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The Evangelical Fellowship
of Canada

**FAITH AND FREEDOM COLLIDE IN INDIA:
A Report on the Rise of Recent Violence against Christians
in Orissa and other Indian States**

February 2009

Religious Liberty Commission
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1. INTRODUCTION

With a staggering population of 1,147,677¹, India is the most populous functioning democracy in the world. Crowned by the world's highest mountain range, the Himalayas, bordered by Pakistan, Nepal, China, Bhutan and Bangladesh and surrounded by the Arabian Sea to the west, the Bay of Bengal to the east and the Indian Ocean to the south, India is comprised of 28 states, 7 Union Territories and one National Capital Territory, Delhi.

The racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity of this vast country is overwhelming. Although the majority of people are Hindu and Hindi has been declared the national language, India is a secular nation with constitutional freedoms of speech and religion and, theoretically, the government works to protect those freedoms. India is a sovereign state in which all faiths are to generally enjoy freedom of worship and government policy is not to officially favour any religious group.

1.1 Religion in India

India is composed of many different religious denominations, groups, and subgroups; 72% of the population is Indo-Aryan, 25% is Dravidian and 3% is ethnically Mongoloid. Hinduism is the religion to which 80.5% of the population identifies, 13.4% of the population is Muslim, 2.3% of the population is Christian and 1.9% of the population is Sikh.² India established itself as a secular state upon gaining independence in 1947.

Although India has advanced significantly as a democracy and world economic power in the short time since gaining independence, there are still many social and political issues that hinder being a strong democracy, including massive overpopulation, widespread poverty contrasted with extreme wealth, and strife between religious and ethnic groups.

The focus of this report is on recent and current tensions between Hindus and Christians, which pose an intense challenge to the concepts of secularism, tolerance, and diversity on which India was founded.

1.2 The Christian Church Movement in India

Christianity took root in India almost two thousand years ago when Thomas the Apostle is reported to have evangelized in the south - home today to a majority of India's more than twenty-three million Christians. Much modern Christian Church growth in India is the result of missionary work during the British colonial period that ended in 1947. Today, some of the north-eastern Indian states also have large Christian populations, and about seventy percent of India's total Christian population is Catholic.

¹ <http://www.censusindia.gov.in>

² <http://www.censusindia.gov.in>

2. CURRENT TENSIONS BETWEEN HINDUS AND CHRISTIANS

2.1 The August 2008 Tipping Point

Tensions between Hindus and Christians in India have simmered below the surface for a long time, often linked to the attendance and conversion of India's Hindu elite at educational institutions set up by missionaries and Catholic orders. However, August 23, 2008 saw these tensions reach a boiling point, resulting in a major increase in the persecution of Christians in the Indian state of Orissa that, at the time of this report's publication date, was still ongoing and had inspired renewed persecution in other states throughout the country as well.

Attacks on Christians and their property began in Orissa's Kandhamal district after Christians were falsely blamed for the August 23 killing of a Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council) leader, Laxmanananda Saraswati, and four of his disciples. On September 1, Maoists (a communist militia group) claimed responsibility for the murders. The confession came after more than 100 Christians had already been killed, and has done little to slow continuing Hindu extremist violence against Christians.

Although the attacks began in the state of Orissa, they quickly spread to Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala. This violence that Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has called a 'national disgrace' has been targeted at Christians, but has also seen police and security forces attacked and killed. The Hindu mobs behind the attacks have used this opportunity to publicly incite further hatred against Christians by accusing them of forcibly converting poor tribes and low-caste Hindus to Christianity through bribery.

Another troubling development is the "re-conversion" of numerous Christians by fundamentalist Hindus. In the Indian state of Orissa, there are reports almost daily telling stories of tribal Christians who are going through forced "re-conversions" in order to save their lives and the lives of their family members. One radical group behind this movement, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), contends that "Christianity and Islam are forces of disintegration," and that "Muslims and Christians can redeem themselves only when they realize that they are in fact converted Hindus and return to the Hindu fold."³ These re-conversions, however, have now escalated to an astonishing rate and are leaving Christians and other minority groups in a perpetual state of fear.

