Prakash Pandey, a recent 'upper-caste' convert to Christianity, was severely beaten by police and deprived of food while being detained overnight without charge. He was reportedly dragged to the Kurebhar police station from Dakinswara by angry villagers, including local VHP co-ordinator Mr Amarjeet, with the complicity of police. Although police later claimed that they detained him for his own protection, he was there kicked and beaten with belts by Police Inspector Jawahar Lal Saroj and other officers.

Following the assault, Dakinswara village chief, Ram Gopal Varma, stated that Hindu villagers had been angered because Pastor Pandey had been holding Bible classes attended by the children of local tribal people. Two days before the incident, Pastor Pandey was threatened by a VHP member in his home village of Chowri Bazar.

Several Christians attempted to lodge an FIR, but the police refused to register the case. A written complaint was submitted to the Senior Superintendent of Police of Sultanpur district, but no action is known to have been taken against the police officers involved.

Belahta village, Jaunpur district, 4 October: Christian arrested and threatened

Hindu extremists vandalised a tent that had been erected to accommodate around 1000 believers attending a prayer meeting, then physically assaulted the Christian, Sanju Singh, outside whose house it stood. VHP members accused Singh of forcibly converting Hindu villagers, breaking idols of Hindu gods and goddesses and throwing them into the village well. They threatened that if Christian meetings continued, they would resort to unprecedented violence.

Singh was then taken to Baksa police station where he was detained for interrogation. The police allegedly demanded a bribe, and pressurised Singh to 're-convert' to Hinduism if he wanted to live peacefully. He was released that night, but asked to return the following morning, and was questioned all day. Reportedly the police could not find any evidence against Singh, according to sources.

It is believed the attack was triggered by false reports in local newspapers about the forced conversions of 350 villagers to Christianity.

Lesuka village, Jaunpur district, 6 October: four Christians beaten

Hindu extremists from the VHP, together with local villagers and police, stormed the Abundant Life Church in Lesuka and beat four believers, identified as Rajesh Rana, Sangram, Rajpath and Lalman. They also announced their intention to 're-convert' believers to Hinduism the following Sunday, although their threat proved empty. Church leaders asked for police protection that Sunday, but this was not provided.

It is believed this incident may have been linked to the newspaper reports about alleged forced conversions in nearby Belahta. On 10 October, another church in Jaunpur district cancelled a church meeting, for fear of further attacks.

Notes

Additional sources: AICC (CSW partner), Compass Direct, EFI, GCIC, GFA, IET, Vijayesh Lal.

Common acronyms

AICC	All India Christian Council
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
EFI	Evangelical Fellowship of India
FIR	First Information Report
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad