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## INDIA | Concerns Over Rising Attacks on Christian Minorities

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) expressed concern over the increasing number of attacks on Christian communities in India.

There has been a spate of attacks on churches and clergy in recent months. On March 16, a church under construction in Haryana was demolished. On March 14, a 72 year-old nun from the Convent of Jesus and Mary in Ranaghat, West Bengal, was gang-raped by eight men. On Feb. 27, a group of 20 Christian missionaries from Hyderabad were detained by the Jaipur police and beaten while in custody. On Feb. 25, a Catholic church in Mangalore, Karnataka State, was vandalized, while at least five Catholic churches in the Delhi area have also been subject to vandalism, arson and desecration of the sacristy.

Speaking at a religious conference organized by Christian groups on Feb. 17, Prime Minister Modi stated, "My government will not allow any religious group, belonging to the majority or the minority, to incite hatred against others, overtly or covertly. Mine will be a government that gives equal respect to all religions...we cannot accept violence against any religion on any pretext and I strongly condemn such violence. My government will act strongly in this regard."

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "CSW calls on Prime Minister Modi to fulfill his promise to combat religious hatred and violence, and to affirm his commitment uphold the Indian Constitution and guarantee freedom of religion or belief. Words must be followed by deeds; we urge the government to act decisively to end these attacks on clergy and churches."