Despite the government's claim that the state is "returning to normal," reports of burnt homes and churches, raided hospitals, brutal beatings, forced conversions to Hinduism, stolen livestock, and rape and death continue to emerge. Over 70,000 people have been forced from their villages for refusing to abandon their Christian faith and are now residing in refugee camps or are in hiding. In reaction to continued violence, the Supreme Court of India announced on January 5, 2009 that it would not allow the "persecution" of minorities to take place and asked the Orissa government to resign if it was unable to

³ "Fire on the Subcontinent: Religious Freedom for Christians in India" by Darren L. Logan

protect Christians who were being targeted in these riots.

2.2 Summary Accounts of Recent Persecution

The following accounts are examples that illustrate the devastation and intensifying persecution being faced by Christians within the various Indian states:

State of Chhattisgarh

At midnight on October 3, 2008 in Dumarbhavna village, Hindu nationalists broke into a house where a three-day prayer meeting was being held and attacked participants as they slept, ultimately forcing two Christians to beat one of their own prayer partners unconscious under threat of death. The mob from the Hindu extremist *Dharma Sena* (Religious Army) beat the participants in the prayer meeting, including women, and dragged three of them from the home of Parmeshwar Beik. “We thought that they were taken to the police station, but instead they were taken to a secluded place where they were beaten all night,” Yahoshu Kujur, the pastor of Blessing Church of God, reported. Muneshwar Ekka and Beik were beaten first, and then the Hindu nationalists ordered them to beat the third captured Christian, Ravi Devangan, or be killed. Police reportedly deceived local Christians into believing that no complaint would be filed against the prayer team members for “forced conversion” if they would agree to file no complaints against the Hindu nationalists. Instead police registered a case of “forced conversion” against the three Christians under sections 3 and 4 of the Chhattisgarh Dharma Swantantraya Adhiniyam (Chhattisgarh Freedom of Religion Bill).⁴

On September 29, 2008 as Christians gathered for a memorial service in the village of Narli, Dantewada district, a mob of Hindu extremists attacked them, injuring about 35 Christians, six of them seriously. One woman was admitted to hospital with a serious head injury from an axe, another man was critically wounded and his motorcycle burned. In addition, three persons are still missing. On October 5, a mob demonstrated in front of Indian Pentecostal Church in Kirandul, accusing the pastor of forcible conversions. He has reportedly gone into hiding following death threats against his family and himself.⁵

As recently as February 17, 2009, police arrested 11 pastors from the Believers’ Church under Chhattisgarh Freedom of Religion Bill, after extremists accused the pastors of forceful conversion, beat them up, tore their Bibles and banners and damaged their sound system. After registering a case against the pastors, the police station released them on bail on February 18.⁶

State of Karnataka

On October 14, 2008 police in Mangalore assaulted a Christian for participating in a protest rally against attacks on churches. The Global Council of Indian Christians

⁴ Compass Direct News

⁵ Compass Direct News

⁶ Evangelical Fellowship of India

reported that local police targeted Herald D'Souza for taking part in the rally, dragged him to a police station and severely thrashed him, then charged him with rioting. The Chief constable assaulted him without initiating any inquiry. D'Souza sustained serious injuries to his backbone, chest, face and hands. A complaint has been registered against the constable, but senior police officials are pressuring the Christian to settle the case.⁷

State of Orissa

Another shameful chapter in religious cleansing of Christians was added when the Orissa government confirmed that a 29 year old Catholic nun was raped by a fanatical Hindu gang on August 25, 2008.⁸

More than 3,000 people attended the funeral in Bhubaneswar, Orissa of a Catholic priest who died on Tuesday, October 28 from injuries sustained in anti-Christian violence that began in August. Father Bernard Digal died in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, after an operation to remove a blood clot that developed in his brain due to a head injury from Hindu extremists attacking him on August 25-26 in Kandhamal district, Orissa state. Fr. Digal had been visiting Sankarakhole parish when violence flared after Maoists killed Hindu leader Laxmanananda Saraswati and his disciples on August 23. Though police suspected Maoists from the start, and the outlawed Marxists had claimed responsibility for the murders by September 1, Hindu extremists bent on stoking anti-Christian fires continued to publicize that Christians had committed the crime, and have not stopped doing so.⁹

Most recently, the body of 45-year-old Hrudyananda Nayak was discovered on February 19, 2009 after he left his village of Rudangia to accompany his older sister to her village of Bandaguda, less than two kilometres away. Eyewitnesses reported that they saw Nayak get stopped by a group of extremists on his way back to his own village. When he didn't return home, a group of policemen and Christians went looking for him and found his disfigured body among some rocks in a forest. There was a rope tied around his neck and it was presumed that he had been dragged into the forest to the place where his body was left.¹⁰

