

Persecution of Christians by Hindus

Note: The incidents below are only a few of the many examples that are recorded by the Barnabas Aid organization. There is hardly a month when at least one incident is reported. There are good reasons to suspect that many incidents do not make it to Barnabas Aid.

Prayer booklets are not usually the source of academic information, but concrete stories of persecution are not usually found there either. So, we opt for prayer booklets as our source in the hope that the information will stimulate more academics to accept the topic's challenge.

In due time, we will also feature stories about Buddhist persecution of Christians.

From the Barnabas Aid Prayer Booklet

May 15, 2017 – The Evangelical Fellowship of India recorded 38 incidents of hate crimes against Christians in the first two months of 2017. For example, on February 23-24, twelve Indian churches held a Peace Festival in Badarpur, Delhi. On the second day a mob of about 250-300 Hindu extremists attacked the seated audience of 1700 people, injuring many people and damaging the stage, furniture and sound system. Pray that the Prince of Peace will comfort His persecuted people, giving them – even when under attack – a peace that the world cannot give.

May 17, 2017- Pastor Jacob Joseph was leading the Sunday worship on January 29 at his church in Chhattisgarh state, India, when a mob of at least 300 Hindu extremists (men and women) burst in, objecting to the service and pushing people around. They also vandalized cycles, scooters, and other vehicles outside. When Pastor Joseph went to the police, they told him to stop holding church services. The same evening Hindu extremists stormed into his home, (where several Christians were visiting) and argued and threatened until the police arrived and took everyone to the police station for a few hours. Having listened to both sides, the police again ruled that Pastor Joseph must stop holding church

services. He requests prayers for God's guidance as to how to continue his ministry in this situation.

June 12, 2017- Twenty people in a Hindi-majority village in Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra state, India, summoned three Christian families for "peace talks" on February 28. They told the three Christians who attended the meeting to leave the village because they did not want any Christian presence there. They then assaulted the Christians and vandalized their homes. The police did not register a case against the attackers, merely warning them and instructing them to repair the damaged houses. Pray that the Lord will strengthen and protect vulnerable Christian minority communities in India who cannot depend on human help. (2 Thessalonians 3:2-3)

July 6, 2017 – Four Indian families who converted from the SarnaDharam traditional religion to Christianity in 2010 were threatened with expulsion from their village unless they agree to become Hindus. The families, who are the only Christians in the village of Ganaloya, Jharkhand state, sought help from the police to explain to the Hindu villagers their constitutional rights. As a result the Christians have been allowed to stay in their homes but have been excluded from village life. They now have to travel 3-4 miles to the nearest town to buy their daily needs, but, praise God, they have their own well, so exclusion from the village water source is not a problem. Each family has had an experience of sickness and healing, which led them to Christ. Pray that they may continue to stand firm for Him. "We are used to social boycotts and can deal with it," said one of them.

July 7, 2017 – "We have to abide by what the Hindu mob wants," admitted Indian police after their colleagues arrested a pastor and a Bible college student who had been assaulted by Hindu extremists on March 17. The extremists first tried to trap the pastor into accepting a bribe, and then they began beating him and the student. A police officer tried to intervene but the extremists told him to let them handle the Christians in their own way. Pray the Lord, their rock, their fortress and their deliverer, will save Indian Christians from their enemies. (Psalm 18:2)

August 9, 2017 – A three-day Christian gathering in Chhattisgarh state, India, was shut down by police on the first evening (April 3). About 40 Hindu extremists invaded the meeting at 9:00 pm and then called the police, claiming that the Christians were engaging in “conversion activity.” Although the organizers had obtained permission to hold the event, police insisted that it should be stopped and made the Christians state in writing that they were willingly terminating the program to avoid communal riots. Privately, police acknowledged that there was no conversion activity, but they could not protect the Christians against the Hindu extremists. Pray for these and other Indian Christians whom the authorities cannot or will not protect, asking that the Lord will be a shield around them. (Psalm 3:3)

August 10, 2017 – Christians were targeted in incidents in at least five different states across India on Palm Sunday (April 9). Police arrested three pastors and their wives during a church service in Madhya Pradesh. In Haryana and Rajasthan, Hindu extremists disrupted church services and persuaded police to arrest Christians by falsely alleging they had forced Hindus to convert to Christianity. In Tamil Nadu, local officials invaded a private prayer meeting in a pastor’s home, and in Uttar Pradesh a pastor was beaten up by a mob. Pray that Indian Christians will not “give up meeting together,” even though they never know if they will get to the end of a meeting without being attacked. (Hebrews 10:25)

August 12, 2017 – A boy came to Pastor Sikander Kumar’s house in Jadhua village, Bihar state, India in early April and asked him to come outside for a personal talk. When the pastor did so, he was attacked by 15 Hindu extremists armed with sticks, swords, and a spiked metal mace. They left him lying in a pool of blood, badly wounded, especially from two deep sword cuts. Two months previously a mob had attacked him and his wife on the church premises. The aim in both cases was to close down the church. Many other pastors and evangelists in India are attacked in similar ways. Pray that God will send His angels to protect His faithful servants.

September 23, 2017 – In two separate incidents in India’s Madhya Pradesh state on the night of May 21-22, at least ten church workers and at least 70 Christian

children (aged 6-15) were detained by police as they traveled home by train and bus from a Christian summer camp. The adults were accused of kidnapping and forcibly converting the children to Christianity. This was based on a claim by the authorities that the children's parents had not completed the necessary paperwork when they themselves converted to Christianity and therefore, their children are still officially Hindu. Two of the children (a boy in fifth grade and a girl in eighth grade) were kept in custody for four days of interrogation. AkashGundiya, one of the leaders, was held for a month, even though he is a juvenile (under 17). At the time of writing, six adult leaders still remain in custody. Pray that they will be released without charge and that they and all the children and young people will be healed of the trauma of their experience.

September 24, 2017 – Lord Jesus Christ, we pray for our brothers and sisters in India, especially the Christians in Jalalabad village, Uttar Pradesh. Four families have been beaten with sticks to force them to take part in Hindu ceremonies. All have had the irrigation cut off to the crops on which they depend. Their persecutors will only restore the water if the Christians give up meeting together to worship You. Lord, give them grace and strength to endure faithfully. May they “live such good lives” among their Hindu neighbors that their persecutors will cease from criticizing them and instead give glory to You. (I Peter 2:12)

From the Barnabas Aid Magazine

July/August 2016

p. 5 –“If we had not received this help [from Barnabas Aid] we would have [continued to be] tortured physically and mentally by the police and these fanatic groups.”

A church leader in India spoke these words after support from Barnabas Aid paid for a lawyer's costs to release him and two other imprisoned church leaders after one night in jail.

The three church leaders, who work among a Hindu group in the city of Nagpur, Maharashtra state, were imprisoned for the part they played in converting Hindus to Christianity. They were also brutally beaten by both police and fellow prisoners.

Since then, Barnabas Aid has continued to pay for legal fees as a local Hindu extremist judge tries to impede the church leaders' work and stop them from pleading their case at a High Court.

p. 18 – An Indian in Bihar state was brutally tortured on April 5, by Hindu extremists who seized him as he was on his way to a village to share the Gospel. Deepak was chained and beaten for five hours until he lost consciousness. After reviving him, his assailants then made him strip naked, gave him electric shocks and threatened to throw him on a railway track unless he insulted Jesus. Deepak refused, saying: “Kill me, but I will not abuse the name of Jesus.”

September/October 2016

p. 11 - In India, the Hindutwa movement within Hinduism argues that every Indian must belong to a religion which has originated in India. This view has become increasingly popular and is now a dominant force in Indian politics. Mob attacks on pastors and members of their congregations, with attempts to force them to convert to Hinduism, have increased greatly, so much so that there was an average of one incident of violence against India's Christians for every day in 2015. This figure seems set to continue, if not worsen, in 2016.

p. 15 – Three Christian men, Vijay Paul, Moses Edward, and church leader Bharat Kumar Wadhwani were severely beaten by a mob led by a group of Hindu extremists on Sunday, June 19, 2016 in Jabalpur, India. They were then beaten as they were led to the local police station where a case was registered against them for alleged attempts to forcibly convert Hindus to Christianity. This is a frequent accusation against Indian Christians who have simply been sharing their faith with Hindus.

“Until midnight the Hindu extremists shouted slogans outside the police station verbally abusing us and blaming us of forceful conversion,” said Wadhwani, who

suffered an injury to his right eye. Vijay Paul and Moses Edward both sustained internal injuries and damage to their ear drums. In spite of their injuries, the men rejoiced, saying, “We got to testify about Christ [at the police station] and it is worth the beating we suffered.”

p. 21 – On Tuesday, May 31, in the Ampara district of Sri Lanka, a Hindu mother murdered her 21 year old daughter, Janani, for converting from Hinduism to Christianity. Following an argument between the two, the mother took a wooden plank from the bed and attacked Janani, killing her instantly. She buried Janani’s body behind her house and reported her as missing, but later confessed to police what she had done.

p. 21 – In India’s Punjab state, a seven-year-old girl and her grandmother were thrown out of their home by the girl’s Hindu father because of their conversion from Hinduism to Christianity. The decision was made by the father after the young girl gave her life to Jesus following her grandmother who became a Christian five years ago. The father also filed a police complaint against the pastor of the church which the girl and her grandmother attend.

January/February 2017

p. 11 – A 45-year-old Christian was abducted and severely beaten on September 16, 2016 for distributing Christian literature in Kharghar and Taloja, near Mumbai. Prashant Bhatnagar was handing out material with a married couple and their four-year-old son when he was hijacked by armed thugs. At gunpoint, he was severely beaten and threatened with immolation.