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INDIA High profile defendant convicted in Orissa

Manoj Pradhan, a high-profile defendant facing fourteen charges in connection with the severe anti-Christian violence in Orissa state in August-October 2008, has today been sentenced to seven years in prison for his role in the murder of Parikhita Naik on 27 August 2008. The victim was one of at least 70 killed during the violence. Pradhan and his co-defendant were also ordered to pay a fine of 6,000 rupees.

Other charges against Pradhan include murder and arson.

Pradhan had been controversially elected to the Orissa state legislative assembly representing the G. Udayagiri constituency for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in May 2009, and had been granted bail on all charges.

Stuart Windsor, CSW-UK's National Director, said, "This is a very significant boost to the cause of justice in Orissa, and the authorities are to be congratulated for bringing Mr Pradhan to justice. We continue to encourage the state government of Orissa to ensure that all perpetrators and inciters of the 2008 violence are brought to justice, that victims are rehabilitated properly, and that community reconciliation is pursued".

Notes to editors:

1. In a recent briefing, [India: Communalism, anti-Christian violence and the law](#), CSW recommended that the government of India should investigate the legitimacy of the election of Manoj Pradhan to the state legislative assembly.