State of Madhya Pradesh

A fire was set in a Catholic Church in Tikamgarh district in Madhya Pradesh on October 22, 2008. Mahasangh President Mr. Kurishinkal Joshi claims it was an attempt to terrorize the community ahead of the state Assembly polls. The community feels that the attack is a Hindu fundamentalist strategy to create communal divide between Christians and majority Hindus. During the regime of the present government in the state of Madhya Pradesh more than 171 incidents of attacks have taken place on church personnel,

⁷ Compass Direct News

⁸ Evangelical Fellowship of India

⁹ Compass Direct News

¹⁰ Evangelical Fellowship of India

institutions and places of worship in the community, this also includes violent attacks on community members.¹¹

3. A CULTURE THAT PROMOTES PERSECUTION

3.1 The Impact of the Caste System

India is often characterized by its caste system, a structure with strong historical ties to Hinduism. The caste system delineates clear social strata, assigning highly structured religious, cultural, and social roles to each caste and sub-caste. Despite efforts by modern leaders from Mahatma Gandhi's time forward to eliminate the discriminatory aspects of caste, societal, political, and economic pressures continue to ensure its widespread practice. The caste system in India today is as much a cultural and social phenomenon as it is a religious one. It must be recognized that this categorization is an innate part of Indian culture that has carried on through the generations and is seldom a conscious act but more often a subconscious one that divides all people into their societal positions.

The caste system is deeply entrenched in Indian society. Until the middle of the Twentieth century, "the untouchables" were regarded as the refuse of society. In 1950, the term of reference for them was changed to "Dalits" and they were given a "Scheduled Caste" status. While most upper caste opinions remain the same to this day, the 1950 law guarantees a certain quota of Dalits are to benefit from education and other initiatives provided in specific societal institutions. Therefore it can be said that steps to appropriate this divisive issue are in place, yet the effective implementation of such laws has yet to be fully realized. Important to note is the fact that Dalit converts to other religions lose their Scheduled Caste status, thus denying them basic human rights in many cases. In August, 2005, Christian Dalits began revisiting a bill that had failed to reach legislative evaluation nine years before. If passed, the bill would allow them to maintain their special status so they could be assured a place in society. In the same month however, the Supreme Court actually rejected a plea from another religious group requesting minority status. The Supreme Court maintains that special status for a religious group of any sort only adds to tensions in society. They are, in fact, encouraging the National Commission for Minorities to help create a society in which notified minorities are gradually done away with completely, thus developing a unified society in which all people are considered equal.

Today one fifth of the Indian population are Dalits, and Hindu extremists (who see Dalits as "less than human") are angry with Christians for converting those who are poor and uneducated. It is important to recognize that the issue of Dalits is both divisive and controversial for Christian and Hindu groups alike. This causes a twofold problem: One, that Christians who care to reach out to this large people group are seen to be undermining the Hindu culture; and Two, that this evangelism and conversion of Dalits provides the Indian states, in which these people live, with greater social and economical problems that the Christians cannot solve (for only the governments in these various states have control over the political, social and economic agenda that ultimately affects

¹¹ Persecution Update India

the livelihood and futures of these “forgotten people”). Recognizing these issues requires a greater call of unity for all religious, non-governmental and political groups.

Christians in India, who are descendants of low caste Hindu families, have historically rejected the caste system and still suffer the same sort of social and economic discrimination that low caste Hindus do (even from some Christians who are descended from high caste families). Additionally, low caste Hindus that convert to Christianity lose their eligibility for any sort of government affirmative action program. Consequently, discussion of the current status of religious freedom for Christians in India must be conducted and understood in this context.

4. GOVERNMENT EFFORTS: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

4.1 Government Steps

Animosities within and between religious communities in India are centuries old. These tensions are at times exacerbated by poverty, class, and ethnic differences, and have resulted in periodic violence throughout the country’s history. The government has made some effort to prevent these incidents and to restore communal harmony when they occur, but these efforts have not been entirely successful.

The government has taken steps to promote interfaith understanding, which can be seen with the creation of the National Integration Council, the National Human Rights Commission, and the National Minorities Commission. Following past outbreaks of violence or riots, the government has even sponsored “communal harmony festivals” and “peace committees” aimed at restoring order. These official commissions, however, are less than effective, often considering past anti-Christian violence as little more than “acts of petty criminals or incidents,” and local “law and order” problems, instead of a growing societal wave of anti-Christian discrimination and violence. On October 13, 2008, for only the second time in recent history, the Prime Minister convened a National Integration Council. A statement was produced with comments in regard to the latest anti-Christian violence taking place in Orissa and other states. While the government has officially recognized the crisis, this statement and the condemnation that accompanies it have failed to initiate any change in the present situation.

While current national law does protect religious freedom for religious minorities, enforcement of that law has been poor, particularly at the state and local levels. At this level, the failure to deal adequately with intra-group and inter-group conflict and with local disturbances has abridged the right to religious freedom. The significant increase in attacks against Christians throughout the years, and particularly within this past year, by Hindu extremist groups can be attributed to this development. To date, much of the official government response to these developments has been inadequate.

4.2 The Impact of Political Parties and Anti-Conversion Laws

Anti-conversion laws are currently in place in seven Indian states (Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh), giving support to militant groups and resulting in ongoing violence against Christians.

Essentially these laws are legislation that makes it difficult for anyone to convert from one religion to another. Stipulations are put on conversion events, such as the convert and the religious teacher (priest, minister, pastor, etc) being required to give authorities 60 days notice prior to the conversion taking place. According to these laws, authorities need to verify the credibility of any conversion and if the proper protocol is not followed and a conversion takes place, the result can be cash fines as well as jail time. These laws appear to target only conversions to Christianity and many state authorities do not keep adequate records of conversions, causing many - even those who don't intend to - to commit this crime.

It has become evident in the wake of current persecution that India's inter-religious violence now extends to Christians in a way that has never been seen before and that legislation such as anti-conversion laws only exacerbate the problem. The underlying causes of persecution are essentially the same as those promoting violence against Muslims, Dalits ("untouchables"), and other marginalized groups; those of political and economic power struggles linked to efforts to establish India as a Hindu nation.

It is important to note that attacks against Christians have increased significantly since the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP- Indian People's Party), came to power in March 1998. This highlighted a disturbing trend in the rise of Hindu nationalism by governments in power at the state and central level.

Despite having often faced opposition due to the deterioration of freedoms under the influence of militant Hindus at the federal level, Christians were encouraged by a surprising turn in the May 2004 election when the ruling Hindu nationalist BJP was overthrown, and the secular National Congress Party was voted into power. Upon forming a coalition with several other parties in what is known as the United Progressive Alliance, their rise to power prompted almost immediate reformation in India. The state of Tamil Nadu, which was the first of several states to adopt anti-conversion legislation under the BJP, was also the first to repeal that law when the government changed hands. Despite changes in the federal government, however, persecution is far from over. Contrary to the action taken in Tamil Nadu, some states have actually worked to tighten anti-conversion laws.

4.3 India's Commitments to Freedom of Religion

India is a signatory to four separate international and national documents that are in place to ensure the basic human rights, including religious freedom, of all Indian people: The Constitution of the Republic of India; The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and the

Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, the commitment to these international laws is lacking conviction and the result is the violation of human rights for thousands of Indians. See appendix III to view the laws outlined that pertain to these conventions and India's current human rights abuses.

The current persecution and proliferation of anti-conversion laws stand in stark contrast to the commitments expressed in these constitutional and international documents.

5. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the development, growth and interconnectivity of our globalized world the importance of human rights, and in particular religious freedom, in India cannot be minimized. It must remain a fundamental device for measuring overall progress for the nation of India.

India's 2009 general election will be taking place in a few months (likely April or May). As a result, world leaders, including the Government of Canada have a strategic opportunity to highlight concerns about the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in India. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's (EFC) Religious Liberty Commission (RLC) condemns the increased persecution of Christian minorities in India and encourages the Canadian government to include persecution of India's Christians on its list of priority concerns and diplomatic interventions with the government and state leaders of India.

The EFC's RLC strongly expresses the importance that Canadian representatives communicate to party leaders in India, at both a federal and state level, regarding the lack of religious freedom and lack of protection afforded to India's Christian community, with a special emphasis on those living in Orissa. The Indian government as well as state leaders are to be strongly encouraged:

- To develop and commit to meaningful benchmarks for improvement in religious liberty; and
- To back up the promises made regarding human rights with concrete action that demonstrates a commitment to promoting religious freedom.

Such concrete actions include:

- Identifying and revising dangerous legislation, such as anti-conversion laws that are used to justify attacks;
- Ensuring the protection of religious minorities who are under attack, including increased police protection around places of worship and service such as Christian-run orphanages;
- Ensuring the security of religious minorities who are forced to leave their homes and live in refugee camps by providing the camps with sufficient food, water and supplies and committing to assisting in the safe transport of refugees back to their homes;
- Holding perpetrators to account for their actions;

- Taking concrete action to assist those who have been victimized by religious persecution which has included: beatings, rape, and death of family members; and,
- Assisting in the promotion of human rights and democracy education among all political parties and citizens in India.

“True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice.”¹² In order for India to move towards being a more effective and powerful democracy it must ensure that peace and cooperation permeate the country on all levels. Respect for all people, regardless of the belief system they hold, is the essence of the democracy India has determined is its goal.

¹² Martin Luther King Jr.

APPENDIX I – MAP OF INDIA



APPENDIX II – TOLL OF ANTI-CHRISTIAN VIOLENCE

Orissa Persecution: Fact Finding Report

Updated October 21, 2008

The following is the information that The Evangelical Fellowship of India has gathered concerning violence against Christians in Orissa.

Please note that this information is incomplete due to continued attacks at the time of publication of this report as well as the sensitive nature of reporting and verifying attacks.

A. Number of Districts affected: 14

1. Baudh
2. Bhadrak
3. Bargarh
4. Cuttack
5. Gajapati
6. Ganjam
7. Koraput
8. Kandhmal
9. Kalahandi
10. Naupada
11. Narbarangapur
12. Nayagarh
13. Sambalpur
14. Rayagada

B. Number of People Affected:

It is estimated that over 50,000 people have been rendered homeless due to the violence. Around 15,000 people are in the relief camps at Chakapada, Tikabali, G. Udaygiri, Raikia, Baliguda, K.Nuagoan and Phiringia. Many others continue to hide in the forest and elsewhere.

C. Number of Schools and Colleges Affected: 14

Kandhamal district

1. Mt. Carmel school was attacked in Balliguda
2. St. Anne's Convent attacked in Padangi
3. St. Joseph Convent attacked in Sankharkhole
4. St. Anne's Convent attacked in Pobinga
5. Mission Hostel in Mangapanga
6. Children home in G. Udaygiri

Koraput

7. B D College vandalized Jeypore
8. Emmanuel school, Jeypore

Rayagada

9. Schools and hostel

Ganjam

10. De Paul School Berhampur

Bargarh

11. School & hostel Madhupur

Khurdha

12. William Carey School in Jatni

Bhubaneswar

13. Loyola School
14. St. Arnold School

D. Number of NGO attacked: 4**Kalahandi**

1. World Vision

Bhadrak

2. Discipleship Centre's

Bhubaneswar

3. Action Ministries office ransacked in Bhubaneswar
4. Compassion East India attacked in Bhubaneswar

E. Number of Deaths (Identified = 51; Unidentified = 7)**Kandhamal district**

1. Surendra Naik
2. Meri Digal
3. Sidheswar Digal Sulesaru village
4. Pastor Akbhar Digal Sulisoru (Burb)
5. Jaka Naik
6. Gapanayak
7. Sadananda Pradhan
8. Anthou Digal
9. Parikhita Nayak
10. Pastor Gayadhar Digal
11. Michel Naik
12. Pastor Daniel Naik
13. Unidentified in a village called Digi, Raikia,

14. Unidentified in a village called Digit, Raikia
15. Unidentified in a village called Digi, Raikia
16. Unidentified in a village called Digi, Raikia
17. Unidentified in a village called Digi, Raikia
18. Unidentified in a village called Digi, Raikia
19. Daniel Naik in Raikia
20. Michael Naik in Raikia
21. Rasananda Pradhan
22. Mishra Digal
23. Ramesh Digal
24. Gullu
25. Trinath Digal
26. Prafulla Nayak
27. Ajuba Naik
28. Akbar Digal Totomaha
29. Dasarath Pradhan Tiangia
30. Dinabandhu Pradhan Limungia
31. Gopan Nayak, Mondakia
32. Janamati Nayak, Bakingia
33. Jecob Digal, Petapanga
34. Kamolini Nayak, Mondakia
35. Khogeswar Pradhan
36. Pastor Samuel Nayak, Bakinga
37. Mathew Nayak, Sarangada
38. Sureshon Nayak
39. Sideshwar Digal, Sisapanga
40. Sibindra Pradhan, Sulisoru
41. Nanamati Nayak Bakingia
42. Nabaghana Nayak
43. Bastina Mantry
44. Kumud Bardhan
45. Mathew Nayak
46. Purander Mallick, Nilugna village, G-Udaygiri
47. Ishwar Digal
48. Bikram Naik (38)
49. Dasaratha Pradhan
50. Bidyadhar Digal
51. Unidentified in a village called Digi, Raikia
52. Priyatamma Diga(45), Bisipada village
53. Meghanath Digal, Bisipada village
54. Sister Mable

Bargarh district

55. Rajini Majhi in Bargarh
56. Pastor Dibya Sunder Digal
57. Unidentified Pastor's Padmapur

Nawarangapur district

58. Unidentified

Gajapati district

59. Mukunda Burdhan

Nayagarh district

60. Abhimonyu Nayak, Barapalli

F. Number of Churches attacked, destroyed / damaged = 50

Kandhamal district

1. Church, Balliguda
2. Church, Kalisiguda
3. Church, Sinaguda
4. Church, Arangamala
5. Church, Gumupadar
6. Church, Masakapanga
7. 55 Parish churches
8. Catholic church, Phulbani
9. GFA church
10. Church, Mandasara
11. Seventh Day Adventist Campus Bhramanigaon
12. A Catholic church attacked in Phulbani
13. Baptist church
14. Church in Raikia

Bargarh district

15. Churches burnt down in Chichida
16. Diocesan Pastoral Centre Kanjimendi
17. Madhupur Catholic Church attacked
18. Church Padmapur

Koraput district

19. Church in Pottangi
20. Church Jeypore
21. JEL church Jeypore
22. Churches destroyed Baipariguda, Jeypore
23. 6 churches in Baipariguda
24. New life Power Gospel Fellowship church in Punda village
25. Bible Mission Jeypore
26. Oriya Missionary Movement (OMM) Church Jeypore
27. Assembly of God, Kakriguma
28. Philadelphia Church Kakriguma
29. Church attacked in Jeypore
30. Bible Mission Jeypore

31. Church in Bhajiguda
32. Church in Koraput
33. Church burnt Nokera under Kundra PS
34. JELC church Pandkamari under Kundra PS
35. OMM Church attacked Jeypore
36. Church in Daulagaon
37. Church in Kodulipadar
38. Church in Nilabari
39. Lutheran Church Narayanpatna

Dhenkanal district

40. Church destroyed

Bhubaneswar capital

41. Archbishop's house
42. A Baptist Church in Akamra Jila

Sambalpur District

43. A Pentecostal church

Nabarangapur district

44. OMM Church attacked in Phupugam
45. Brethren Church in Bhimaguda

Boudh district

46. Church destroyed Jamtangi

Rayagada district

47. Church destroyed

Ganjam district

48. Church attacked

Bolangir district

49. CNI Church Murshingaon

Cuttuck district

50. Church in Bidanasi

G. Number of Pastors, Priests and Nuns assaulted - 14

Kandhmal district

1. Mina Barua Nuagaon
2. Rev. Thomas Chellen

Khurda district

3. Pastor Jeebaratna Lima

Bargarh district

4. Father Edward Sequirea Padampur

Koraput district

5. Rev. U.C Patnayak of the Orissa Missionary Movement, Jeypore

6. A Blessing Youth Mission Pastor Ramgiri, Jeypore

Kalahandi district

7. Pastor Sikander Singh Bhawanipatna

8. Pastor David Diamond Pahar,

9. Pastor Pravin Ship, Aampani

10. Pastor Pradhan, Aampani

11. Pastor Barik Aampani,

12. Pastor Alok Das, Kharihar

13. Pastor I M Senapati, Kharihar

14. Unidentified attacked Naktikani

H. Number of Houses, Shops, Villages destroyed**Kandhamal district**

1. 1,900 destroyed

2. Sisir Mallick, Sarapanch Kurtamgarh

3. Nine unidentified houses at Toposi village

4. Houses Mangapanga

5. Houses in Mundabali

6. Houses in Baringia

7. Mr. Benjamin Nayak house in Telingia, G. Udaigiri

8. Mr. Gomor Nayakin houses in Telingia, G. Udaigiri

9. Houses in Khajurinal

10. Houses in Balliguda

11. Houses in Phulbani

Bargarh district:

12. 13 unidentified villages

Kalahandi district:

13. 3 shops looted

Koraput district:

14. House in Ramgiri

Rayagada district:

15. 2 houses in Rayagada

Gajapati district :

16. Houses and one grocery shop
17. 3 villages in the Gajapati

Sambalpur district:

18. HM Sister's, Ainthapalli

Bolangir District:

19. Village in Manihira
20. Village in Pandrani
21. Pramod Bedi house

Boudh district :

22. Eight houses torched in, Lamsaripali village
23. 42 houses were torched in Uma village
24. 29 houses burnt at Mosinaguda village
25. 27 houses in Phatamunda village
26. 13 houses in Kunukutri village.

I. Forcible Conversion of Christians by Sangh Parivar outfits

1. VHP, Bajrang Dal and RSS activists have been threatening Christians in refugee Camps and in the still intact villages to convert to Christianity or face death. From 24 August till date, every date several case of such coercive action is being reported.

2. Forcible conversion consists of shaving the heads of the male forcing the family to drink cow dung diluted with cow urine and water, and taking an oath at a fire. In some cases authorities have reported that head of the families so converted are asked to set fire to neighbouring Christian house and church and is photographed while doing so , as if to concoct “ evidence” that Christian bunt their own houses.

J. Relief Camps attacked

1. The Government Relief Camps set up at Vijay High School Raikia block, Kandhamal reported that drinking water was poisoned on 3rd September 2008. Fortunately, the poisoning of water was detected in time and confirmed by a doctor just before food was served to the Christians taking refuge in the camp, resulting in their going hungry till 4pm. An attempt to poison the drinking water source of the relief camp in Habaq High School, Relief Camp at G. Udayagiri, Kandhamal was foiled by an alert security guard at 9 pm on 2nd September. On Sept 4th a group of nearly 2500 Hindutva extremists barged into the Relief Camp at Tikabali Govt. High School shouted at the Christian refugees and took away supplies meant for the Christian refugees, while police were silent spectators to the event.

2. In Non Government camps about 93 no of men, women and children from the District of Kandhamal have come to Cuttack, fleeing from the torture at their own villages. They have been sheltered at Peyton Sahi, Cuttack by few individuals of Cuttack Oriya Church (Independent Baptist Church). The members are taking care of the needs through the personal support of the organizers and some well-wishers. The local administration has come forward to supply them with tents & clothing and some cooking utensils.

3. Incessant rain in Orissa is wrecking havoc in relief camps where thousands of victims are housed. Poor hygienic conditions and mall nutrition is raising the death counts. One child died in G. Udaigiri relief camp.

APPENDIX III – INDIA’S LEGAL AND INTERNATIONAL TREATY COMMITMENTS

INDIAN LAW:

The Constitution of the Republic of India

Article 15 – Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth

Clause 1) the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them. 2) No citizen shall, on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subjected to any disability, liability, restriction or condition.

Article 17 – Abolition of Untouchability

“Untouchability” is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of “Untouchability” shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Article 19 – Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech, etc.

1) All citizens shall have the right- a) to freedom of speech and expression; b) to assemble peaceably and without arms; c) to form associations or unions; d) to move freely throughout the territory of India; e) to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India; and g) to practise any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business.

Article 25 – Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion

Clause 1) Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion

Article 26 – Freedom to manage religious affairs

Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right: a) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes; b) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion; c) to own and acquire movable and immovable property; and d) to administer such property in accordance with law.

Article 30 – Rights of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions

Clause 1) All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice

INTERNATIONAL LAW:

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Article 1 – 1. All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Article 2 – 1. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Article 7 – Freedom from Torture or Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and Punishment

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In particular, no one shall be subjected without his free consent to medical or scientific experimentation.

Article 9 and 14 – Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Detention and the Right to a Fair and Reasonable Trial

1. Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.

Article 18 – Freedom of Religion and Conscience

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to

manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.
3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.
4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

Article 26

All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Article 27

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Article 2

The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Article 13

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

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